

1 Peter – An Outline

- I. Introduction (1 Peter 1:1-12).
 - A. The Writer and the Recipients (1:1-2).
 - B. Praise to God for Salvation – the doctrinal section (1:3-12).
 - 1. The Nature of Salvation (1:3-5).
 - 2. Their joy in salvation while suffering (1:6-9).
 - 3. Salvation and the Old Testament Prophets (1:10-12).
- II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).
 - A. Section One (1 Peter 1:13-3:12).
 - 1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).
 - a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).
 - b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).
 - 2. Concerning sin and the people of the world (2:11-17). Note that Peter makes a distinction between sin and the people in this sinful world.
 - 3. Concerning special groups among believers (2:18-3:12).
 - a. Servants (2:18-25).
 - b. Wives (3:1-6).
 - c. Husbands (3:7).
 - d. All believers – love within; restraint without (3:8-12). Note that Peter supported his exhortations by Scripture: verses 10-12 are a quotation from Psalm 34:12-16a.
 - B. Section Two (1 Peter 3:13-5:9).
 - 1. Some of the benefits of suffering as Christians (3:13-4:19).
 - a. It gives opportunities to witness to the world (3:13-17).
 - b. This is confirmed and illustrated by the benefits of Christ's suffering 3:18-22).
 - c. It produces greater godliness in our lives (4:1-19).
 - 1) To do God's will (4:1-6).
 - 2) To prepare for His coming (4:7).
 - 3) To pray (4:7).
 - 4) To love each other (4:8-10).
 - 5) To minister the Word, depending upon God, for His glory (4:11).
 - 6) Not to think it strange that we suffer, but to rejoice that we are partakers of Christ's sufferings (4:12-14).
 - 7) To keep us from sin (4:15).
 - 8) To trust God to take care of us (4:16-19).
 - 2. More Special Instructions (5:1-11).
 - a. For elders (5:1-4).
 - b. For the young (5:5a).
 - c. For all of the Lord's people (5:5b-11).
- III. Conclusion (1 Peter 5:12-14). In verse 13 Paul states how he would describe this epistle: "I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."

1 PETER

Introduction: Anyone who has read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is very familiar with the name, Peter. He is mentioned over 150 times in the NT, most of these in the four Gospels. Originally his name was Simon. We are told in John 1:40-42 that it was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who "brought him [Peter] to Jesus." We are also told in that same chapter that on that occasion when Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, that Jesus said to him, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas" (John 1:42). And the Apostle John in writing tells us that Cephas means *a stone*. But it seems that the Greek version of the Aramaic Cephas, which was Peter, became the name by which the writer of this epistle was known.

In John 1:44 we are told that Peter and Andrew were from Bethsaida, and they were by trade fishermen, working with their father. They were the first two disciples of the Lord who were called to follow the Lord, and who ultimately became apostles.

From the very first Peter was the leader of the apostles. He was very strong in his character, and very self-assured. And this got him into a lot of trouble, the worst of which was his denial of the Lord Jesus Christ at the time of our Lord's arrest, a thing that he had openly declared that he would never do. But it seems that that was a breaking point in the life of the Apostle Peter. After he heard the rooster crow, and he remembered what the Lord had told him about his denial, we are told that Peter went out and "wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75; Luke 22:62; see also Mark 14:72). It appears that after the resurrection of the Lord, Peter was a completely different man, and he became a mighty instrument in the early church. He was very active in the early church, but he is not mentioned in the book of Acts after chapter 15 in connection with the Council which was held to determine what would be required of the Gentiles who were being saved. Although Peter was called to be the apostle to the circumcision, he was the one whom the Lord used to open the door to the Gentiles when he was called to the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion and, thus, a Gentile, where he preached the Gospel unto them, and saw a similar work of the Holy Spirit that had taken place under Peter's ministry on the Day of Pentecost which is recorded in Acts 2.

The Apostle Paul mentioned Peter in his epistle to the Galatian churches, stating first that three years after he had been saved, he went to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter (see Gal. 1:18). Paul also told about a dispute that he had with Peter (Gal. 2:7, 8, 11, 14). Paul also referred to Peter as Cephas in 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:22 and in Galatians 2:9. But with the exception of his name appearing at the beginning of the two epistles which bear his name, he is not mentioned again in the NT. Note that in 2 Peter he identified himself as Simon Peter – Simon, his original name; Peter, the name Christ gave him. So we don't know anything else about Peter, except from his epistles from the late 40's (at the Council in Jerusalem) until possibly the mid 60's when his epistles were written. Where he ministered, and the blessing that he experienced in his ministry, we know nothing. At the end of his first epistle he sent greetings to the Jews of the Dispersion from the church in Babylon where he evidently wrote his first epistle, but that is the only evidence we have that he was there.

While he identified himself in the first verse of 1 Peter as "an apostle of Jesus Christ," he also mentioned in the first verse of chapter 5 that he was "an elder." And he was exhorting the elders who were among "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" as to what they needed to do to help those in those five areas who were suffering persecution for their faith in Christ. And this is in keeping with the nature of this epistle. This is a pastoral letter. Peter was writing generally to the same believers that James had written to, although at a period several years later than James wrote. Both men wrote to encourage and to instruct those beleaguered people of God as to how they should behave when under assault from those who were enemies of the Gospel.

(February 21, 2006)

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The Purpose of the Epistle

The Epistle itself shows that Peter was seeking to encourage and comfort those who were suffering severely for their faith in Christ. But throughout the epistle he also exhorted them to persevere in their faith, living for the Lord when they were under trials just like they would at any other time.

The Exposition

I. The Introduction (1 Pet. 1:1-12).

A. The Writer and the Recipients (1:1-2).

As was customary in those days, the name of the writer as well as those to whom he, or she, was writing, came at the beginning of the letter. Thus, this is very much like what Paul did, only briefer.

1:1 Peter,” Πέτρος, the Greek form of the Aramaic, Cephas. It means *a rock*, or *a stone*. We don’t know why the Lord named him Peter unless it was an indication of the place of leadership that Peter was to have with the apostles, and the spiritual strength that would be displayed in his life as a result of God’s work in him. Peter demonstrated early in his apostleship that he was not worthy of the position, but as we follow his story in the NT we see what a tower of strength he became under the blessing of the Lord. The Lord delights in taking the weak and making them strong.

“An apostle of Jesus Christ” – This was his title. He was a personal representative of Jesus Christ. And apostle is one who is sent forth from one to others. This spoke of Peter’s authority to speak on behalf of Jesus Christ. And this he would do in this epistle under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The sovereign authority of Jesus Christ over the people of God, was Peter’s commission as an apostle. It was like receiving a letter from our Lord Himself.

The word “elect” which appears in the KJV in verse 2, immediately follows our Lord’s Name in verse 1 in the Greek text. And so it should read “to elect strangers.” We could translate it “elect foreigners.” It is the same word which is translated “pilgrims” in 2:11. We may be citizens of the United States, but when we were saved we became citizens of heaven, as the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:20-21. We still maintain our earthly citizenship, which last only until we die, but over and above our citizenship in this world is our citizenship of heaven. And this is basic to the problem that we have as Christians. We see it especially in the life of the Apostle Paul. He was the darling of the scribes and Pharisees as long as he was unregenerate, but when he was saved, those who before had been his supporters, became his enemies, and wanted to kill him. We are still to obey the laws of the land in which we were born physically, but after we are saved and become citizens of heaven, we live by higher standards and become like strangers to the people of this world. And we are strangers! But we are “elect strangers,” chosen by God to be His, chosen for salvation and the forgiveness of sins. And even in Peter’s day you would find them “scattered” throughout the Roman Empire. But Peter was writing especially to those in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. One thing that the enemies of the Gospel did not count on when they drove believers from their homes within Israel, was that wherever they went, they would carry on telling others of Christ. And so churches began to spring up throughout the Empire. Out of apparent defeat came great victories. Peter was one of them. He was one of their leaders, and he was not afraid to identify himself with them. They were a very special people. “Elect,” or “chosen,” indicates that they were chosen by God, chosen for salvation, chosen for eternal life, chosen to belong to the Lord, to live for the Lord, and chosen to become like the Lord.

1:2 It is to be understood that in this verse Peter was going on to speak of the chosen people of God. He

was concerned with Jewish believers, but not exclusively so. In the churches Jews and Gentiles were mixed together. There was, and always has been, and always will be, only one Savior: Jesus Christ. And the great doctrines of salvation apply equally to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

Here in this verse Peter mentioned all three Persons of the Godhead with reference to salvation.

He was probably speaking here of their election, and saying that it was “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” This word, “foreknowledge,” is used only one other time in the NT, and that is in Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts 2:23 where Peter said of Christ,

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Some people, who don’t really believe in the sovereignty of God in salvation, define God’s foreknowledge of what we would do, and so, on that basis, He chose us. That would mean that we are the ones who determine our own salvation. But the Bible says that “there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11). If God made His decisions on the basis of what we would do, no one would be saved. “Foreknowledge” speaks of God’s knowledge of what *He* would do! It is His place. He has done the electing. It amounts to His decree. We were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). That is, before creation. God is the One Who took the initiative in salvation. It wasn’t any of us. God’s heart was filled with love for those whom He chose. He chose us; we didn’t originally choose Him. He sent His Son to die for us. And He sent the Holy Spirit to convict us, to draw us, and to redeem us. The more you study salvation, the more you see the evidence of the work of God in all of it, from start to finish. God’s choice of us is past. As we move on to the next statement in this verse, we come to the present. What is it?

“Through sanctification of the Spirit” – This is what is going on in the present. The basis idea in sanctification is that of being set aside, or set apart. This speaks of our growth in the Lord, which Peter speaks about in chapter two. But even here in chapter 1, quoting from the OT, read what Peter said in 1:14-16. *The Spirit’s work is to separate us from sin, and to separate us unto God.* We live in a way that is less and less like the people of the world, and, on the other hand, more and more like Jesus Christ. It is amazing to think of what God has undertaken to do in our lives. And so it is unto obedience. It is through obedience, which is only possible by the Holy Spirit, that we are being sanctified.

Finally, the third of the three statements here is, *not the shedding* of the blood of Jesus, *but the sprinkling!* Christ shed His blood but once. But the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is continually being used to cleanse us from our sins. In 1 John 1:6 and 7 we find these words from another apostle, the Apostle John:

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:6-7).

Wayne Grudem, in his commentary on 1 Peter says that the cleansing of the leper best corresponds to what Peter was speaking of the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And I fully agree. Cf. Lev 14:1-7

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:

3 And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper;

4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

5 And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water:

6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall

dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:

7 And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

So we have had a past – God’s choice of us for salvation. The present – our present and progressive sanctification. And now we come to the future. We will always sin, unfortunately. And we will always need cleansing. And it is only by the blood of Christ which was shed for our salvation, by that same blood that we are being cleansed from the defilement of sin. And this will continue to be true until finally we are safe in heaven,

This very brief, but very rich, introduction concludes with that greeting which is a prayer, and is found in all of the Apostle’s letters: “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

For “grace,” look with me at the following verses in 1 Peter: 1:10, 13; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12. What is grace? Grace is the unmerited, undeserved goodness of God. God’s grace was displayed when He chose us. His grace is continually seen as He sanctifies us. And God’s grace is seen day by day, as the blood of Jesus Christ continues to cleanse us from our sins. “Grace” means strength. Cf. 2 Cor 12:7-9

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.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 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.

Think of it! God has extended His favor to us in Christ. It is by grace that we are saved, and it is by grace that He keeps us. And it will be totally because of God’s grace that we will ultimately stand before God transformed into the very likeness of Christ. Thayer says that the primary meaning of grace is that which “affords joy, pleasure, delight” (p. 665). This is what people want, but apart from God’s grace they never look for it in Christ.

What about “peace”? It is only found three times in 1 Peter, but it is implied throughout this epistle. The three places are 1:2; 3:11; 5:14. What is peace? It is harmony, security, tranquility.

Peter prayed that grace and peace would be *multiplied* unto the believers to whom he was writing. This means that it was Peter’s desire that they would experience an increasing amount of grace and peace throughout the days of their lives.

Remember that “grace” was basically a Gentile greeting, or prayer; “peace” was (and is) a Jewish greeting and prayer. It has also been said that grace is basically NT; peace is OT. The order is significant also. Grace precedes peace. There can be no real, lasting peace apart from grace. And it also must be said that true grace is always accompanied by peace. This applies to salvation. It also applies to the Christian life.

It is difficult to find a more important word for the child of God than “grace.” We are saved by grace. And as Christians we are to be continually growing in grace. Just yesterday I was reading in 1 Corinthians 15, and I came across those familiar words in which the Apostle Paul was giving his own testimony. You will find it in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10:

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

God works in us by His grace. Grace is strength and power. Paul said this in 2 Corinthians 12:9 where Paul was writing about his “thorn in the flesh.” Three times Paul asked the Lord to remove it, but the answer that

the Lord gave him was:

9 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.
10 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 (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

So we can hardly pray a prayer for each other, or for ourselves, than “grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”
You can pray that for me, and I will pray the same for you.

February 28, 2006

We now come to the second part of the Introduction:

B. Praise to God for Salvation – the doctrinal section (1 Pet. 1:3-12).

I do not mean by this that there is no doctrine in the remainder of the epistle because there is. But, in contrast with the Apostle Paul, in Peter's first epistle we have a letter which is primarily hortatory, that is, given to exhortation, as 1:13 begins to show. In Alford's commentary, *the Greek Testament*, he says that in verses 3-9 Peter was directing his readers to look into the future, and then in verses 10-12, to the past. However, in verse 3 he began with the not-too-distant past, when they were saved, before moving into the future, while verse 6 definitely speaks of the present time of his readers. Verses 10-12 have to do with the distant past, the ministry of the OT prophets, who spoke of this same salvation. However, in doing this, I have point out in my outline that verses 3-12 contain three points:

1. **The nature of salvation (1:3-5).**
2. **Their joy in salvation while suffering (1:6-9).**
3. **Salvation and the Old Testament prophets (1:10-12).**

So now we are ready to look at what Peter had to say about:

1. The nature of salvation (1:3-5).

1:3 Quoting Alford again, he said that the word that Peter used here for “blessed” (Εὐλογητός) “is used in the NT of God only” (IV, 332), like Paul did in 2 Cor. 1:3 and Eph. 1:3. Salvation is all of God, and so He alone is the One Who deserves the praise.

But Dr. Grudem pointed out that Peter praised God, as Paul did, with a Name that God did not have in the OT: “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But God is not “the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ” in the same sense that He is our God and Father. We are born of God. The Lord Jesus is eternal. He never had a beginning, as John 1:1-2 clearly state. But Dr. Grudem pointed out that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ because He relates to the Lord Jesus as a father relates to his son. We see this especially in the ministry of our Lord upon the earth. Our Lord prayed to God as His Son, depending upon Him, doing His will, seeking His glory.

Here at the beginning of verse 3 Peter was directing praise toward God as the Author of our salvation.

But it is important for us to notice what Peter was doing here. He was directing the attention of his suffering brethren to the benefit it is for believers to praise God when we are under trial. Regardless of what our circumstances might be, we always can and should praise God for saving us. And this should be among the first things that we do. God did a work in us when He saved us which no enemy, nor any trial, can ever take away

from us. And so while this is really a doxology which Peter was expressing for himself, it carries with it an imperative emphasis, that this is what those believers to whom he was writing should do.

And so Peter not only was exhorting them to do as he was doing, but as I have already mentioned he told them why they should be praising the Lord. One of the psalmists wrote in Psalm 113:2 and 3,

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

What God has done for us in Christ was not something that we deserved. It was according to God's mercy, and not just His mercy, but "according to His abundant mercy." It was not just enough mercy to get us saved, but it was far more than we needed. If it had been necessary, the mercy of God was sufficient for the salvation of any sinner over and over again. But we can thank God that salvation is a one-time gift from God which we can never lose. Now as I have mentioned many times, grace has to do with our guilt; mercy has to do with our misery. Sin brings with it all kinds of misery. Look at our country and our world today. People are freer to do whatever they want to do, but there are more miserable people than you and I could possibly count. Sin always brings misery. Sin may give a temporary pleasure, but it always brings with it that "morning after" feeling that people talk about. On the other hand, God's mercy in salvation is "abundant," overflowing, more than enough to give us peace, and joy, and all of the other characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. How tragic it is that there are so many people who do not know this. And often, even when men are told about it, they don't care; they aren't interested.

March 6, 2006

But what blessing did Peter mention here? As I have already indicated, it was the blessing of salvation. And what a blessing this is! There is absolutely nothing which can even begin to compare with this. And, like God's abundant mercy, this salvation is abundant also. We will understand its abundance more clearly when we see what Peter has said about it.

In God's mercy we have been *born again*! The verb that Peter used is ἀναγεννάω. When the Lord spoke to Nicodemus in John 3, He spoke of being born *from above*. Peter has it here that we are born again, thus drawing a comparison between our first birth and this second birth. As in our first birth we were begotten by our parents, in the new birth we are begotten of God. As we had nothing to do with our first birth, so we have nothing to do with our second birth. Our first birth gave us physical life; our second birth gives us spiritual life. So Peter made it clear that he was writing to believers.

Now this is the aspect of salvation that is *past*, complete and secure. Then Peter moved on to the *future*.

"Unto a lively," or *living*, "hope." As we use the word hope it is often to express what we desire, but which is by no means certain. We have no control over the future. But in this passage, and in many others in the NT, it speaks of something which is yet future, but which is guaranteed by the promise of God. Paul wrote to Titus telling him that we need to be "looking for that blessed hope, and (or, even) the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13). And the Apostle John wrote that "when He," i.e., Christ, "shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." And then he added, "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2b-3). The Apostle Paul, after telling the Roman believers that we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," went on to say,

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it (Rom. 8:24-25).

Mr. D. Edmond Hiebert writes in his commentary on 1 Peter,

In the present turbulent world, Christians are truly justified in viewing the future with optimism. Our new God-given life has delivered us from hopelessness (Eph. 2:12) and given us a joyous expectancy of what God still has in store for His people (p. 59).

And then Hiebert added on the next page:

The resurrection of Christ is the crowning point of the redemptive work and the valid foundation for all of God's saving work, both present and future (p. 60).

Dr. Clowney of Westminster Seminary said this about our hope:

Our hope is anchored in the past: Jesus arose! Our hope remains in the present: Jesus lives! Our hope is completed in the future: Jesus is coming again (1:5,7, 13) (quoted by Hiebert, p. 60).

Peter's statement at the end of verse three means that our hope in Christ was secured by "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" – an actual, historical, bodily resurrection from the dead. In Revelation 1:18 we have the actual words of the Lord Jesus Christ Who said,

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Thus we have it on the highest authority that His life on earth was real, His death was real, and so was His resurrection! Never doubt any part of it for even a moment.

We have already seen what our hope is, but note the way in which it is expressed in verse 4 by the Apostle Peter. (Read.)

The Apostle Paul in Romans 8:16-17 had this to say about believers as heirs and having an inheritance:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Our inheritance is not just heaven (although it will be unspeakably wonderful to be there), but it is glorification, meaning conformity to Christ. This is also our hope, as we have seen. Paul also spoke of our inheritance in his epistle to the Ephesian believers. Cf. Ephesians 1:10-14:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 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,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Our inheritance, then, is heaven, plus the fact that we shall "be to the praise of His glory." We shall not only see His glory, but we shall "be to the praise of His glory," made like Him. This is astounding truth. But how do we know that we are going to make it? A part of that answer is that we have the Holy Spirit in us now, and a major part of His ministry to us is that He already is making us like Christ. Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18. I don't very often use the Revised Standard Version, but I particularly like the translation of 2 Corinthians 3:18 as it is in the RSV. Let me read it to you:

18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

You and I may not realize it, but from the moment you trusted in Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit has been at work in your heart making you like Christ. And He works by degrees. He still has a lot to do in me, and

FOREWORD

Here are strengthening words for the days of storm and testing, and cheering words for nights dark and starless, and guiding words for times of mental perplexity and of moral peril. They come across the distant centuries, but they meet precisely our modern needs. They are weighted with divine mysteries, but they chiefly concern human duties. They were addressed to members of a heavenly brotherhood, but they deal with the practical, earthly problems of employers and servants, husbands and wives, teachers and taught, rich and poor, of all who need encouragement to press on through sorrow to joy, through temptation and failure to strength and victory, through doubts and fears to assured faith and cloudless hope. They were written by men who had been companions of Christ, but they are His present messengers for all who yield to His Spirit and seek to do His will.

– Charles Erdman, in his commentary
on The General Epistles, page 7.

you probably would say that He has a lot to do in you. But never fear: He is going to complete that work. Cf. Phil. 1:6 and even here in 1 Peter 2:221-23. (Read.)

But how do we know that we are going to make it? What did Peter say about our inheritance? Four things; notice what they are in verse 4.

1:4 Notice the four things that Peter mentioned about our inheritance, that is, if you know the Lord:

- 1) It is incorruptible.
- 2) It is undefiled.
- 3) It does not fade away.
- 4) It is “reserved in heaven for you.”

What do these mean?

- 1) It is not like silver and gold which can be corrupted so as to become worthless.
- 2) It cannot be changed and defiled by something else, or anybody else, nor can it be stolen.
- 3) It is still as glorious as we were told that it would be.
- 4) It is waiting to be claimed as each one of us arrives in glory.

There is not an investment on earth, nor has there ever been, nor will there ever be, that has the guarantee that our inheritance has. Many inheritances have been wasted, or stolen, but even when they are received by the heirs, they cannot survive the death of the heir. Our inheritance in Christ is eternal.

Alford, in his commentary called *The Greek New Testament*, explains our inheritance in this way: “It is in *substance*, incorruptible; in *purity*, undefiled; in *beauty*, unfading” (IV. 333).

And then Peter said that it is “reserved in heaven for you.” The tense and voice of the verb indicate that this has been done in the past, and that it continues in the present. This is like all of the Word of God, all of the promises of God. They are secure, changeless, just was true as they always have been and always will be.

But at the same time our inheritance is being reserved for us in heaven, something is being done with us while we are still on earth.

1:5 We are being kept. A different verb is used here from the word “reserved” in verse 4. This actually means *guarded*. Wayne Grudem says that the use of this verb in the NT “shows that the word can mean both ‘kept from escaping’ and ‘protected from attack,’ and perhaps both kinds of guarding are intended here. The form of the verb that is used here (a present passive participle) emphasizes the fact that we are continually being guarded. So we are protected from any foolish action that we might take, while being protected from an enemy, even the Devil, who might want to take us away from the Lord so as to rob us also of our inheritance. Cf. John 10:27-30; 3:16; 17:11b-12.

Remember that Peter was writing to suffering saints, suffering because of their faith, their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior. And the word “through faith” indicate that their faith will be preserved even though as Peter would go on to say, “though it be tried with fire.” Perhaps Peter was thinking here of his own failure when he denied that he even knew the Lord. Prior to his denial the Lord had told him what we read in Luke 22:31-32:

- 31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:
- 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Satan did exactly that to Peter. His faith faltered, but it did not fail. And here in 1 Peter we find Peter doing

exactly what the Lord told him to do: he was strengthening his brethren who were going through their own time of severe trials. The power of God is never more evident than when the faith of believers stands firm under trials, regardless of how severe they might be.

The salvation that will be revealed “in the last time,” when the Lord comes, is the future tense of salvation, or glorification. Everything is “ready” in heaven, that is, prepared, and they have been “ready” since the Lord ascended back to the Father. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, plus all of the saints in heaven, and even the angels (which we will learn about at the end of verse 12), are all waiting, and we should be waiting in great anticipation also, for that wonderful day when all of the redeemed will be glorified, sin will be a thing of the past with all of its tragic results, and we all will be glorified, made like our dear Savior and Lord. What a day that will be! That day is finally coming. It has been set from eternity past. Everything is ready. We need to make sure that we are ready. That means making sure that Christ is our Savior, but it also means that we are living the way He wants us to live.

March 13, 2006

But as we come to verse 6 we find that salvation does not exempt us from suffering. In fact, it is often the reason why the Lord’s people suffer. So at this point in the introduction Peter spoke of:

2. Their joy in salvation while suffering (1:6-9).

1:6 From what the Apostle Peter said in this verse, we are to learn that the key to rejoicing whatever our circumstances might be, is to have found our chief joy in our salvation, not only in what we already have, but the glorious prospect that is still ahead of us in heaven. As I have tried to bring out in the outline which I have given you, Peter was reviewing for them in verses 3,4, and 5 the true nature, or character, of our salvation. These verses cover the whole gamut, the entire range, of salvation. He didn’t say everything that could be said, but he spoke of the beginning, our new birth, and our ultimate destiny. We can even go back into verses 1 and 2 to learn about our election by God, our sanctification by the Spirit, and the continuing power of the blood of Christ to keep cleansing us from sin. We are not only saved, but we have just seen in verse 5 that we are “kept,” kept from escaping and kept from all attacks from within and without. Not only that but our inheritance is in the safekeeping of God Himself in heaven. So we are totally secure in our salvation. It cannot be taken away from us, nor can we lose it.

So, when Peter said, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice,” or *in which ye greatly rejoice*, he was speaking of our salvation. “Greatly rejoice” is the translation of the verb. It properly means *to jump for joy*. It means *to be overjoyed!* Peter was not speaking of some ridiculous outburst or emotional demonstration, but he was speaking of a joy deeply rooted in the heart, really a person’s deep joy, and joy which only a true believer can understand because only a true believer can experience it. Looking at some of the places in the NT where this verb (ἀγαλλιάω) is used, will help us to understand the meaning.

Our Lord used it in His Sermon on the Mount, as He was concluding the Beatitudes. It is translated, “be exceeding glad.” And it is said also in the context of suffering. Cf. Matthew 5:11-12:

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Mary, the mother of our Lord, used it as she began her Magnificat:

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour (Luke 1:46-47).

Our Lord used this verb in His prayer to the Father in Luke 10:21

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Our Lord said that Abraham had this kind of joy. We read what He said in John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”

When Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem to the thousands that were gathered before him, he referred to David’s words in Psalm 16 as he anticipated in his day the coming of the Lord. Here is what Peter said quoted David. You will find these words in Acts 2:25-27

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Luke, in describing the time when the Philippian jailor was saved, had this to say:

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:34).

Actually Peter used this verb two more times in 1 Peter. See 1:8 and 4:13.

In the book of the Revelation, just before the Second Coming of Christ, the Apostle John described what he heard in these words:

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (Rev. 19:6-7).

As we read over these passages, we need to ask ourselves, “Does this verb describe how we feel about our salvation?” Or could it be that we felt that was about the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior when we first were drawn to Him, but we don’t feel that way now, and perhaps it has been a long time since we felt that way. When was the last time that you gave thanks to the Lord for saving you? We ought to do it every day, not just because it is a good thing to do, but because we can’t but express the deep feeling of love that we have for the Lord. This is the joy that will give us the support we need when we are going through trials. How do we get it if we have lost it? By thinking about salvation, as Peter was doing here, and about the blessings that have come to us because we are saved. Think of His promises. Think of our inheritance. Think of the coming of the Lord when we will see Him, be like Him, and be with Him and all of the people who are going to be in heaven when we get there. But all of this is so that we will love the Lord with all of our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. Actually Peter is telling us in this epistle what it is that we need.

And why do we need them? We need them because our days here on earth are very often not what we would like for them to be. Note what Peter said, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (or better, trials). Charles Erdman, who was the Professor of Practical at Princeton Theological Seminary in the days when Princeton and its faculty stood solidly for the

truth of the Word of God, says in his brief commentary on 1 Peter that these were people, believers, who “were suffering from hatred, suspicion, violence, slander, and cruel persecution; nevertheless, in view of their coming ‘salvation,’ they were above to rejoice” (p. 57), and to “greatly rejoice.”

But notice the words, “though now for a season.” We could translate this, “though now for a little while.” God has set limits on what people can do to us. The enemies of the Gospel have a limited time in which they can cause trouble for the people of God. This expression has several ways it can be explained. This little while is like nothing in comparison with eternity. That is one explanation. But it also means that the Lord will eventually stop it, or else He will take us home to heaven. Trials make us think more frequently and with greater joy about the coming of the Lord, as Peter mentioned in verse 7.

“If need be” could be translated, *if it must be*. Do you remember what I have said about this word “must.” It speaks of a divine appointment. Peter wants us to know, as he will tell us later, that we are not to think it strange that trials will come. It may come from people, but it is always that which is ordained by God for our blessing, for our spiritual growth, our sanctification. In trials we pray. In trials we humble ourselves before the Lord. In trials we pay closer attention when we read the Word, or when we hear it taught or preached. In trials we confess our sins.

And Peter spoke here of times of trials as times of “heaviness.” What did he mean by that? It is a word that has to do with sorrow or sadness or grief. Christians have their sad times. Sorrow touches all of our lives. But we can thank God that because of the Gospel, we don’t sorrow like people do who don’t have the hope that you and I have in Christ.

But what did Peter mean by “manifold temptations”? I think that we probably should be talking about *manifold trials*. The same Greek word can be translated either way. Sometimes a trial is also a temptation, but God gives us trials, but He never tempts us to sin. If a trial causes us to sin, like it did Job’s wife, the fault is ours, not God’s. Remember what James told us on this subject. You will find his words in James 1:13-15:

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

But what did Peter mean by “manifold temptations”? He meant that there are many different kinds of trials. Loneliness can be a trial. The loss of a job can be a trial. Sickness is always a trial. Death, ours, or the death of someone dear to us, is one of the greatest trials. Persecution is a trial. A foolish decision can lead to trials. Broken fellowship can be a trial. This world is a place of trials. But they all have one thing in common, and Peter takes that up in the next verse.

1:7 Every trial is “a trial of” our “faith.” It is a test as to whether or not we are going to trust God, or we going to continue to try to work things out for ourselves like we usually do. The Christian life is a life of faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 3:11).

But as difficult as our trials are, they are “precious,” even though it means being “tried with fire.” The mention of “gold” and “fire” suggests the testing that proves that “gold” is genuine. So our trials are precious because they prove under testing that our faith is real. It is not mere profession, but pure faith. A child of God will often falter under testing (because we are totally weak in ourselves), but trials show us that we do not have the

resources to deal with our trials by our own strength, and so, often it takes time, it is in times of testing that our faith is strengthened, and God is glorified because faith like everything else in the Christian life is a gift from God. Jesus Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Faith comes from hearing and hearing and hearing the Word of God. See Hebrews 12:2 and Rom. 10:17. As Peter closes this verse, he links what is going on now to that which will take place “at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

When Peter speaks of “praise and honor and glory” when the Lord returns, Dr. Grudem raises the question, Is this “praise, and honor, and glory” that we give to God, or that God gives to us? He, Hiebert, and others, including Calvin, take it in the context of Peter seeking to encourage the people of God in their sufferings, that when the presence of Christ will be revealed for believers to see, the fact that they have trusted Him in their afflictions, will be reward by Him as He confers upon His people “praise and honor and glory.” The people of God may be hated and despised and persecuted to death by the enemies of the Gospel here on earth, but as they trust Him through their trials, they will be rewarded with “praise and honor and glory” at the coming of the Lord.

We all know, or should know, that even down to eating and drinking, or whatever else we do, we are to do all to God’s glory. And so it is not something that we should be surprised about to learn that the Lord will take note of this in the day when we stand before Him. Probably each of these three words has special significance as we think of standing before the judgment seat of Christ. We are not going to be judged for our sins. They have been forgiven, and will not be remembered against us. But we will be judged for our works, and how we have sought to please God day by day. So “praise” probably has to do with the Lord’s, “Well, done, thou good and faithful servant.” The “honor,” to be seen in “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” The “glory” will be the extent to which we will be conformed in our eternal condition to be made like our blessed Lord. What an incentive this should be for all of us to be primarily concerned about pleasing the Lord from our hearts every day that we live.

But Peter did not end his statement with verse 7. He continued in verse 8.

1:8 We know that the Apostle Peter was very well acquainted with the Lord Jesus. It is difficult to read any of the four Gospels without coming to the name of Peter and giving us more information about our Lord’s involvement in Peter’s life, and Peter’s involvement in the Lord’s life. The relationship between Peter and the Lord, was a very close relationship. He had seen the Lord time and time again. In fact, Peter, along with James and John, saw the Lord in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. But Peter was writing to many believers who had never seen the Lord. Most of them were not even saved when the Lord was on earth. But even though their faith was a gift from God, and they could take no credit for their own salvation, yet for them was a unique blessing that not even Peter could claim. It was this: They loved the Lord although they had never seen Him – “Whom having not seen, ye love.”

This ought to remind us of our Lord’s words to Thomas, one of our Lord’s disciples who was not with the others the first time the risen Lord appeared to them, responded to the disciples who said that they had seen the Lord, and these were his words as reported by the Apostle John in John 20:24-29:

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

These words applied to those suffering saints to whom Peter was writing. They did not even apply to Peter himself. And what is even more wonderful as far as we are concerned, *they apply to all of us who are here today*. We haven't seen the Lord, and yet we not only know Him, but *we love Him!* The persecutors of the believers to whom Peter was writing this epistle, were just like you and I are. They hadn't seen the Lord either, but they loved Him. And they loved Him so much that they were willing to suffer for their faith in Him rather than to deny Him. I have given my life, as many of you have, to telling people about the Lord, and encouraging them to trust the Lord, but I still have never seen Him. When you stop to think about it, it sounds a little wacky, doesn't it? Wacky means crazy, silly, utterly irrational, erratic. No wonder that it seems to be a lot of foolishness to most people. But I know I speak for you when I say that I have no doubt but that everything that the Bible says about the Lord, is absolutely true!

But we not only love Him, but we believe Him. We trust Him. We have faith in Him. Our love and our faith may neither be as strong as we would like for them to be, but even though we have never seen Him, nor have we ever met anyone who has seen Him, He is the One Whose very fellowship give us "joy unspeakable and full of glory." We "rejoice" (there is our word again that we met in verse 6) with a joy which cannot be adequately expressed in words. The world knows nothing of such a joy, is not interested in hearing about it, and is presently doing all that it can to keep it from even being mentioned. Grudem called this "unalterable and exalted joy" (p. 67).

1:9 The goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls. Salvation is by faith alone, by grace alone, and by Christ alone. Peter is declaring here that salvation from sin comes through just one Person, and His Name is, as you all know, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But before we go any farther in the introduction to this epistle of Peter, let me ask you a question, and I direct this question to myself as well as to you. Are you as excited about salvation as Peter was? Do you have the same kind of joy in the Lord that He had? Do you love the Lord Jesus so much that you can't find the words to express how much you love Him? We are all going to fail in our trials if we don't stand on the same ground that Peter did. Nothing could be more important than the conviction that he expressed to us here. It doesn't seem possible, but it is absolutely true, that we can be going through a severe trial, and at the same time be so happy in our souls that words fail us when we try to express how much we love Him. We love Him because of what He has done for us in the past, what He continues to do for us in the present, and for what He is going to do in the future. When we finally see Him, and are made like Him, we will be with Him forever. These are subjects for constant praise.

March 20, 2006

Peter used "salvation" here in its fullest meaning – our ultimate glorification. "The end" speaks of the ultimate purpose of our salvation, our inheritance, being conformed to the likeness of Christ.

The NASB translates this verse, "Obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls." The word translated in the KJV, "receiving," and in the NASB, "obtaining," is a present participle in the Greek which carries with it the idea of continuously receiving, or continuously obtaining. It has to do with our progress, or growth, in the Christian life. We don't realize all at once the purpose of our salvation, but it is a continuing process as we continue to believe, or to trust in the Lord, and as we learn to rejoice in this marvelous salvation. And our faith and joy are to be exercised in a growing love for the Lord Jesus Christ

Himself. Again let me say that the more we love Him, and the more we trust Him, the more we will continue to receive, or obtain, or grow in the purpose for which we have been saved. It is very important that we understand our part in progressive sanctification. This is what Peter was talking about.

In verse 10 we come to what Peter had to say about:

3. Salvation and the Old Testament prophets (1:10-12).

Peter did two things in this section: (1) He shows that the salvation that the OT prophets wrote about, was not a different salvation from NT salvation, but that it is all the same. There is only one way of salvation. Not as much is revealed about it in the OT as in the NT, but it is all the same. (2) He shows that there were things that they wrote which they did not understand, and so they studied their own writings. This is evidence of divine inspiration. It also shows that salvation is far more wonderful than anything that they could possibly have conceived if they had been planning salvation themselves. Fausset, in the JFB series, wrote:

The magnitude of this “salvation” is proved by the earnestness with which “prophets” and even “angels” searched into it. From the beginning of the world it has been testified to by the Holy Spirit (VI, 599).

1:10 Peter seems reluctant to leave the word “salvation,” because here we have it again. The two words, “enquired and searched diligently” expresses how constantly and intensely they searched their own writings to learn all that they possibly could about this wonderful word of God called “salvation.” They did not want to overlook any part of it or miss any detail. What an example they are to us as far as the study of the Word of God is concerned. We miss so much because we do not really search the Scripture as we should. Nobody ever learns it all; that is the reason we need to keep searching and searching the Scriptures, being careful not to miss anything, but also being careful to remain within the limits of what we have in the Scriptures.

“Who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you” seems to indicate that they knew that the revelation they had was not complete. “Grace” is used here as a synonym for salvation. It is all of grace. They knew that they did not work for it; it was a gift. And they were very conscious that they did not deserve it. They deserved judgment, not grace, and the same is true of us. That is another reason why we need to rejoice constantly in our salvation.

1:11 The word “searching” here is a verb of which the word “searched” in verse 9 is a compound, that is, they are both the same verb, but in verse 10 the verb has an ἐκ attached to the beginning of the verb, which gives the idea of “diligently.” The verb in verse 10 is an aorist which just speaks of what they did, and did extensively, while the verb here in verse 11 is in the present which indicates that they were doing this constantly. They never stopped. Hiebert says that the first in verse 10 means they did it zealously, and the verb in verse 11 means they did it carefully. See p. 73. And he gave Daniel 7:15-16 and 9:1-3 as examples of what Peter was saying.

The prophets were searching for “what,” that is, *what* the Messiah would do; “what manner of time” meant *when* it would all take place. They knew that the Spirit of Christ was in them and revealing to them what they were to write (“Christ” here clearly meaning, Messiah – Christ being the NT Greek equivalent of Messiah, the OT Hebrew). This confirms what Peter wrote in his second epistle that those who wrote the Scriptures did so as they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21).

“When It testified” – the translators of the KJV used it to agree with “Spirit” which in Greek is neuter, but it should be translated, He. There is no question but that the Scriptures speak of Spirit as a Person. Even here the

Spirit signified and testified, which are evidences of His personality. The testimony of the Spirit is the Scriptures. "Beforehand" meaning before any of the predictions had taken place. This included the virgin birth, the Lord's birthplace, etc. But particularly "the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glory that should follow." The prophets had the right order although it was not always clear to the Jewish people. We see in reading the Gospels that the disciples were looking for Jesus to be glorified over all the earth, but that they rejected any idea of His sufferings and death.

What did the prophets learn?

1:12 Obviously they learned that what the Spirit had revealed to them was that their writings which they searched so carefully and continuously, had to do with the Messiah, the Christ, His sufferings and His glory. But as to *when* those prophecies would be fulfilled, it wasn't that they would live to see them fulfilled, but, as Peter said, it was "unto us they did minister those things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven."

What exactly did Peter mean by these words?

They mean that somehow it was "revealed," a revelation from God, that the prophecies they wrote, would not be fulfilled in their lifetimes, but it was (the best reading is not "us," but *you*) unto you, in this particular instance, the "strangers" of 1:1, who had seen the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ fulfilled, and a part as well as a guarantee in the resurrection of Christ, that "the glory" was sure to follow. Peter says that the OT prophets, while surely ministering to their own generations, were ministering, or serving, those to whom the Apostle Peter was writing. It was for their comfort, their encouragement, and for the strengthening of their faith – "for you." It was for "the elect strangers."

It seems that here Peter was stressing the importance of reading the Scriptures as being addressed to us, or as a preacher or teacher of the Word can say to a group of fellow-believers, "This is for you. God has placed this in His Word for you! Take it personally, and treat it personally. Accept it like the prophets did who wrote it. Search these things out for yourself, diligently and carefully. Don't miss a word. The Spirit of God has revealed it to those who have been preaching the Gospel to you "with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven."

We need to understand from these verses how important the ministry of the Spirit is. He enabled the prophets to write it. It has been preserved for "you" who have been born of the Spirit. The Spirit empowers the preaching of the Gospel by those who have been sent "to you." None of this has been by chance, or by accident, but all under the sovereign ministry of God, the Holy Spirit. We have never seen the Spirit, but the Bible is evidence of His existence, and we are trophies of His work. What we could never have understood by ourselves, He has taught us. And what we could never have become, He has made us. Peter was saying, in effect, "Look at your Bible. Hold it very lovingly, and read it constantly and carefully. Pray for the Spirit to teach you, because all that God has been pleased to tell us about His Son, has been especially for you. If I were teaching particular redemption, this is one passage that I could surely use.

We have all heard this Gospel, this good news, from somebody, and maybe from many *somebodies*. *But the Holy Spirit has been behind it all. From eternity past the Lord has always been thinking of you.* If this would not have made those suffering saints rejoice, nothing would. But they did rejoice, and rejoiced with great hope and peace.

"Which things the angels desire to look into."

Fausset says that the magnitude of this salvation is shown by the attention given to it by the prophets of the OT, *and even by the angels!* Obviously these are the elect angels, the good angels, the unfallen angels. You know, Christ did not die for angels. But they are interested in salvation, keenly interested. The word that Peter used for “desire” is the word from which the Greek word for *lust*, or even *covet*, comes. It means that they have an intensely strong desire to learn all that they can about salvation. And Peter used the present tense of the verb to show that even though these angels have been living throughout the history of the human race, they still are learning, and still desire to know all that it is possible for them to know about salvation and the Gospel. This kind of lusting and coveting is OK. The Lord Jesus even said that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). Just think, they have been looking into salvation for thousands of years, and they are still learning.

Grudem says regarding the verb “look” that this is a verb which describes the look of an outsider, and that those upon the angels are looking, are not aware that anyone is watching them. The verb even indicates stooping or bending so as to get a closer look at those the angels are watching. And from the context of this verse, it would indicate that the angels are looking to see how those who have been saved perform when trials come and life gets difficult. The angels know that everyone has trials, but what they are interested in knowing is, does it make a difference when trials come, if you have been saved, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? They know it ought to, but does it in all cases? No, they find, not in all, but sometimes Christians have a tough time when trials first come, and then they see how the Savior helps His own people when they are in trouble.

What are angels learning from us who know the Lord when trials come?

These are all very heart-searching words, aren't they? How important it is not only to know what the Gospel is, but to believe it! Salvation is a work of God, a transforming work, the most amazing work that can be done on this earth, when God by His grace works in the hearts of people, making them new creatures, new creations.

March 21, 2006

And so, as we come to the end of verse 12 we come to the end of Peter's introduction to this very important, and very encouraging, epistle. It is very important that we understand the truth of these first twelve verses. It is difficult to see how we can make real progress in our salvation unless we know the truth that Peter has emphasized in these opening twelve verses. We would do well to go back over them again and again throughout our lives.

I mentioned in the beginning that Peter's emphasis in this epistle is practical. The doctrine of Scripture is always followed by the practical. Or, to state it another way, the doctrinal is always accompanied by the practical. The doctrine without the practical application is incomplete. And those people who say, “Don't give me doctrine; I just want the practical,” are expressing a desire that is never taught in Scripture. How can we live in fellowship with the Lord if we don't really know what salvation is. If the angels have been looking into this doctrine of salvation for over six thousand years, and still have not exhausted what can be, and is to be, known about salvation, then it is certain that none of us in the brief time we are here on earth, will be able to know it all. So we all need to keep reading the Bible. We need to keep asking the Lord to teach us about this wonderful salvation, both the doctrinal and the practical. Some Christians are strong on doctrine, but weak on the practical exhortations of Scripture. Others are strong on seeking to do the practical, but they don't know doctrine. We need both. And we see this all through Scripture, in both the OT as well as in the NT.

So, starting in verse 13 of chapter 1 we have:

II. THE EXHORTATIONS (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).

Now with all that I have said about doctrine and the practical application of the doctrine, we need to understand that when the writers of Scripture deal with doctrine, you will also find practical teaching. In the same way, when the writers of Scripture deal with practical matters, they do not leave doctrine behind. So, while, especially in the NT epistles, we have doctrine and then the practice of the doctrine, they are never completely separated. There is always some intermingling of the two.

I doubt if the apostles wrote with an outline in mind. They certainly were very reasonable and logical in what they wrote and the manner of their writing, but we use outline to help us see the order in which they wrote. I have divided this practical section into two parts: Section One in 1 Peter 1:13 - 3:12, and Section Two in 3:13 - 5:9. I hope the outline I have given you will help you to see the difference between the two. In Section One Peter has dealt with the needs of believers, and the needs of us in the separate groups in which we can be divided such as husbands and wives, and so on. But you even have a little of this in chapter 5 which is in Section Two. But the main emphasis in Section Two appears to be the benefits which suffering produces in our lives.

1 PETER

Having completed the Introduction to the first epistle of Peter, we now turn to:

II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:11).

This does not mean that there is no doctrine in the remainder of the epistle, but we are simply indicating that the nature of this epistle is primarily practical – how believers are to behave in times of testing. I have divided the practical section into two parts. We begin with “Section One.”

A. Section One (1 Peter 1:13-3:12).

1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).

a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).

We all have to admit that knowing the Lord does not mean that we escape trials, nor that we do not have our times when we are discouraged. Peter had his times of discouragement and failure, and so he could speak from personal experience. But while we get discouraged, we don't want to stay discouraged. We don't want to live in discouragement. 1 Peter is a good book of the Bible to help us with discouragement, even with prolonged discouragement. So it is important for us to see *where* he begins, and *how* he continued. Verse 13 of chapter 1 shows how he began.

1:13 “Wherefore” is a word which connects what Peter had written with what he was about to write. He was indicating that, in the light of what he had written, he wanted them to know what they should do. And so he was tying together his teaching with their living. He had shown them very briefly, but very powerfully, what they *have in Christ*; now he wants to tell them how they are to live.

“Gird up the loins of your mind.” We don't usually talk like this, and so we need to take some time to find out what Peter meant. The NASB expresses it this way: “Gird your minds for action.” The NIV renders it, “Prepare your minds for action.”

The verb which Peter used here, ἀναζώννυμι, and which is used only this once in the NT, is described by Thayer in his Greek Lexicon as

a metaphor derived from the practice of the [Jews], who in order to be unimpeded in their movements were accustomed, when about to start on a journey or engage in any work, to bind their long and flowing garments closely around their bodies and fasten them with a leathern girdle (p. 37).

But with reference to their minds, this would mean that they were to prepare their minds to think differently, as Christians should think, and to be prepared for action.

Hart, in the Expos. Gk. Test., sees in this exhortation a reference to what the Lord told the children of Israel as He was preparing them to leave Egypt in the days of Moses. Speaking of the Passover Lamb, the Lord said this:

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover (Ex. 12:11).

Our deliverance from the world is yet future, but we are to have our minds girded for action as we await the coming of the Lord, as the last part of this verse indicates.

We also have these words spoken by the Lord Jesus in Luke 12:35-36 as He was speaking to His disciples about how they were to live as they awaited the coming of the Lord. Listen to what He said:

35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

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35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

- 36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.
- 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them (Luke 12:35-37).

The way psychologists, humanistic psychologists, have invaded the church, has made a lot of Christians wary of any talk about the mind. And we should be wary of what they have to say. But I would remind you that there is such a thing as Biblical psychology. The Bible has a lot to say about the mind. The way we use our minds is extremely important. Paul spoke in Romans 12:2 about “the renewing of your mind.” In Philippians 2:5 he said, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” The word that Peter used here is *διάνοια*. It is used twelve times in the NT. Once it is translated “imagination” in Luke 1:51, and once, as “understanding,” in 1 John 5:20. But in the other ten verses where it is used it is either “mind” or “minds.” This is the word that the Lord used when He said that we are to love God “with all thy mind.” It has to do with the way we think. In Ephesians 2:3 and 4:18, as well as in Colossians 1:21 we see the problem that we had with our minds before we were saved. You see, one of the basic differences between a Christian and a non-Christian, is in the way we think. There are just two ways in which people think: either with the wisdom of this world, or with the wisdom of God, some of which is in our hearts, but the rest is in the Word of God. A non-Christian is incapable of thinking like a Christian is to think. It is foolishness to him. It is a miracle of the grace of God when in our minds and hearts we think the way God wants us to think.

So what Peter was saying here right at the beginning of his emphasis on how we are to live, he was saying that we all need to get our minds prepared for action, and we can only do that by reading, or hearing, the Word, by memorizing the Word, *and by obeying the Word, and all of this done with much prayer!* It doesn’t make sense to a person who doesn’t know the Lord, but nothing else makes sense to a true child of God. A part of what Peter was saying will be fulfilled by simply going on in our reading of chapter 1, and then chapter 2, and so on. The basic problem with the non-Christian is that “God is not in all his thoughts” (Psa. 10:4). See also Gen. 6:5; Psa. 139:17, 23; Isa. 55:6-9; Heb. 4:12.

April 3, 2006

“The loins of your mind” is an interesting statement. Our loins is the hip and upper leg are of our bodies. It is the major place of strength in our bodies. A man who is weak in this area is not capable of going to battle because it may even be difficult for him to walk. Peter wants us to know that the place of strength in our lives as Christians, is in our minds. That is the reason that in the book of Proverbs such a strong emphasis is put upon wisdom and knowledge, the wisdom and knowledge of God. And in the Bible the mind and the heart are closely related to each other. To gird up the loins of our minds is to be strengthened by the wisdom of God. We see this even in Paul’s description of our warfare in Ephesians 6:10-18 where every part of the armor of God has something to do with the Word of God – followed as Paul said with “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. So nothing is more important for any of us than for us to be learning the truth of the Word of God, getting it in our minds and hearts. What Peter went on to tell the believers to whom he was writing about how they should live, is not what you will hear from the world. Just as when we were born into this world, we had to learn to talk and walk and think, so when we are born into the family of God, born again, or born from above, we need to learn how to talk as Christians, and to walk, or live, as Christians, but it all really starts by learning *to think as Christians*. And this doesn’t all happen over night. In fact, those of us who have known the Lord for a long time, can tell you that the girding up of the loins of our minds is a life-long process. It is just as important for me today as it was the day I was saved. And the same is true for you. This is why we need to be reading our Bibles every day, and praying, as we read, that the Spirit of God will enable us to understand the Word, and then to enable us to obey it from the heart.

But Peter adds, “Be sober.” This is a present participle of the verb νηφω, which means *to keep on being sober*. This is a verb which has to do with refraining from intoxicating drink. Alcohol can and does affect a person’s ability to think clearly. It affects the way he walks. A drunk person will stagger around, and often fall down. It is not expected that a Christian will get drunk. In fact, the Bible has a lot to say against drunkenness. Paul said in Ephesians 5:18, “And be not drunk with wine.” And the best way to make sure that you don’t get drunk, is to leave intoxicating beverages alone.

But Peter was not talking about drunkenness with beer, or wine, or liquor in this passage. He was talking about a Christian who can be affected the same way spiritually that a drinker of alcohol can be affected physically. Of course, what affects you spiritually can affect you physically at the same time. What was Peter talking about? He was saying that the only way to stay sober in your Christian life is by not trying to mix the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God. The person who tries to mix the two will be affected in his walk and his talk, and when a person who claims to be a Christian, does this, he does and says things which makes others say, “How can a person who is a Christian say such a thing, or do anything like that. Let me say that there are plenty of Christians these days who are spiritually intoxicated because they try to follow the Lord in some things, but follow the world in others. The danger for the Christian has never been greater. TV brings the world right into our homes, and so do the wrong kinds of books and magazines. The deadening effect upon our lives can be so gradual that we don’t realize what is going on until we perform in a way that is unbecoming for a Christian. And this can come down to a critical spirit, or a proud heart, or anger, or a thousand other things. Let me paraphrase what Peter said here: “Be sober, and stay that way.” We have the same word in 4:7 and 5:8. In 4:7 the Greek word is different, but the meaning is the same.

But what else did he say? What is your score card so far? And I ask myself the same question.

The rest of the verse goes together: “And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” What does this mean? What was Peter talking about here?

He was talking about the return of Jesus Christ. You know He’s coming, don’t you? Do you know when? No. Could He come today? Yes, He could. Do you know that He won’t? No, we don’t know that He won’t come today. So what? We need to be expecting Him at any moment. So don’t be doing anything, or saying anything, or going anywhere that you would not like to be when the Lord comes. But this has its positive side as well. Do we have any relationship which need to be fixed? Have we be postponing something which we know the Lord wants us to do?

I told you when we were examining verse 3 that we have been born again unto a living hope by the resurrection of our Lord from the dead. And I told you that the word “hope” there did not mean something that was in doubt, that it may or may not happen. But I said that it is an absolute certainty. There is no question but that Jesus Christ is coming back. He is coming back to take us to our inheritance in heaven. We have part of the inheritance now, but we are going to have all of it then. Now what Peter was saying here in verse 13 is that we need to hope in our hope. That is using the word hope in two different ways.

Please turn with me to Romans, chapter 8, and look with me at verse 24 and 25. This is what he said:

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it (Rom. 8:24-25).

Paul told Timothy that all of us are to be “looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” That is, He told us that He was coming back. We know that He hasn’t come yet, but we believe that He most certainly is coming. He hasn’t told us when He is coming, and I am sure that

one major reason He hasn't told us the day and the hour, is because He wants us to stay ready, and to be expecting Him at any moment.

Originally I had five brothers and one sister. Originally our parents had seven children. Our parents died many years ago, and one by one five of their seven children have died. There are just two of us left. My one brother lives in Tacoma where we were all born and raised. He called me on Saturday and told me that he and his wife JoAnne were coming to Portland on Monday, yesterday, and they wanted to visit us. They said that they would be here around noon, and would be home and able to see them. I told Bryce that we would be home, and we would be delighted to have them come. Well, they arrived, and we had a good visit, and then they left to visit relatives that JoAnne has in Beaverton.

Well, how do you think they would have felt if they had arrived, had rung our doorbell, not just once or twice, but a half a dozen times, only to discover that we weren't home after he had gone to the trouble and expense of calling us and making a date with us. How do you think that they would have felt? I don't know if that would have made them mad, but I know that they would have been very disappointed. I can imagine my brother going away, saying, "I don't understand what happened. I told Dwight we were coming, and he said he would be here, but obviously they aren't here."

Or what if Bryce had called, made plans for them to come, but when he arrived we had two couples sitting at our dining table have lunch, and I had to tell them that we wouldn't be able to see them after all. I am sure that my credibility with them would have been a big zero. As it was, we were there, looking for them and wanting them to come, and the visit was just too short.

Do you get what I am saying, or rather what Peter was saying here? He was saying that we need to be expecting the Lord to come. We need to hope every day that our hope will finally be realized. The Lord is coming, and He wants us to be ready and looking for Him when He comes. He is going to come whether we are looking for Him, or not. And He is going to take us to heaven even though we may not think that He will come now. How different it will be if when He comes, He finds us ready, expecting Him, and hoping that it might be now!

What is "the grace" that He will bring with Him when He comes? It is the fulness of our salvation.

Sunday afternoon I finished reading again Paul's Ephesian epistle. And I notice that he used the word "grace" a number of times in the epistle. Of course we are all familiar with Ephesians 2:8 and 9, but earlier in the epistle, in chapter 1, he wrote these words:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Eph. 1:5-7).

Grace is another word for salvation. And it is going to mean more to us when we get to heaven than it has ever meant to us here on earth. Then we will all realize how utterly unworthy we are to be with the Lord in heaven, but even more, how utterly gracious it is of God that He predestined us to be His son, and to be like His only begotten Son.

1:14 If we are living like Peter said we should be living in verse 13, then we will be called "obedient children." It is one thing to be a child in a family, but it is so much more if we are "obedient children." This is what God wants us to be. With all that the Lord ever said to Israel in the OT, it could all be summed up in

these two words: He wanted them to be “obedient children.” And the same is true of us – not obedient tomorrow or next month, but right now, and continually!

We are all “fashioning ourselves” in one way or another. We are fashioning ourselves to be like God wants us as His children to be, or we are fashioning ourselves like we did before in our ignorance before we were saved. I have never met a Christian who was not willing to say that, if he or she had her life to live over again, there would be a lot of things that he or she would do differently. We all have sinned, and we wish that we hadn’t. But we can’t undo the past. We can only seek the Lord’s forgiveness, and ask Him to keep us from sin. We will never be completely free from sin in this life, but we need to be moving in that direction.

What is involved in “fashioning”? This is another present participle (συσχηματιζόμενοι), but it is in the passive voice which, in the negative, speaks of what you and I are *not* to do to ourselves. Peter was making the point that we definitely have a responsibility before God for the way we live. This same word appears in only one other place in the NT, and that is in Romans 12:2 where we are told not to “conform” ourselves to the world. So both appearances of this verb in the NT are in the negative – that which we are not to do. The people of the world have their own way of life. And they live the way they do because they are ignorant of the right way to live, the way that is pleasing to God. And they are willingly, happily, ignorant, just as we used to be. And it is characteristic of the world to put everyone else under pressure to do like they do, to dress like they do, to talk like they do, *and to think like they do*. Fashioning, or conforming begins outwardly, but it soon makes itself felt inwardly. In Romans 12: 2 Paul said that we are not to conform, or fashion ourselves to the world, but “be transformed,” which is an inner transformation that is passive, because the Holy Spirit does the work, and the inner change works out to transform the life of the child of God according to that “good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

People who don’t know the Lord, live the way they do, because they are ignorant – ignorant of God, ignorant of themselves, ignorant of sin, and ignorant of hell and of heaven. If you and I had known years ago what we know now, we wouldn’t have done many of the things that we did. “Lusts” sometimes means good desires, but Peter seems always to have used the word of sinful lusts. Even “the love of money” is sin, and is the root out of which all other sins grow. So said the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 6:10.

Verse 14 has to do with the negatives that we are to stay away from. Verses 15 and 16 deal with the positive side.

1:15 What has caused such a total change in our lives? Why have you and I been born again? It came about because we were “called.”

April 4, 2006

Cf. Rom 8:28-30:

28 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.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Note that “called” is placed right along with “foreknow,” “predestinate,” “justified,” and “glorified.” So it is an essential part of salvation. Hart says that “He which hath called you” amounts to a Name of God. When God calls, people come. In our concern for people who do not know the Lord, it is usually very painful for us

to wait until the Lord calls. His call was preordained because no one truly comes to Christ until he or she is sovereignly called.

On the call, cf. 1 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 3:14; also 1 Peter 2:9-10.

But what do we need to recognize about this God Who calls people to Himself for salvation? He “is holy”! What does that mean? As you probably have been told many times, the basic idea in holiness is separation. God is separate from us. We were made in His likeness, but sin changed us. And that is the basic difference between God and us. We are sinners; He is not a sinner. He is the essence of purity. God not only has not sinned, but He cannot sin. We, like David, were born sinners. There is nothing about man as he is by birth, nor by his life, that is pleasing to God. But God is perfect. And because He is holy and we are sinners, He has called us to be holy like He is. The Apostle Paul’s version of what Peter was saying here, is found in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. (Read.) This is where the struggle is in the Christian life, and we are all involved in it. We are not all troubled with the same sin, although sometimes we are, but we are all troubled with sin. It is most likely that all of us have sinned in some way before we got here to the class this morning.

So, as Paul taught in Romans 8:28, what was God’s purpose in saving us? Was it primarily to take us to heaven? No, that is a wonderful part of our salvation, but not the primary reason. The primary reason, or purpose, that God has in salvation, is to make those whom He has saved to be like Himself, and like the Lord Jesus Christ. Are we like Him now? Yes and no. The work has begun, but it is not finished. But cf. Phil. 1:6. As long as we sin, the work is not completed. But our hope, the certain prospect that we have before us, is that we will be like Him. And the Apostle John has told us that that will take place when “we shall see Him as He is.” Cf. 1 John 3:1-3. *This is the primary reason for our salvation.*

But how extensive is this holiness to be? Peter said, “In all manner of conversation.”

The KJV of the Bible is an excellent translation. It is a marvelous translation. But there is one real problem that we must recognize, that we have with the KJV. It is that some words have changed their meaning. This word “conversation” is an example which we come to here in verse 15, has changed drastically. Today our conversation is our talk; in the days when the KJ was translated. It was back in 1604 that King James I authorized some fifty scholars to prepare a revision of earlier translations of the Bible. Their work was completed in 1611. This is why it has been known as the King James Version. One writer has said,

The beauty and grace of the translation established by the King James version is one of the great treasures of the English language (*The World Book*, Vol. 2, p. 286).

But over time words do change their meaning, and this word “conversation” is an example of a word that has undergone a major change.

The importance question is, what is the meaning of the word that the Apostle Peter used here in verse 15. What was the word?

The word in Greek is ἀναστροφῇ, the dative singular form of ἀναστροφή. It means “prop. ‘walk,’ i.e. *manner of life, behavior, conduct* (Thayer, p. 42). That is what “conversation” meant back in the 1600's. But today “conversation” means only talk. So don’t be unhappy with the NASB, for example, when verse 15 is translated, in part, “be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.” That is exactly what Peter was saying. We as the Lord’s people are to be characterized by holiness in every part of our lives – in our talk, in our dress, and even in our thoughts. The Gospel transforms every detail of our lives. As we read in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

This word ἀναστροφή is used by Peter eight times – here, and in 1 Peter 1:18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16; also in 2 Peter 2:7; 3:11. The Apostle Paul used it in Gal. 1:13; Eph. 4:22; 1 Tim. 4:12; and, if he wrote Hebrews, or whoever wrote it, Heb. 13:7. James used it in 3:13.

So the person who thinks that becoming a Christian just means going to church, hasn't understood the Gospel. A child of God is certainly going to want to be in a church where he can be with other Christians to worship God and to hear the Word. Salvation is going to change every area of our lives. Our Lord's holiness was not just to be seen in some parts of His life, but it was evident in His whole life. And the same is to be true of us as well.

How is this to be realized in our lives today? Go back to the beginning of verse 14 where Paul spoke of the people to whom he was writing as "obedience children," or *children of obedience*. It is through obedience to God, which means being obedient to His Word, that we are being made holy. The Word not only teaches us to avoid sin, but it teaches us to hate sin and to love righteousness.

We don't understand much about God if we do not recognize that He is holy. In fact, how can a person really understand the Gospel if they do not have some sense of the holiness of God. It is basically because God is holy, and that we are sinners, that we need to be saved. When God revealed Himself to Isaiah, He revealed Himself, as the seraphim proclaimed Him, the thrice holy God: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. "Holy, holy, holy," three times, means that He is totally holy in all that He is – and so He is holy in all that He says, in all that He does, and even in all that He thinks. In John 12:37-41 the Apostle John made it clear that it was Christ Whom Isaiah saw. But since the Father, Son and Spirit are identical in their Deity, to see Christ is to see God, as our Lord declared in John 14:9.

April 10, 2006

1:16 Peter's authority for what he wrote in verse 15, is what Moses wrote in Leviticus 11:44. It is written in the perfect tense in the Greek, which means that *it stands written*. This is Peter's first quotation of the OT, and he quotes it much like the Lord Jesus did when referring to the OT. These words are found sixty-three times in the NT. Peter used them as his authority for what he was writing to his fellow believers. Much that is in the OT does not apply to us today, but there is also much that does apply. This is an example. It has always been the Lord's will for His people that they be holy. This is the purpose of all of the practical exhortations of the Bible. God wants us to be holy because He is holy. There is no other basis upon which we can have fellowship with God. The Apostle John expressed it this way:

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7).

This is a very important point which the world does not understand, and neither do many Christians understand it. The holiness of God is the ultimate basis for all morality. And this is true for both Testaments. Dr. Grudem expressed it this way:

The final reason that some things are right and others wrong, and why there are moral absolutes in the universe, is that God delights in things that reflect His moral character . . . and hates what is contrary to His character (*Op. cit.*, p. 80).

The "I" in "I am holy" is emphatic. This also gives us a definition of sin. Whatever is in agreement with the character of God, is holy; whatever is contrary to the character of God, is sin.

1:17 This verse begins with an “if” statement, and is what is called in Greek “a simple condition” in which you assume something to be true. And the “if” in such cases can be translated *since*, or *if, as you do*. The idea here is that if you are a true believer, you will be calling upon the Father, or, to state it another way, if you are a believer, then surely you will be calling upon the Father, you will be praying. It is inconceivable that a person would be truly saved, but not praying. So Peter was giving this as an evidence that he believed that he was writing to true Christians, and this was the basis of his appeal. He went on to show what a true believer should be doing because he is a true child of God. And the fact that Peter called God “Father” here, gives further evidence that he believed he was addressing genuine children of God. And he was reminding them that God is not a respecter of persons. Whether a man might be an apostle, or someone who had just been born into the family of God, they stand on the same basis before God who judges us all on the basis of our works (“works” here probably meaning *the way we live*). The apostle may understand more truth than the one who has just been saved, but we are all to “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” Interestingly the Greek verb for “pass” is the verb from which we get the noun “conversation,” or, as we have learned, which is more accurately translated “conduct.” So we are to conduct ourselves in the fear of God, or, with the deepest possible concern that we do nothing that would be displeasing to our heavenly Father. You see that this all ties in with Peter’s exhortation that we be “holy in all manner of our conduct” (v. 15).

So no one who claimed to be a child of God would be able to say that what Peter had written did not apply to him, or to her, as the case might be. We are all sojourners here. This world is not our home. We are just passing through. And even though in this world you and I could get away with a lot of sin, yet as the children of God, or as the citizens of heaven, our standards of life are set by God, our heavenly Father, and not by what we may be able to get away with in this world.

And so the question comes down to each one of us individually: Do I call God my Father? Do I pray? If people ask me if I am a Christian, do I say “yes”? Then my main concern in life is to be that I show that I love God by doing what His Word tells me to do, and by not doing the things that He tells me not to do.

You will find in our hymnal, one of the inserts that we have added to the hymns that were originally included in our hymnal, a couple of verses which describe what it means to fear God. It is letter “C,” and so should be inside the front cover. (Read.) To fear God, or to fear the Lord Jesus, is to watch the way you live, and the places you go, and the words you say, and even the thoughts you think, so that by God’s grace (and it can’t be done any other way) your main purpose in life is to pleasing the Lord. We need to be God-fearing people. We have every reason to fear the consequences of sin, and to fear what God might do to us or to someone very near and dear to us if we persist in sin.

And so the word “fear” is used two ways. We can use it of something that causes us to be afraid, to be anxious, to be alarmed. But we can use it of the attitude of awe and reverence when we think of the majesty and glory of God. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 9:10,

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. As you read your Bible, note carefully those verses that talk about the fear of the Lord. They are among the most important verses that you and I will ever read. They have everything to do with the way we live.

But we need to go on. In my Bible verse 17 ends with a colon, indicating that verse 18 is connected with it. And when I look for the period ending the sentence which begins with 17, I don’t find it until I get all the way down to the end of verse 21. The KJ translators had that way of showing the verses that go together, and I have usually found them to be very accurate.

1:18 “Forasmuch” is one of those connecting words, isn’t it? Actually there is no word which is translated

“forasmuch,” but the idea is in the verb which is translated “forasmuch as ye know.” Peter was here giving us another reason as to why we should be holy in our conduct. The first was that in salvation God becomes our heavenly Father, and we have the privilege of fellowship with Him in prayer. The second is that we know, we are well aware of the high cost of our salvation. This 18th verse along with verse 19 tell us that our salvation was not purchased with money, “silver and gold.” And he was speaking to all of the people of God when he wrote, “ye know.” “Ye” is plural. They understood this. They knew how they were redeemed, and it was not one way for one person, and another way for someone else. There is not enough money in the whole world to buy salvation for a single person. And those who teach that money has anything to do with salvation, are teaching that which is abominable in God’s sight. The scribes and Pharisees were notorious for this, and it is still emphasized

We know that we have been “redeemed.” This is a verb in the passive voice which means that we did not redeem ourselves at all, but that we were redeemed by someone else. And the verb λυτρόω indicates that there was a price to be paid to secure our redemption. But we didn’t pay it; some else paid it for us. And that is why it is sometimes called *a ransom*.

But it wasn’t a payment in money, called here in verse 18, “silver and gold,” which are called “corruptible things.” Dr. Hiebert believed that Peter had been greatly impressed by our Lord’s words in Matthew 6:19-21.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

Money can be stolen from us. Or money can become worthless. Or the price of things can be raised so high that we cannot afford it. It is the height of folly to put our trust in what money can do for us. We did not bring any money with us when we came into this world, and we are not going to take anything out when we go.

One commentator translated the words, “from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers,” as “from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers” (Hiebert, p. 89). This would indicate that many of the people to whom Peter was writing were Jews (and he was the apostle to the Jews). The sum total of their teaching amounted to nothing. You could listen to the Pharisees and scribes forever, and never learn how to be saved, how to have your sins forgiven, how to be assured of heaven. And there is much teaching in churches today that is totally “empty.” Do all that these teachers tell you to do, and you will end up in hell regardless of the money you give and the works that you do. Salvation is not something that we can pay for or earn by our own works. Fausset in the JFB commentary, described “vain” as self-deceiving, promising good which it does not perform” (VI, 601).

The people of God to whom Peter was writing knew that they were not going to be able to pay for their salvation, nor could they earn it by what they did, their good works. But they also knew the true way of salvation which Peter described in verse 19.

1:19 They knew that they were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” They knew that “the wages of sin was death” (cf. Rom. 6:23). They also knew that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). They knew that the animals killed for sin in OT times were of value only because they looked forward to one whose sacrifice they anticipated. And they knew that it was the sacrifice of Christ that was most precious because there was no other way for sins to be forgiven. He was, as John the Baptist proclaimed, “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” It was not that everybody would be saved by Christ, but that wherever in the world there

were people who wanted to be saved, and who could be sure that they were saved, it would be Christ, and Christ alone, who could and would save them. This was what made the blood of Christ precious. It was not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of Christ, the Son of God, the sinless One, described as being “without blemish and without spot.” Just as the animals presented to God in sacrifice in OT times were not to be crippled or blind or with any physical defect, so the only One Who could possibly qualify to be our Savior, and to die for others, was the One, our Lord, Whom Peter described in 1 Peter 2:22, “Who did no sin.” And He did no sin because as the Apostle John wrote, “In Him is no sin” (1 John 3:5). The writer of the book of Hebrews said concerning the impeccability of Christ, that He was “without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

The believers to whom Peter was writing, understood all of this about salvation and about Christ. Peter was still preaching the same Gospel that he had preached in the early days of the church in Jerusalem when he proclaimed,

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:10-12).

But this was not all that these believers understood. You can see how well taught they were about salvation.

1:20 Don’t think for a moment that the sin of Adam, and the consequent sinfulness of the whole human race took God by surprised. The Lord Jesus Christ “was foreordained before the foundation of the world” to do what He did. What does “foreordained” mean? This is the first of two very, very important statements concerning our Lord and His redemptive work. They are indicated in the Greek by *μὲν* in the first part of this verse, and *δὲ* in the second part of the verse. They can be translated, *on the one hand* and then *on the other*.

The word translated “foreordained” is actually the verb of the word “foreknowledge” which Peter used in verse 2, *to foreknow*. The first part of this verse is translated in the NASB, “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world . . .” Both in verse 2, and also here in verse 20, Peter was speaking by direct revelation from God. He did not possess such knowledge himself apart from God. The knowledge of God is infinite. He never needs to learn anything because He knows all things. He knew the end from the beginning. So, as Dr. Grudem points out, it would not make sense to say simply that the Father knew Christ before the foundation of the world, or before creation. Of course He knew His Son, and He also knew the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit also knew the Father and the Son. They were all infinitely acquainted with each other. Well, then, what does this expression mean?

For God to foreknow anything, or anyone, is to make certain what He knows about that person. So His foreknowledge is greater than just knowing something or someone ahead of time. What He foreknew about Christ means the same as to ordained, to determine, that what He knows will certainly come to pass. Revelation 13:8 speaks of our Lord as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” So it was predetermined by God, foreknown by divine decree, that the Son of God would in time come to die to secure the salvation of the elect. To say that God foreknew this is the equivalent of saying that He pre-determined, or foreordained, that the Son would die for sinners to save them from their sins.

The Spirit of God is telling us here what was decided in eternity past, before there was a creation, even before sin had been committed. This is what concerned the prophets who wrote about it (see again verses 10 through 12), and even the angels (v. 12b end). The coming of the Son to be the Savior of sinners, was the focal point of

all past history, but it was foreknown from before creation. The same is true of God's choice of the elect. See Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13.

Much of time went on, and still the Messiah, the Christ, did not come. But then He did come. He was revealed. He appeared. The foreknown plan of God was fulfilled.. Notice: "for you" – particular redemption. The purposes of God never fail. The whole earthly mission of our Lord is included in the last part of this verse – His virgin birth, His perfect life and ministry, His suffering and death, His resurrection, and His ascension. And throughout time God has been calling His elect to Himself, and will continue to do so until they all have been saved. In His sovereignty His whole work of salvation will ultimately be included.

1:21 In this verse, although there are differences among Bible scholars as to some of the fine points of what Peter had to say here, we can clearly see that it is through Christ that we also believe in God. Christ, as Peter would say in 3:18, brings us to God, the God Who raised the Lord from the dead, "and gave Him glory," pointing to His ascension and His being seated at the Father's right hand, our Lord being honored, so that our faith and hope might be in God.

The Apostle Paul spoke of believing in God in Romans 4 when he was speaking of how, by faith, the righteousness of God was imputed to Abraham. Listen to what Paul said in Romans 4:23-25:

23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

People will often speak of believing in God who will make no mention of Christ. When people speak of believing in God (as though that alone was sufficient), ask them if they are speaking of the God "Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Most religions speak of God. Even many professing Christians think that believing in God alone is all that is required for heaven. It is very important that they are speaking of the one, true living God, and not just some God that whom people think is a God. It is important to believe in God, but we need to make sure that we are talking about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the God Who "raised" our Lord "up from the dead." And He is the God Who "gave Him glory." This speaks of our Lord's ascension and the fact that He is now seated at the Father's right hand - the place of the greatest honor and power.

This is the third time that Peter has mentioned our "hope" so far in this epistle. See 1:3, 13 (a verb), and here in verse 21.

Notice that verse 20 indicates that all that God has done from eternity past up to the manifestation of Christ, that is, His coming to the earth, was done "for you," Peter said to the original recipients of this letter. But those words, "for you," apply just as much *for us!* And then in verse 21 the resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ was also for those who believe – "that you faith and hope might be in God."

Now all of this expresses why it is important for us to be obedient to what Peter commanded his original readers, and us, to do what he has told them and us to do in verses 13 through 16. God has invested (so to speak) a great deal in our salvation, going back into eternity before creation, and extending into all eternity which is yet to come. The time in between is extremely important for us. It is a pathway involving trials, sometimes fiery trials. But through our earthly sojourn the Father is preparing us for heaven and eternity, a heaven where holiness prevails, and where all of the redeemed will bear the likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Faithfulness to the Word will bring with it blessings which are unimaginable and indescribable. So let us pray that the Father will enable us to be faithful.

April 17, 2006

We come to the next paragraph in verse 22, and it extends through verse 23.

1:22 Peter was not indicating here that we have been responsible for our own salvation. That would have been in contrast with what he had just been saying that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Plus, if we have brought about our own salvation, what would Peter have mentioned that God had raised the Lord Jesus from the dead in order that our “faith and hope might be in God.” Peter seems to be emphasizing here our sanctification, or the life we live after we have been saved.

As the perfect tense in English, “have purified,” would indicate, progress in purification, the Greek is also in the perfect tense which indicates past action with continuing results in the present. He wasn’t saying that they were fully purified, but that they had made real progress in purifying their souls. They had evidently turned away from their previous sins, and were seeking by “obeying the truth through the Spirit” (and the truth cannot be obeyed in any other way). Consequently Peter was here recognizing the progress they had made in living holy lives since they had been saved. Holiness comes through obedience to the Word of God. This is really what it means to fear the Lord. (Look back at verse 17.) “Unto” points to a result which is “unfeigned love of the brethren.” “Unfeigned” is a good translation of what Peter was saying. He used the word for a hypocrite and put an “a,” or what Greek teaches call, an alpha privative, before it. That is like putting un- before the word feign. If you feign something, you are pretending to be something which you are not. And that is what a hypocrite is. But if you put un- before feigned, you completely change the meaning of the word feigned. If you feign to love the brethren, you are only acting like you do, or talking like you do, but you don’t really love them. But if your love is “unfeigned,” then you really do love your fellow believers in Christ. Loving some but not loving others, will not do. If our love is unfeigned, it is not selective; it applies to all believers. And this is a test of our obedience. True obedience not only produces holiness in our lives, but it also causes us to love the people of God, and to want to be with them.

So Peter was saying, you love the brethren, but see that you love each other “fervently.”

The apostles in writing the Scriptures frequently indicate that as good as our progress may be in living for the glory of God, it can always be better. Or, if we are making progress in some areas of our lives, we need to make progress also in other areas of our lives. Here they loved each other, but they needed to be fervent in their love. What does it mean to “love one another with a pure heart fervently”? Many of the best MSS do not have the word “pure.” That word is really not needed if the love is coming from a person’s heart. It will be pure then.

Peter actually employs both words for love in this verse. “Love of the brethren” is the translation of one Greek word, the word from which the city of Philadelphia gets its name. It is the city of brotherly love. It employs the noun from the Greek word φιλέω. But when Peter exhorted his readers to “love one another with a pure heart fervently,” he there used the verb ἀγαπάω. Various attempts have been made to distinguish between these two words for love. Probably in the context here the first would indicate that I am to love the brethren simply because he is my brother, or because she is my sister. We are to love each other because we are brothers and sisters in the family of God. But to love a person fervently, means to love a person because I really delight in him or her. It is the kind of love which makes us look for opportunities to express our love by what we do for that person. If you love a person fervently you would do anything helpful for that person. That person will be on your list for prayer. Obedience to these words from Peter would make our fellowship with each other a real foretaste of heaven on earth. This is the kind of love the Father has for us, and it is the kind of love that the Lord Jesus has for us. It is the kind of love that caused the Father to send His Son to die for us, and it is the

kind of love that caused the Lord Jesus to come to die for us. This is a love that does not go away. It does not change. It is the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts for the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Truly our relationship with our fellow-believers is a real test of our Christian lives.

So as much as we may love each other, we can always love each other more, and do more to manifest our love. The Apostle John makes it very clear in his epistle that this is one of the main evidences that a person is truly saved. If your best friends are non-Christians, it is something to be greatly concerned about.

1:23 The only one who can truly obey the previous verses which call for holiness of life, the hope of heaven and perfection, and showing love for the people of God, is one who have been born again. In our lives, this is where it all begins. Peter used this same verb in 1:3. (Read.)

Like physical birth, being born again brings abiding results. We may not know exactly when it took place, but we have to take the word of others as to when we were born into this world. But the greatest proof that I was born “x” number of years ago, is I. I had to be born, or I wouldn’t be here today. The same is true of you. So when the writers of Scripture speak of the evidences that a person has been born of the Spirit, or born by the Word of God, is my life. The Bible does not know of a salvation that leaves a person the same. If you and I are truly saved, our lives are going to show it. You have to have life before you can live. So don’t try to get a person who hasn’t been born again to live the Christian life. They are dead in trespasses and sins. They need life, divine life, eternal life, if they are to live.

How were we born again? By the Word of God. This is the reason that I say that I don’t believe anyone is ever saved apart from the Word of God. That is the reason it is so important to use the Word of God when we talk to people about the Lord and salvation. It is a living Word. It is a powerful Word. It is a seed. And this Word is the second incorruptible thing that Peter has mentioned in this epistle. The first was our inheritance in chapter 1, verse 4. Here in verse 23 it is the Word of God. What does “incorruptible” mean? It means that it is imperishable. The Lord Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt. 24:35). The Psalmist said, “Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89).

In Greek the words “being born again” are in the perfect passive, meaning that it has taken past and continues with continuing results, but it is not something that we do for ourselves; it has been done by another for us, and that One is the Holy Spirit. The instrument is the Word of God which lives and abides forever. The words “for ever” are not in many of the better MSS, but they are not needed because the idea is included in the words, “liveth and abideth.” Hiebert says that it is “never obsolete nor irrelevant” (p. 116). And he quotes Bruce Metzger who said concerning the Word that it is “intended for all periods of time, never to be superseded by human philosophy.”

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1:24 Concerning these last two verses Matthew Henry said,
The apostle having given an account of the excellency of the renewed spiritual man as born again . . . now sets before us the vanity of the natural man, taking him with all his ornaments and advantages (VI, 1013).

Peter is here quoting from Isaiah 40:6-8 which in the KJV reads:

6 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:

7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the

people is grass.

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever (Isa. 40:6-8).

As Matthew Henry said, the Apostle Peter was doing as Isaiah did, contrasting the permanence and the glory of the Word of God with the temporary and vanishing glory of man, *i.e.*, of all mankind. The strength of any man, the beauty of women which claims so much attention in every generation, the power which any man may exert over others, whether it be over a few or over many nations, regardless of how much wealth and fame he may acquire, it is all like grass and quickly fades away. When you take all of the ornaments of the human family and gather them together, Matthew Henry said, and we know that it is true, “nothing can make him a solid substantial being.” As Solomon reminds us over and over again, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” (Ecc. 12:2). The Lord Jesus said, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). The most glorious among men are all like grass. They appear for a very, very short time, and then vanish away. *Peter was saying, as Isaiah said, and as our Lord also said, that the Word of God stands alone from generation to generation, and it is the only means by which frail, vanity, and corrupt man, can be born again, and be destined to share the eternal glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only by the Word of God that man can have any hope that is lasting, and the hope that the Gospel gives us is eternal.*

And yet although this has been on record in the Scriptures year after year, men still try to prove that they can be the exception.

My first pastorate after I finished my seminary training, was in Beaumont, Texas. I went from Dallas to Beaumont on weekends for several weeks before I graduated. I stayed in the home of two elderly sisters and their brother. One sister was a widow, but the other sister had never married and neither had the brother. But the spinster lady was a painter, an artist. And she loved to paint a field of Texas bluebonnets, which is the State flower of Texas. And it was one of the most beautiful sights you could see when you would be driving through the country in Texas and see a field full of blooming bluebonnets. But they didn’t last. You could drive by that same field later and the bluebonnets were gone. And the Lord tells us in his word that those bluebonnets are a picture of man. Let him glorify himself with any kind of achievement – in science, in sports, in whatever field of achievement a man may glorify himself – but, without exception, it is soon recorded that he died. Dr. Chafer used to tell us in the seminary classroom that the cemeteries of our country of people who thought that they were going to be the exception. They may have glorified themselves in many ways, but eventually it is recorded that “he died”!

We really don’t need the Bible to tell us of the fleeting glory of man. But here it is, and it was written also approximately seven hundred years before by Isaiah the prophet. But it was also illustrated by everyone from Adam on down to the present day. And yet people don’t get it! We are like a flower that fades and like grass which dies. *But is there no hope at all?* Yes, there is, and that is what the Apostle Peter was led by the Holy Spirit to tell us once again. Where is that hope? Verse 25 here at the end of 1 Peter 1, tells us. Read it.

1:25 And we in America, where we have had this Word from the very beginning, are now trying to do everything that we can to do away with it. We can thank God that that is not true of everybody in our country, but if only one person were trying to do away with Scriptures, it would be one too many. “The Word of the Lord endureth forever.” There is no book like the Bible. It alone is “the Word of the Lord.” And it is by this Word, and by this Word alone, that people in every generation around the world have been born again. However, no person is going to listen to this Word until he, or she, sees that he is like grass, or as the Psalmist said using another illustration, man, unregenerate man, is “like the chaff which the wind driveth away” (Psa. 1:4b). What is this message that is so supremely important? It is the Gospel. The message is the same in the OT that it is in the NT. Isaiah and Peter preached the same message, of a Savior Who came to die for sinners that He might save those who are lost. Everybody needs to be born again. We are not acceptable to God as we

are by nature. We need to have our sins forgiven, and to be born again, given new life, divine life, eternal life. And we can have it, not by working for it, not by paying money for it, but simply by faith in God's Son Who died and rose again that He might give us life.

We are going to learn more about our continuing need for the Word of God after we are born again as we go on into chapter 2 of 1 Peter. But at this point all of us need to make sure that we know by personal faith the truth that Peter has been proclaiming in 1 Peter 1. How tragic it would be for even one person to have attended the Tuesday Bible Class at Trinity Bible Church, without having really heard this message and trusting in Christ. May God give us ears to hear, hearts to understand, and faith to believe the Gospel. There is no other way of salvation. This is the Gospel that Peter was preaching in Jerusalem after the resurrection of Christ. This is what he said, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ,

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

1 Peter

We are now ready to move into chapter 2. As we do, let us note where we are in our outline. We have noted that this first epistle of Peter is primarily an epistle of exhortations. So, after a brief Introduction which is primarily doctrinal in nature, at verse 13 in chapter 1 we come to the first of the exhortations which continue throughout the epistle. So the outline, up to and including the first part of chapter 2, looks like this:

- I. Introduction (1 Peter 1:1-12).**
- II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).**
 - A. Section One (1:13-3:12).**
 - 1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).**
 - a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).**
 - b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).**

In the first part of the exhortations (1:13-25), the latter part of chapter 1, we have seen evidence that the believers to whom Peter was writing, were people of unusual maturity. In verse 14 he addressed them as “obedient children.” In verse 17 he commented on their praying. In verses 18 through 21 he wrote of their understanding of the Gospel. And in verses 22 and 23 he spoke of the purity of their lives and of the love that they had for each other. Even verse 15 seems to indicate that they were a holy people in their behavior, but that Peter wanted them to persevere in what they were already doing. Thus, this epistle is in marked contrast with Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth which reveals that they had many problems and, consequently, that the church at Corinth had many needs.

April 24, 2006

However, with all of the good things that could be said about the believers to whom Peter was writing, they were experiencing some severe trials. Testings of various kinds, and especially opposition from the world, are to be expected by every child of God in every generation. And these are never easy. The life that a Christian is to live is do different from the way people in the world live, that it provokes opposition from the world. Unsaved people want us to live like they live, and when we don’t, they at first are confused, but then, when they see that we are not going to change, opposition sets in.

Peter’s concern for the believers who were living in the Roman province of Asia, was that the opposition would not cause them to react as they would have acted before they were saved. It is natural for us to want to get even, or at least to give the opposition a little bit of what they give us. But Peter insists that whatever people might do against us because we belong to the Lord, God’s people are react in ways that are pleasing to God and consistent with the Gospel.

And so in chapter 1 we have seen that he began by pointing out to the believers in Pontus, Galatia, etc., by his doxology (“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .”), that their salvation was traceable to God. It was not something that they had asked for. It certainly was a salvation that they could never have deserved. It was all the result of their election by God and “according to His abundant mercy.” And it was a salvation which not only had present effects in their lives, but it extended on into heaven when salvation would be completed. And the change has been made in our lives by a new birth. It is God Who has “begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

This means that “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” has become our Father. We are born into the family of God. Therefore, as the children of God we are to be like God. And, since God is holy, we are to be holy. In our character we are to be like God, and in our conduct we are to be pleasing to God. So the Christian life is a life of fellowship with God.

But Peter also brings out in chapter 1 that God is not only our Father, but according to verse 17 He is our Judge. And, therefore, we are to “pass the time of our sojourning here in fear.” This “fear” is the recognition that our primary object in life is to please God. Our fear is the fear that we will not please Him. And so we exercise the greatest care in living each day that we please Him by obeying Him, and that we do not displease Him by disobeying Him. But this is a fear that is to be prompted by our love for God. We recognize that God is truly God and that He is infinitely worthy of our obedience. We revere Him. We worship Him. It is our greatest joy to be what He wants us to be, and to do what He wants us to do.

But how does all of this come about? Well, Peter mentioned in verse 2 the “sanctification of the Spirit.” And that is what Peter had in mind in verse 22 where he said that they had “purified” the “souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.” What is “the truth” that Peter was talking about? It was, and is, the Word of God. We have been born again by the Word of God (v. 23), and now we are being “purified,” or *sanctified*, by the Word of God.

If we fear God, and want to please God by doing what pleases Him, where do we learn what is pleasing to Him? We learn that from the Word of God, from our Bibles. And, as Peter emphasized in verse 22, one of the first evidences that a person has truly been born again, is that he loves the people of God. He loves those who are members of the family of God.

This is where we are as we get to chapter 2. Our sanctification comes about through spiritual growth, but there can be no spiritual growth apart from the Word – reading it, understanding it, and obeying it.

So now, here in 1 Peter as we come to chapter 2, we find Peter exhorting them to grow in the Lord. They had grown, but they needed to continue growing. This is what I need, and this is what you need. We can see that as good as things seem to have been among the believers to whom Peter was writing, things can always be better. They not only can be better with all of us, but they need to be better, they must be better. We never get to the place in this life where we do not need to grow more in the Lord.

And so the next point in our outline is:

III. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).

A. Section One (1:13-3:12).

1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).

a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).

b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).

2:1 “Wherefore,” or *therefore* - meaning that because of the truth that he had explained in chapter 1. So there is a logical connection between the truth of chapter 1, and what Peter was then preparing to say in chapter 2.

The form of the verb which Peter used here (an aorist participle), can mean that this “laying aside” is something that these believers needed to do as a definite act of the will, or something that they had already done (Lenski). Exactly the same word appears in Hebrews 12:2, where it is translated, “let us lay aside.” Either translation would fit here in 2 Peter 2:1, but the idea is that either they have done this, or it needs to be done. But it is not done progressively, but a definite thing to do, the knowledge that such things as Peter mentioned here do not belong in a Christian’s life. The presence of such sins will definitely affect a person’s hunger for the Word. So the presence of these sins in a believer’s life will definitely be a hindrance to his desire for the Word, and so to his spiritual growth.

One thing expositors are united on is that the sins mentioned here are sins against other people, and it is very likely that Peter was thinking especially about sins against other believers. A believer who tolerates such sins cannot be said to love his brothers and sisters in Christ. Lenski mentioned 1 John 4:20 as teaching what Peter was teaching here:

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

What are the sins which Peter mentioned?

“All malice” may be a title for all of the following because it can mean sin of any kind. It especially means sins where you intentionally are trying to hurt someone, hurt them in any way. “Guile” is deceit. It is an old used word which meant to catch with bait. “Hypocrisies” is in the singular in the better MSS, according to Robertson. This, of course, is pretending to be what you are not so as to deceive. A hypocrite has no credibility. “Envies” in the plural suggests the many different ways in which it can show itself. In hypocrisy we are claiming to have what we don’t have; in envy we deny the good that can obviously be seen in others. “And all evil speakings” refers to the many ways in which one person can slander another. It often takes the form of gossip. Hiebert says that it “deliberately assaults the character of another and usually takes place behind the victim’s back” (p. 122), meaning when the victim is not present. These words represent the regular behavior of people in the world, but the child of God who is intent on pleasing the Lord must lay these aside and have nothing more to do with them. Grudem summarizes this list by saying that “all these sins aim at harming other people, whereas love seeks the good of others” (p. 94). Lenski says that these sins have in common that they are, or can be, sins of the tongue. He does not deal with the sinful deeds which often follow them. But if we can stop the wrong kind of talk, we will usually stop the sinful behavior which usually goes along with them. This is what we learn from James, that if we can control the tongue, we won’t have trouble with the rest of our body. The tongue gets us into a lot of trouble.

Many a Christian suppresses any “desire” for the Word by his own sinful speech and/or behavior.

2:2 Verses 1 through 3 give us a statement. Verse 1 is only the first part; verses 2 and 3 are the last part and show what the Apostle Peter wants to emphasize.

If a person claims to be a Christian, but does not take time to read the Word, or to go where he can hear it taught, his profession is probably false. But Peter in this verse was not talking about that. He was talking about *a desire for the Word*. The verb “desire” suggests an “an intense yearning” (Robertson, VI, 94). The verb is ἐπιποθέω. Paul used it in Philippians 1:8 to describe how he longed after the believers at Philippi, longed to be with them, longed to see them going on with the Lord. Peter was not calling his readers, “newborn babes,” but he was saying that just like a newborn desires the mother’s milk, and Grudem says that desire is “eager” and “constant,” believers should “desire the sincere milk of the Word.” Most expositors that I have consulted do not think that Peter was using milk here in contrast with meat, or solid food, as it is used in 1 Corinthians 8 and Hebrews 5, but he was simply indicating that all believers should always show the same kind of desire for the Word that a baby shows for milk. The baby has no idea that he, or she, needs the milk in order to grow; they just want the milk because they like it. And when they don’t feel right about things, they usually cry, and can only be quieted by getting some milk. What a wonderful thing it would be for all of us to know that, when things are not going like we want them to, or we are out of sorts, what we need is the Word. But we need it so that we will grow. We know that we need the milk of the Word for that purpose; the baby knows he *desires* milk, but he doesn’t know why. The Lord has put that desire in his “newborn” heart so that he will survive. The Word does for our souls what milk does for a newborn baby. Most people in the world spend most of their time satisfying their physical desires, but they give zero time to satisfying their souls. And it can’t

be satisfied by anything but the Word of God. And so most people are always dissatisfied, always looking for something else, but never really satisfied.

But what did Peter mean by “the sincere milk of the Word”? What does “sincere” mean? The word translated “sincere” is only found this one place in all of the NT. It means *pure, genuine, unadulterated*. This is why we are naturally suspicious of new translations of the Bible. The Living Bible is a paraphrase of the Bible. It is a tampered copy of the Bible. But the Bible can also be tampered with by the translation that is given to it. There are good study Bibles that are available, but there are also some that are not good. We can be thankful that after all of these years we still possess translations of the original Hebrew and Greek that are “sincere,” pure, unadulterated. And this is what we want. It is good to have books *about* the Bible, but they should never take the place of the Bible itself. If you know what the Bible says, then you will be able to judge whether a particular commentary is reliable.

I have frequently said that I don’t believe anyone is ever truly saved apart from the Word of God. I want to go on record as also saying that no one can really “grow” in the Lord without a knowledge of the Bible, a growing knowledge of the Bible.

Now this verse applies just as much to me now as it did fifty years ago. Why do I say that? I say that because we never outgrow our need to grow. We should be growing constantly as long as we live, or until the Lord comes. We feed our souls on the Word of God. We read it. We seek the Lord’s blessing in understanding it. And we seek the help of the Holy Spirit in applying it to our lives. It takes time to grow. We may reach a certain height in our physical growth in the first twenty years of our lives, more or less, but our maturity takes a lifetime. When people are saved, they need to be told that they need to grow in the Lord.

But then what did Peter add in verse 3?

“If so be that . . .”

Do you remember that back in verse 17 where the word “if” occurs, we talked about conditional sentences in Greek? I won’t both you about all of the conditional sentences that are found in Greek, except for what are called *first class conditions*. *This is a sentence which begins with “if.”* Now in interpreting the Bible we are faced with the question, Was Peter questioning their salvation, the salvation of those who whom this letter was originally sent? If so, then he was saying you need to grow unless you have never tasted that the Lord is gracious. Now that statement is true. You can’t grow in the Lord until you are first born again, born into the family of God. But Peter has said so much about the believers in those places mentioned in chapter 1, verse 1, that we know he was assured that he was writing to people who had really been saved. So then we know that the “if” in this case means *since*. So then, verses 2 and 3 read, “As newborn babes . . . since ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” To taste that the Lord is gracious, is to be saved. And so being saved, Peter said, you need to grow. He did not want that reader who may not have been saved to think that he could grow when he had not been born again.

But what does it mean to “have tasted that the Lord is gracious”?

This expression describes salvation. Peter took this expression from Psalm 34:6 where we read, “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” What Peter wrote is not an exact quote because he wanted to emphasize the tasting part. In the latter part of Psalm 34:6 David went on to say, “blessed is the man that trusteth in Him,” that is, in the Lord. So to taste is not just to sip, or to sample in some way the Word of God. But it is to appropriate, to partake of, to trust in the Word of God. But Peter didn’t say that you will find that the Word is good. He said, “that the Lord is good.” How do we explain the difference? Well, there actually is no difference. When you

trust in the Word, you are trusting in the Lord. The Lord and His Word are inseparable. Do I want to learn more about the Lord? Then I must go to the Word. By faith in the Word of God I get my first taste of the Lord, and my taste has given me life and a delight to know more of the Lord.

The Greek word translated “gracious” can mean *kind*, or *good*. In Arndt & Gingrich’s lexicon they use also the words *loving* and *benevolent*. One commentator (Bengel) said, “A taste excites the appetite” (quoted in Robertson, VI, 95).

Hiebert says this in concluding his comments on verse 3:

Their eager appropriation of the milk of the Word has brought them into direct contact with the Lord Who gave the Word. “He and His Word form a unity” [quoting George Williams]. The true aim of Bible study is never a mere mastery of its contents, but a transforming experience with the Lord Who revealed Himself in His Word (Hiebert, p.126).

May 1, 2006

This Greek word (χρηστός) which is translated “gracious” here in 1 Peter 2:3, is rendered as “goodness” in Romans 2:4. In Ephesians 4:32 it is “kind.” And so this is why Bengel said that “a taste excites the appetite,” as quoted above. It is the goodness and kindness of God in saving us, that makes us want to learn more about Him.

Digression: It is important when studying any book of the Bible, or any portion of any book of the Bible, to observe the development, or progression, of truth which is always to be observed. But only the Holy Spirit can enable us to see, and then to understand, the way in which the writers of Scripture move from one point to another. But it is not only the thought of the writers that we want to observe, but, in reading Scripture, we need to remember that each writer of Scripture was being led by the Holy Spirit in his writing, down to the very words that the writers used. The Holy Spirit did not dictate to the writers what they wrote, but he used their knowledge, and often their experiences, and, to be sure, their personalities, and yet He did it so that what each man wrote can truly be called the Word of God. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16 that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” And Peter himself said in his second epistle, regarding how we got the Bible, that “men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). This is what makes the Bible so important. It was all given to us by God. And yet, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we read the Bible like we would in trying to understand it, we think about what we are reading by reading it over and over, and we pray for the Lord’s help in seeking to understand it, and to believe it. Then we seek, again with the help of the Spirit, to obey what it tells us to do, or not to do, as the case may be.

Now, in reading chapter 1 we need to ask ourselves, Is this teaching about salvation, or the new birth, descriptive of me? Have I been born again? Do I love Jesus Christ? Do I want to be holy? Is that my main objective in life? Do I love the people of God, and do I enjoy being with them? If so, then I need to praise the Lord like Peter did beginning with verse 3 of chapter 1. If not, then I need to ask myself, Why not? Peter in chapter 1 was writing about salvation. So I go back to the chapter to learn specifically how I can be saved to make sure that Peter could have been writing this epistle *to me!* *Make sure that you know what it means to be born again!*

Then, coming to chapter 2, from what Peter wrote in this chapter, we need to ask ourselves, If I am a Christian, am I a growing Christian? And again I need to ask myself, How can I tell if I am growing? Well, in the verses we have covered at the beginning of chapter 2 we can see that it is by the Word of God that I can grow, “the sincere milk of the Word.” A growing Christian will be growing in his love for the Word. A growing Christian will be growing in his desire to obey the Word. A growing Christian will be growing in his love for other true Christians. And, most important of all, a growing Christian will growing in his love for the Lord, and for

God, and for the Holy Spirit. And along with all of this, as verse 1 of chapter 2 indicates that a growing Christian will seek to avoid any and everything that the Bible calls sin.

So, you and I need to ask, Is Peter talking about me in these verses at the beginning of chapter 2. If not, why not? If a baby is born into this world, but he does not grow, the parents get concerned. The doctors get concerned, and they do everything possible to find out why, and to remedy the problem, if it possible to do so. I think we all understand, or should understand, that not everyone who claims to be a Christian, is a Christian in the true meaning of the word, Christian. Many people think that because they go to church, at least once in a while, they are Christians. Others think if you try to live a good life, you are a Christian. A true Christian does seek to live a good life, but the good life is the life that is described in the Bible, not just by society. But a person who really knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his, or her, Savior, wants to grow. And yet I believe that there are some Christians who are not growing. Let's make sure that we are not one of them.

So let us all make sure that we understand what Peter was talking about, and that we are making the application of what he has written *to ourselves!* If you have experienced the graciousness of the Lord in salvation, you are going to want to know more, and so to grow. This was so important to Peter that it was the last thing that he mentioned in his second epistle. See 2 Peter 3:18.

So I trust that, as we have come to the second chapter, we all know that we are saved, and we all know that we want to be growing

Not let us go on to verse 4.

2:4 "To whom coming." Who was Peter talking about? He was talking about two people. The one who comes is a reference to all true believers. The One to Whom we come is the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. And the participle "coming" is a present participle, meaning that *we keep coming* to Him. We are always "looking unto Jesus." This is not just daily, but many times each day. Our living can be described as continually coming to the Lord. We came to Him to be saved; we continue coming to Him as we grow.

Now our translators have added the words, *as unto*, but they are not in the original. The Greek says, "to Whom coming, a living stone." Now we do not usually speak of stones as *living*. So we know that Peter has something special in mind. He speaks of the Lord as a "living stone." But even though our Lord is stone, presumably because of His strength, yet a stone fittingly represents our Lord because like a stone, He is unchanging. But from Peter's perspective as he wrote, and from ours as we read, our Lord had been raised from the dead (see the latter part of 1:3). So from the language used here we see that our Lord as a stone is strong, is unchanging, and is living. And He will never die again. So this agrees with the hope that we have in Him. We change, but He never changes. Our hope in Him is secure.

But we find that there is a difference between the way men generally evaluate the Lord, as compared with the way God considers Him. Concerning the attitude of men toward the Lord, Peter used the word "disallowed." This amounts to a total rejection. Men disapprove of Him. They feel no need of Him, but want nothing to do with Him. It was prophesied that He would be despised and rejected, and that is exactly what happened to Him when He came into this world. This is still the way that people generally treat Him. "Men" is without the article *the*, and so "men" would here support the translation, *mankind*.

But what about God? We have in the preceding statement a μέν and δέ which means that this verse can be translated, *on the one hand* and *on the other*. The Lord Jesus was disallowed indeed of men, on the one hand, but on the other hand, chosen of God, and precious. Peter was anticipating here what he was going to say in

verse 6 where we have a quotation from Psalm 118:22 which we will get to in a moment. “Chosen” shows the Lord’s preference of His Son above all others, but it also speaks of His choice to be the One to come Who would reveal the Father and carry out the Father’s will in securing the salvation of sinners. The Lord Jesus was the One in Whom the Father found all of His delight. “Precious” speaks of the special love that the Father had, and has, for His Son, and that He was the only One Who in becoming a Man would qualify to be a Substitute for sinners. And we can testify that the more we know of the Lord Jesus, the more we can understand why it is that the Father has such a love for His Son. But this also helps us to understand how much the Father loves us in that He would send His only begotten Son, His Son in Whom He found all of His delight, to come to bear our sins on the Cross.

2:5 “Ye also” – Peter was not writing to believers just as individuals, but as a group. The pronouns and verbs are plural. Peter spoke here of us as believers using the same words which he used of the Lord in verse 4. He is “a living stone”; we “also” are “living stones.” To God we bear the likeness of Christ. On the word “are built up,” Hiebert had this to say:

Furthermore, a house is not a jumbled pile of stones. The image implies the orderly and purposeful arrangement of the individual stones, each shaped and placed to fulfil its assigned task (p. 132).

This is similar to what Paul said about us being members of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12. And especially to what he wrote in the Ephesian epistle about us being “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Listen to the following words which are found in Eph 2:19-22

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

In OT times, after the descendants of Abraham had become a nation, God’s dwelling place was first in the Tabernacle, and later in the Temple. This is stated very clearly in Exodus 25:8 where we read, “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” And then later in Exodus 29 it is recorded that the Lord said this:

45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God (Ex. 29:45-46).

And so it is apparent in both the OT and the NT that God delights to dwell with His people. We know from the NT that all three Members of the Godhead dwell within each one of us personally, but there is a special way in which, when we are gathered together as His church, the presence of the Lord is manifested in a very special way. And it is always to His glory and for His glory that we recognize His presence. As amazing as it is, the Lord delights in us, and not only is “with us,” but He, more than any of us, looks forward with great anticipation and joy to the time when we will all be in heaven with Him. Cf. John 17:24. What a glorious day that will be for our Lord Jesus Christ and for God Himself, but we should also anticipate it because of what it is going to mean to us! What an awesome thing it is for us to recognize the Lord’s presence with us today! Remember what Habakkuk told the children of Israel about the presence of the Lord. We find these words in Habakkuk 2:20: “But the LORD is in his holy temple : let all the earth keep silence before him.”

This is wonderful truth, and we need to recognize it and to enjoy it. Dr. Grudem has expressed the thought of verse 5 in these words: “As you (keep on) coming to Christ (in worship, and prayer and praise), you are (continually) being built up into a spiritual temple, a place in which God more and more fully dwells” (p. 100). So as we grow spiritually, our experience of the very presence of God among us becomes more and more of a

spiritual reality. May the Lord bless us with the enjoyment of the very truth that Peter was describing here. What a blessing we will miss if we are not meeting regularly with the people of God.

But then Peter adds another title to describe the people of God. We are not only “a spiritual house,” but “an holy priesthood.” If we contrast the ministry of the prophet with the ministry of the priest, it will help us to have a clearer idea of Peter’s teaching in this verse. A prophet ministered from God to man; a priest ministered from man to God. And as we are now priests to God on behalf of people, we have “spiritual sacrifices” to offer to God which can only be “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Our only right to approach God even to worship Him is “by Jesus Christ.”

What are the spiritual sacrifices that we are to offer to God?

- 1) Our bodies, *i.e.*, ourselves (Rom. 12:1-2).
- 2) Our money (Phil. 4:18). Also Heb. 13:16m).
- 3) Praise and thanksgiving in prayer to God by Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:15).
- 4) Good works (Heb. 13:16a).

May 2, 2006

At this point the Apostle Paul quotes from the OT three times, once in each of the next three verses:

- 1) In verse 6 from Isaiah 28:16.
- 2) In verse 7 from Psalm 118:22.
- 3) In verse 8 from Isaiah 8:14.

And these three OT passages are cited in proof of what the Apostle Peter has written in verses 4 and 5 of this chapter.

2:6 Isaiah 28:16 is a prophecy of the very thing that Peter was discussing.

This is what Isaiah 28:16 tells us:

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Peter was quoting from the Greek translation of the OT, not the Hebrew text, which explains the words, “he that believeth shall not make haste,” as meaning that “he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.” This is the idea expressed in several passages in Scripture that those who trust in this One Who is to be the Chief Cornerstone, will not be disappointed nor ashamed. This will surely come to pass.

The temple had already been built by Solomon. Zion is not heaven; Zion was in Jerusalem. And we know from the NT, especially the book of Acts, that the church began in Jerusalem, and that it was gradually extended to “all Judaea,” and then to “Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Again, as in verse 4, our Lord Jesus Christ is called “elect” and “precious.” The Lord Jesus was chosen by God the Father for the unique place that He has always held in the plan and purpose of God, and in this sense (but also in many others) He is “precious,” given a place of special honor, unlike and higher than the honor given to anyone else, whether angel or man.

4:7 Moving on to verse 7, the quotation is from Psalm 118:22, where we read: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” Peter’s quotation is, “the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,” or the cornerstone. This speaks of Israel’s

rejection of their Messiah. They repudiated Him, and this rejection was culminated in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. But God sovereignly overruled the people, and has made the Lord Jesus the foundation of this new and living temple.

The first part of verse 7 should probably read as a better translation, “Unto you therefore which believe, is the preciousness.” What Jesus is to God, He becomes to those of us who believe. We honor Him as the Father does. We do not reject Him, but give Him full honors for being the One Whom the Father has said that He is, “My Beloved Son.” And this is our glory.

But not all have received Him. However, that has not ruined the divinely ordained plan of God. Over the objections of Jews and Gentiles, the Father has made the Lord Jesus “the head of the corner,” the chief corner-stone, the foundation stone for the whole building in which God is pleased to manifest His presence. So the evidence for the supremely exalted position of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be seen in the church which is His body.

In verse 8 Peter went on to speak of those who were disobedient, those who have rejected Christ in the past, and the same applies to those who continue to reject Him in the present. So the acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ is the dividing point for the whole human race.

2:8 Here Peter quoted from Isaiah again, Isaiah 8:14. It says this:

14 And he 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.

The Apostle Paul touched on this very way in which the Lord Jesus was held by Jews and Gentiles alike where he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:21-24:

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Why have there always been those who believe in Jesus Christ? It is, Paul said, because they are “called.” Who does the calling? God does. Whom does He call? Those whom He has chosen. Why are there people who never accept Christ? Peter says it is because this was their appointment, their appointment by God. This is a difficult truth for all of us to handle, but it is the teaching of Scripture.

Most of us were raised believing that our wills are free – that we are the ones who determine what our eternal destiny is to be. If we accept Christ, we will go to heaven; if we reject Christ, we will go to hell. People urged us to believe in Christ, and we have urged others to believe in Christ. And it is right that we should. But the truth is that our wills are not free. Our wills are in bondage to our sinful nature. Philippians 2:13 tells us that “it is God which [or Who] worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Salvation is His work, not ours. We have also been taught that not even God knows who is going to be saved. But that displays a terrible ignorance of the character of God. Is He not infinite in His wisdom? Doesn’t He know the end of all things from the beginning?

The truth is that we all deserve to go to hell. But God knowing our hearts, in eternity past chose those who were to be saved. This is the doctrine of election which Peter mentioned at the very beginning of this epistle.

But He not only chose us for salvation, He calls us, He draws us to Himself, He saves us, and He keeps us. If God had not done all of that for us, we would never make it to heaven.

But what about those who are never saved? Is it that God just ignores them, and lets them go their own way? Even many of those who believe in the election of the saved, believe that is the case. But Peter here in 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 8, says that the disobedient and unbelieving “were appointed” to damnation. Paul taught the same thing in Romans chapter 9. God’s sovereignty extends to every person who has ever lived, or who will ever live to the end of time. He was not obligated to save anyone. But He has chosen to save some, but not all. And we need to realize, as Paul teaches in Romans 9, that He as God has that right, that authority.

Now we don’t know who the elect are, or who the reprobates are. And so we are commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature. God uses His Word to save whom He will. It is our responsibility to preach the Gospel, to spread the good news of salvation. And people are responsible for their response to the Gospel. But we know from Scripture that when anyone trusts in Christ, it is not because of our ability to convince them that they need to be saved and/or that Christ can save them. When anyone trusts in Christ it is because God in eternity past chose them, then He calls them, and draws them to Himself, He saves them, and keeps them, and guarantees that they will never die. God’s purposes never fail because He cannot fail. He has chosen some to be saved; others He has appointed for eternal judgment. Thank God, this appointment does not apply to all or no one would ever be saved. But God in His grace has appointed millions to be saved; the rest are appointed for eternal death. Christ is the “stone of stumbling,” and he is the “rock of offence” to Jews and Gentiles alike. But to those of us who are saved He is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

The doctrine that Peter was dealing with here is called *reprobation*, which even the dictionary defines as *rejection by God’s decree*. As Ezekiel tells us, God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. See Ezekiel 33:11. But for His own glory [whether we understand it or not], God has chosen to save the elect (whom the Lord spoke of in John 17 as those whom the Father had given to Him); the rest He has appointed for eternal judgment.

Now why did Peter bring this up in this epistle. We need to remember that the believers to whom he was writing, were suffering terribly at the hands of wicked men. Many had been imprisoned, and many had died for their faith. But Peter wanted them to know that they had not been abandoned by God, that He was in control of the wicked just as He was of the righteous. And that everything was being carried out in their day in accordance with the sovereign will of God.

I heard the other day about a Father who didn’t want his little boy to go to church because, as he said, *nobody was ever raised from the dead*. That father was stumbling over Christ; he was offended by the teaching of Christ’s resurrection. Is that father “appointed” to God’s wrath? I don’t know. But unless God has mercy upon him, and shows him that Jesus Christ is alive, and that He was raised from the dead, that father will suffer the judgment of the reprobates. The Lord Jesus Christ is the issue. The elect will believe all that the Bible teaches about Christ; the reprobates reject it all. Those who believe in Christ will go to heaven because they have been chosen by God. Those who do not believe in Christ are appointed to remain under the judgment of God, and will spend eternity in hell.

I hope that you all will be so convinced that God is God, and that God’s Word is true, that you will not reject any part of the Word, even that which may be very difficult to understand, and that that Word will give you peace. The Psalmist in Psalm 119:165 said, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” Nothing will make those who love God’s Word to stumble. Whatever we find in the Word of God, we believe. We may not understand it all, but we believe it all. And this brings peace to our hearts.

2:9 At this point returned to talk about the people of God, and he describes them with four different titles which apply to all the people of God.

They are:

- 1) "A chosen generation."
- 2) "A royal priesthood."
- 3) "An holy nation."
- 4) "A peculiar people."

What do these titles mean?

"A chosen generation" brings before us again that we are what we are by God's sovereign choice. We are God's because He had chosen us to be His. The word "generation" suggests how we became what we are. We all have a common heritage. We have been born into God's family. We all have His life. We have a closer and more enduring relationship than any human relationship we might have. Dr. Hiebert says that this "new race transcends all natural distinctions of ancestry, languages, or cultures" (p. 142). This also "removes all boasting and yet establishes a dignity of heredity that enables a chosen one to point to 'God as the Father of his race'" (Adams, quoted by Hiebert, p. 142). We belong to a new race of people.

"A royal priesthood" – This follows from Peter's statement in verse 5 that we are "an holy priesthood." As priests we have direct access to God. Also, as we have seen already, we are "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is our "great high priest" (Heb. 4:14). We serve as priests "by" Him, and under Him. Since He is not only our Savior, but also our Lord and King, not only sovereign over us, but over all men, nations, and circumstances over every kind throughout the whole world, and so we are "a royal priesthood." Many different explanations have been given to this term, but this seems to satisfy the thought that Peter was expressing.

"An holy nation" speaks of believers who make up the church as "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19), and in Philippians 3:20 believers as those who have their citizenship in heaven. As such we are distinct from any nation on the face of the earth; we are "an holy nation."

"A peculiar people" – This word "peculiar" is an old English expression brought into the English from the Latin, *peculium*, which means "private property . . . belonging to an individual; privately owned" (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 730). The Greek is εἰς περιποίησιν, which means *to acquire by purchase*. It is the idea expressed in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Paul used the verb from which this word "peculiar" comes as he spoke to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28:

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Christ purchased us for God. We belong to Him.

All of these expressions taken together show that those of us who belong to the Lord, and so have these exalted positions, are honored above all other people, and even above the angels. This, too, would have been very comforting to the suffering, outcast believers to whom the Apostle Peter was writing. We need to stop and think of what all of these terms mean until our own souls are blessed by them.

But these are not to make us proud so that we feel better than others. These are what we are by grace, and the

Lord has made us what we are for the purpose stated in the latter part of this verse: “. . . that we should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” What are His praises? They are the reasons for which He should be praised – His glorious attributes, all of the aspects of His Deity. We are to show them forth? What does this mean? It means that we are to proclaim what they are, to proclaim them to those who do not know them and to do it in a joyful manner, like a celebration. But how does Peter here describe our salvation. The praise goes to the One Who has called us. That One is the Father. And He has called us out of something, and into something else – out of the darkness of this world with all of its ignorance and corruption due to sin, into the light of His presence where our lives have been forever changed. And notice that Peter called this light “marvelous”! That is because when men see it, they marvel, they wonder that anything could possibly be that wonderful.

The thought of verse 9 is carried on into verse 10.

2:10 Here Peter added to the word “people” which he had used in verse 10. Verse 9 says that now we are His people; verse 10 tells us that we were not always His “people.” In time past we were just like the people of this world. But now we are the people of God. And the difference that has taken place in our lives was not due to any merit on our part, but solely due to the “mercy” of God.

Peter’s language here is reminiscent of the way Hosea preached to Israel and Judah, but especially to Israel. Cf. Hosea 1:8 through 10.

Charles Erdman, in his comments on these last two verses, said:

Such boundless privileges imply great responsibilities. Christians are expected to show for by life and word, “the excellencies,” the virtues, the goodness, the wisdom “of Him Who called” them, by His Spirit and providence, “out of darkness,” the ignorance and night of moral ignorance and unbelief, “into His marvelous light” as revealed in His Son; in time past, whatever nationality, they really “were no people, but now are the people of God”; they “had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (p. 64).

Notice the words, “Such boundless privileges imply great responsibilities.” In verse 11 the Apostle Peter began to spell out what some of those responsibilities were, and still are.

1 Peter 2:11-17

At this point we come to the following point in our outline:

II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:11).

A. Section One (1:13-3:12).

1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).

a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).

b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).

And now we come to:

2. Concerning sin and the people of the world (2:11-17). AS CITIZENS

We are, as Peter emphasized in 1:1, “strangers,” in this world, and as he mentioned again here in 2:11, “strangers and pilgrims,” yet we have responsibilities regarding sin and regarding the people in this world, especially its governmental leaders. Our first responsibility is to the Lord, but that does not eliminate our responsibility in this world, but it includes it, as Peter here explains. But in doing so we are not to forget who we are and that we are called upon by the Lord always to conduct ourselves in a manner that is becoming to a child of God. Too often Christians are guilty of bringing reproach upon the name of the Lord because this is not clear in their minds. And so, for example, they will burn down abortion centers, and consider themselves persecuted because they are arrested, put in jail, and often prosecuted for what they have done. If we break the law, we deserve to be prosecuted. One of the main reasons we are left in this world after we are saved, is to be witnesses for Christ and the Gospel. If we are forbidden to speak of Christ, that is a different matter, and yet there are ways in which we can comply with the law without denying the Lord. Christian public school teachers are faced with this dilemma every day they are in their schools. But under no circumstances can there be a justifiable compromise with sin.

2:11 Note how tenderly the Apostle Peter addressed the believers to whom he was writing: “Dearly beloved.” See also 4:12. In both instances Peter wrote simply ἀγαπητοί, but “Dearly beloved” is a justifiable translation because it does express what a deep love Peter had for the Lord’s people to whom he was writing. Regarding love for the people of God, he practiced what he preached. Hated as they were by the world, and having suffered as they had by the people of the world, such an expression by Peter would in itself have been encouraging to the people of God.

“I beseech” does not have the word “you” after it in the original, although he was speaking to the people whom he had mentioned in 1:1. Hiebert says that the absence of the word “you” place more of an emphasis upon the exhortation which followed. The verb which people used was παρακαλέω which can be translated in different ways, such as, exhort, or plead, or urge, or, as it is in the KJV, “beseech.” It shows very clearly and strongly what Peter’s desire was for them. And he was saying it recognizing that they were “strangers and pilgrims.”

“Strangers” means that spiritually they were like aliens, or foreigners, who didn’t really belong. It meant, as we used to sing, “This world is not my home.” Our true and eternal citizenship is in heaven (see Phil. 3:20-21.) And yet at the same time we are citizens of the USA.

But we are also “pilgrims.” My Greek program on my computer suggested the translation, “resident foreigner.” It means that we are here now, but we are not going to be here forever. “We’re just a passing through.” It is very important that we know this, and that we remember it, and act accordingly.

But what was Peter’s exhortation to these believers? They were to “abstain from fleshly lusts which war

against the soul.” The verb “abstain” is in the middle voice, and so it speaks of what each of us is to do for ourselves. In our behavior we are to put a distance between ourselves and our fleshly lusts. We are to hold ourselves back and away from them. We are to stay out of those situations where we are going to be tempted. The idea in abstaining is that if we get involved in that from which we are to abstain, we are going to get hurt. We must be constantly vigilant with regard to our own fleshly lusts. We are in a warfare that will not end until we are with the Lord.

Being sinners by nature, we have a natural tendency to get involved in fleshly lusts. “Fleshly lusts” are desires that we have because we are still sinners. This is true of all people, but there is still this tendency in the heart of Christians. And we must be constantly on guard against this tendency. We have bodies that we need to take care of, but we also have souls that we need to take care of. “Lusts” are desires; “fleshly lusts” are evil desires. But Peter was telling the believers in his day to do something that they really could not do “on their own.” This is where we need to turn to what Paul wrote in Galatians 5, beginning with verse 16. Please turn to that passage with me.

The Galatian churches had been invaded by false teachers who taught that we overcome sin but putting ourselves under the Law. But the problem about dealing with sin by the Law, is that the Law is “weak through the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). This means that the Law tells me what to do, but the Law doesn’t help me do it. The Law addresses you and me. “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” We all agree that that is right. But “how to perform that which is good,” Paul said, “I find not” (Rom. 7:18). So, if we are fighting against our fleshly lusts in the temptations that come our way, we are going to lose the battle. This is one of the main reasons the Holy Spirit has come to live in us. By His power we are enabled to obey the Word, to please God, so that we will not do what our sinful natures will encourage us to do, and cause us to do.

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And so what did the Apostle Paul tell the Galatian believers to do in order to live victoriously over the flesh? You see his answer in Galatians 5:16. (Read.) The whole passage down to the end of Galatians 5 is important to know and to act upon. To walk in the Spirit means that we are to walk with our dependence upon the Holy Spirit, not in ourselves, not in the time that we have been saved, not in our knowledge of the truth, nor in the verses that we have memorized, but “in the Spirit.” “Walk” is a present imperative which means that this is a command from God, not just a suggestion. Taking the whole verse together this is a sure promise from God. Being in the present tense it means that we must walk and continue to walk, walk all of the time, not just when some special temptation comes along. We are to live in dependence upon the Spirit. Often we will be careless about the way we live until some temptation arises, and then we turn to the Spirit. But that is not what the Apostle Paul was saying. We are to live continually in dependence upon the Spirit. Then we will be prepared when suddenly we are overtaken by temptation.

On the other hand, as Peter tells us here, we are to “abstain” from fleshly lusts. It takes both. We are to stay out of tempting situations while at the same time we are to be walking in the Spirit. And the reason that our walking and abstaining are to be constant, is because the warfare is constant. “War” is also in the present tense.

So this whole verse is in the present tense. It is for all believers all of the time. Those who have just been saved need to know this; those who are the most mature in Christ never can afford to neglect it. This is the Christian life.

But how do we walk in the Spirit? It is a life of obedience to the Word of God. Don’t look for some ecstatic experience as a demonstration of the presence of the Spirit in your life. The Holy Spirit is there if you are really saved. Depend upon Him day by day, and you will experience His delivering power, His strengthening

power, throughout the day. The attacks of our sinful nature are against our souls, the inner man. That is where the struggle is before it shows up in what we do, or in what we say. Know what the lusts of the flesh, and then be on the lookout for them to arise from within you.

2:12 This verse is a continuation of verse 11, not only as a part of the exhortation in verse 11, but in the same present tense, “Having,” ἔχοντες, *continuing to have*. And then we come to our old word, “conversation.” And what does it mean? *Conduct!* What about our conduct? It is to be “honest.” This is the common Greek word for *good*. It is καλήν to agree with ἀναστροφὴν. In the KJV it is translated “honest.” Peter meant that their conduct should be what the Gentiles expect that it would be since you claim to be a child of God. It means that they don’t find you claiming to be one thing, but in your behavior showing that you are something else. Peter was warning them against hypocrisy. They may criticize you for being a Christian, but their criticism will be far worse if your conduct shows that you are not really what you claim that you are. It may be, as the word “honest” suggests, that if the Gentiles, the world, find that you are what you claim to be, that outwardly they will criticize you, but in their hearts there will be real admiration for you.

Charles Erdman, of the old Princeton Seminary, stated in his brief commentary what I believe was the message that Peter was giving to the believers to whom he was writing who were living under the constant scrutiny of an unbelieving and hostile world. I will read to you what he said:

The special motive given for honorable and consistent conduct is the effect it might have upon the unbelievers among whom the readers were sojourning. Christians were being slandered for being irreligious because not worshipping the heathen gods, as morose and ascetic because refraining from popular vices, as disloyal to the government because claiming allegiance to a heavenly King. Peter urges them to disprove such reports by their pure and noble lives, and so to conduct themselves that their very accusers might be won to the faith, and might thank God, in the day of Christ’s appearing, for the good deeds and saving influence of the Christian pilgrims who had sojourned among them (p. 66).

Eternity alone will reveal how many people have been drawn to Christ through the godly behavior of the people of God. The point that Peter was making here, was probably the major reason he wrote this epistle.

But even though they might never see the impact that their lives were having, what Peter was writing to them was the way they could bring glory to God. Our main purpose in life is not to please the world, not to become like them, but to please God and to seek in our behavior to be like the Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the lies of the Devil that if we are going to win the people of the world, we must be like them. Just the opposite is the truth.

“The day of visitation” is a term which speak of the judgment of God upon men when He returns in His glory.

In verse 13 Peter got specific as to ways in which the believers were to live honestly before the people of the world.

2:13 Number 1: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.” This is the very point at which many present-day Christians have gone wrong. They are of the opinion that because they are Christians they don’t have to be submissive to the government. Peter, and Paul also in Romans 13, taught otherwise. We are not only to submit, but we are to submit “for the Lord’s sake.” We may feel that our taxes are too high, but we need to pay them anyway. We may believe that abortion is wrong, and it is! It is taking human lives (which it is), but that does not give us the right to stand in front of an abortion clinic to block the way so that people cannot go in, or to burn the place down. The government has legalized it. Those who have legalized it will have to face God on this issue. As will those who conduct abortions. People insist on their rights, but we have no rights that are in violation of the will of God. But the day is coming when God is going

to take care of all of this. Homosexuality is another issue that is condemned by God. We may believe that homosexual relationships are an abomination to the Lord (and they are), but that does not give us the right to attack them physically, or to kill them. We can vote against any or all of these things, and we should, but our responsibility is to be positive. If people want us to deny the Lord, we can't do that. But so far it hasn't come to that in our country. Our emphasis is to be on the positive side. Our Lord expressed it this way:

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

The Apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

What Peter said applies to all branches of government: "to the king, as supreme." And remember that this was Caesar when Peter wrote these words.

2:14 "Or unto governors," meaning those appointed by the king to see that his laws were being carried out.

And their responsibilities were twofold: "For the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." This was what the king and governors were to keep in mind as well as for the people. It is not just for punishment, but for praise when people do what they are supposed to do.

Why did Peter say these things? In answering that question, Peter came back to the theme of his epistle. See verse 15.

2:15 The will of God may not be clear to us in every situation we face, but it is clear in this, and so is the objective that we need to keep before us at all times. Submission to those in authority over us, is the will of God. But why? "That by well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

I often wonder what ideas people have today of Christians. As a general rule people would rather not have anything to do with us. But it bothers me when we see people who claim to be Christians acting in violation of the clear teaching of Scripture. I knew a man who professed to be a Christian and who had been in and out of jails more times than he could remember for trying to block people from going into an abortion clinic. And he considered that he was being persecuted. He wasn't being persecuted, he was being arrested for violating the law. He was getting what he deserved to get. We make decisions for ourselves that the world doesn't like, things that we won't do, places where we won't go. Peter referred to this in chapter 4. (Read the first four verses.) If the government tries to force us to abort our children, or to teach our children to accept various lifestyles, of course we are going to refuse. But we do so prepared to suffer the consequences. That is another matter. But in most things we can submit, and that is what we need to do.

But notice an amazing word in verse 16.

2:16 I am referring to the words, "As free." How can Peter tell those suffering Christians to submit, and then tell them that they are "free." The world doesn't put those two words together. That is not the ACLU's idea of civil rights. They believe that you are free, and that because you are free, you don't have to submit. That shows how deceived they are. Nobody is free to do anything that they want to do and still expect that they can avoid the consequences. Freedom is not a license to do whatever we want to do. Freedom is never a permit to sin. A Christian is the only person who is truly free. He has been set free from divine condemnation. He has been set free from the bondage of sin. He is free to serve God and to do the will of God. As Peter said here, we are free to serve God. Unsaved persons do not possess any of those freedoms. They think that they are free, but they are in the worst kind of bondage. We are freed from sin, but not free to sin. We still can sin, and that is the reason that Peter said that while we are free, we are not to use our "liberty as a cloak of maliciousness." What did he mean? He meant that we are not to use our freedom as a coverup for doing sinful

things. We are free, “but as the servants of God.” And Peter here used the word for *bondservants* – δοῦλοι. In the context of NT life, a δοῦλος was one who was obligated to do the will of another. But what a glorious servitude this is. As Peter began his second epistle, he identified himself as “a servant (δοῦλος) and an apostle of Jesus Christ.” And it is significant that he put “servant” before “apostle.” When Paul began that marvelous book of Romans, he called himself “a servant of Jesus Christ” who had been called to be an apostle. And servant there is again the word δοῦλος. Both he and Peter considered that their title of the greatest honor.

The Lord Jesus said in John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” And He also said, speaking of Himself as “the Son,” in John 8:36, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,” that is, *really free, truly free*. Every child of God owes his or her freedom to His relationship with Jesus Christ in the Gospel. As the Lord’s bondservants we have the freedom, the liberty, to submit ourselves to the ordinances of men, and we do it “for the Lord’s sake” and according to the liberty that we have in the Lord. Lord, or Master, and servant, are words that go together. If the Jesus Christ is our Savior, He is also our Lord, and we are His unworthy servants. But even we are not free to do anything that we want to do. But, as Matthew Henry said, we are “free from Satan’s dominion, the law’s condemnation, the wrath of God, the uneasiness of duty, and the terrors of death.” But we are not free to use our liberty to engage in sinful rebellion against our government.

In these verses from 11 through 17 Peter was addressing all of the people of God. Starting with verse 18 he began to speak with various groups in the church. See the outline. But before he changed from all of the Lord’s people, he gave them four brief, but very important exhortations.

2:17 These four exhortations out of what Peter had been writing from verse 11 to this verse.

First, “Honor all men.” Those we honor are those whom we place above ourselves, which needs to be our attitude toward those who are above us in government. This was Peter’s call for the people of God to humble themselves. Pride always produces sin. Pride is probably our greatest problem. Paul said in Philippians 2:3, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

Peter expressed this verb honor in a way as to indicate that this should always be our approach to all people, not only believers, but also people of the world. We are to look for things in their lives for which we can respect them, and perhaps from what we can learn something for ourselves. I once heard Dawson Trotman say that he never met a person who did not teach him something. We are often inclined to notice things in people which draw criticism from us, at least in our hearts. If we are to honor people, we are to look for the good, commendable things, for which we can really respect them. A verse that is very similar in the writing of the Apostle Paul to what we have here from the Apostle Peter, is Romans 13:7: “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

Second, “Love the brotherhood.” The brotherhood is a generic term for all of the Lord’s people. We are to have a special love for all of the people of God. Usually we don’t have to be told to love the people of God; it is just there when we are saved. This is one of the first evidences of true salvation that we need to look for. We may not agree on every point, but we do on the fundamentals. We can always find certain characteristics that we may not like, but these do not free us from our responsibility to love each other. The Lord prayed in His high priestly prayer (as it has been called), John 17, that we would be one. This calls for love. Peter said, “Love God’s people, love them with a special love, and keep on loving them.” Those we love, we are going to remember in prayer, and we are going to do anything we can to encourage them and to help them as we walk together in this wicked, fallen world.

Third, "Fear God." Isn't it interesting that Peter started here in this verse with the whole world, then to the Lord's people, and third to God Himself. There is no greater subject for us to be concerned about in our relationship with God than that we learn to fear Him. The sum total of the Christian life is found in these words. To fear God, Solomon said is "the beginning of wisdom." God's people are to be God-fearing people. We are to love Him. We are to respect Him. We are to believe Him. We are to remember how much greater He is than we are. I would like to recommend a book on this subject to you. It is one of the best books that I have ever read, written by our dear friend and brother in Christ, Dr. Jerry Bridges. The title of the book is, *The Joy of Fearing God*. It will transform your life to read it. In your Bible reading notice the references that are made to the fear of God. This is a subject which is greatly needed in these days when we are inclined to have such low thoughts of our God. Robertson in his Word Pictures of the NT says that Peter expressed in these words, "Fear God," that we are to do it now, and then "keep it up."

Quoting Matthew Henry again, he said that "if this be lacking, none of the other three duties can be performed as they ought." As believers in Christ we ought to be characterized as God-fearing people. Finally, "Honor the King." With this Peter ends this brief section in his epistle as he began in verse 13. The verb is the same as in "honor all men" at the beginning of this verse. Our country would be a lot better of if the men and women in Congress, and all of us as citizens, would have this attitude toward our President. People start to tear him apart verbally before he even gives a speech. We forget what it is like when we have a President which we really cannot respect. I feel that we are in great danger of destroying ourselves as a nation. We don't fear God as a nation, and so we don't honor our President. Those who sow discord are an abomination to God, and just as a house divided against itself cannot stand, neither can a nation that is divided against itself. We are living in terrible times, maybe in the end times.

We are never going to see everybody turn to the Lord, but that was not Peter's emphasis in the days when the people of God were under Roman rule. He was saying that we as the Lord's people have a tremendous responsibility to exercise our freedom in living for the Lord more than we ever have. In many respects, we are the key. This first epistle of Peter is our chart for the direction in which we need to go today. Let's make sure that we are living to please the Lord, that His will is the light for our paths. As we treat believers and unbelievers also the way the Lord wants us to treat them, blessing will come upon us and our nation. And as we give God His rightful place in our lives, we can once again see the mighty power of God changing lives, righting the things that are wrong, and turning the hearts of people toward God and His dear Son and our Savior. Let us pray for revival, and trust God to do His work in our hearts.

May 22, 2006

In our outline of 1 Peter we are still in Section One (1:13-3:12) of Peter's many Exhortations (1:13-5:11). We have covered Peter's Exhortations Concerning the Needs of Individual Believers (1:13-2:10) which are to be holy and to grow spiritually. We have just concluded what Peter had to say by way of exhortations Concerning Sin and the People of the World (2:11-17). Now we are ready to proceed with his Exhortations Concerning Special Groups among Believers (2:18-3:12). This will conclude Section One. And so outline looks like this:

II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:11).

A. Section One (1 Peter 1:13-3:12).

3. Concerning Special Groups among the Believers (2:18-3:12).

a. Servants (2:18-25).

This will be followed by:

b. Wives (3:1-6).

c. Husbands (3:7).

d. All believers (3:8-12).

2:18 Here the Apostle Peter used a different word from δοῦλοι, which he used in verse 16. Here is the word, οἰκέται, which comes from the Greek word for *house*. It is actually a household servant. He might also be a δοῦλος, but he has been promoted a position which would give him, or her, as the case might be, a much closer relationship with the family. This is what Joseph was in Potiphar's house. It was usually a place given to a bondservant as a reward for faithful service. But it did not mean that the household servant could be less than respectful and submissive toward his master. The word for "masters" which Peter used here is the Greek word from which we get our English word, *despot*. It speaks of one who over his servants has, as Thayer says in his *Lexicon*, "absolute ownership and uncontrolled power" (p.130).

The word "submit" in verse 13 and the words "be subject" here, are verbs which indicate how strongly the Apostle Peter was teaching his fellow believers the necessity and importance of submission. And "be subject" is expressed in such a way as to indicate that this is what we are to do to ourselves. We are to place ourselves under the authority of those over us with every intention of doing whatever they want us to do, and to do it well. The only exceptions would be when we are expected to do something that is in direct conflict with the Word of God. And we are to do with "with all fear." The believers were to "fear God" (v. 17), and to fear their masters as well. In most cases the one is equal to the other. They were to fear the consequences of disobedience either to God or to their masters, but also to fear that we might come short of that which would please them. What a lot of trouble would be avoided today in labor-management disputes if this were the pattern of all behavior. But this is not possible where unbelievers are involved as servants.

It is important to notice that with Peter, as with Paul, they placed the chief responsibility on those who were in the second place – servants to masters, wives to husbands, and children to parents. And the same applies for all of us in our relationship with the Lord. Remember that the Lord said that the greatest are those who are the servants of all. And this submission applied regardless of the character of the master – "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." A "good and gentle" master would be kind, considerate, and patient, but a "froward" master would be hard to please, one who expects the impossible, and one who would be crooked or dishonest regarding pay, time, and working conditions.

So the submission does not depend upon the reasonableness or rightness of the master or his demands, but upon the Word of God.

And then in verse 19 Paul went on to give another reason why he was giving the servants these instructions.

2:19 “For this is thankworthy.” The Greek is, “For this is grace.” It can mean *commendable*, or *praiseworthy*. Or it can mean that this is evidence of the grace of God. Either way it is true, but most commentators seem to prefer the way it is translated in the KJV. When a child of God suffers under a cruel master, and endures it, meaning that it is not an isolated incident, but constant, and yet, because he wants to please the Lord, this is praiseworthy, *i.e.*, this will bring the blessing of the Lord. Grudem points out that of all the times that this word “grief,” or its related verb, is used in the NT, it never used of physical suffering, but of all of the kinds of mental anguish that come in such a difficult time. “Conscience toward God” not only means that such action is pleasing to God, but it mean that the servant is aware that it is all under the eye of a sovereign God Who ultimately will settle all scores. This, therefore, seems to be Peter’s version of what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 13:19,

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mind; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Paul was quoting from Deuteronomy 32:35. And, quoting Grudem again, the child of God will be able “to submit to an unjust master without resentment, rebelliousness, self-pity, or despair” (p. 127).

And then to emphasize what he meant, Peter asked a question. See it in verse 20.

2:20 On the other hand, if a servant has done something wrong, and takes it patiently, he does not anything to glory about. There is a feeling in most people’s hearts that if a person does the wrong thing, he needs to be punished. But there is also in the hearts of unregenerate people a feeling of commendation or praise for a person who has done no wrong and yet is subjected even once to punishment of any kind. “But,” introduces a strong contrast, if a person does well, suffers for it, and yet takes it patiently, “this is,” and again we have the word, χάρις, “wellpleasing with God.” Erdman says on this point, “Endurance of undeserved punishment, when there can be no redress, is here declared to be a ground of glorying and of praise” (p. 69).

Thayer gives the proper meaning of the word *grace* (χάρις), as “that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, *sweetness*, *charm*, *loveliness*” (p. 605), as we have it, for example, in Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

What Peter was teaching in these verses is one of the strongest means of testimony that is possible to give. It is often silent, but to react as Peter was encouraging these servants to do, is so totally different from what you can expect normally, that often the most difficult people will have their hearts opened by the Lord to the Gospel when they observe such unexpected behavior.

Nobody lives in perfect circumstances. We may not have to suffer like those people did to whom Peter was writing were having to suffer, but people always in one way or another can cause us trouble. I once heard a teacher say that we wouldn’t have as much trouble as we have in living the Christian life if we didn’t have to deal with people. I doubt if that is altogether true, but it would save us some of the trouble we have anyway. Peter was writing to believers who were having a lot of trouble with people. They had been forced out of their homes by the government. They knew what persecution was. And as hard as they might try to avoid having problems with other people, they couldn’t avoid it altogether. Children have this trouble with other children. Young people getting to the age where they want to make their own decisions, have trouble with their parents who stand in their way. Husbands and wives have this trouble, and it often leads to divorce. They say that they just can’t get along with each other any more. People in churches have trouble with other Christians. People we do business with often displease us and provoke us. We never can tell at the beginning of any day how soon we are going to be in a situation where we are tempted to say the wrong thing or to react to some situation in the wrong way. So a passage like this, while it was originally directed to house servants who were living in the Roman Empire, has a lot in it that we all can use. Sin has made us so that we not only want to get even

with someone who says the wrong thing to us, or about us, or who does something that makes life difficult for us, but we want to do a little bit more to them than they have done to us. This is human nature. This is really what is behind wars between nations. This is why we have laws, but there never has been a law, even the law which God gave to Moses, which could solve all of our problems. Eight of the ten commandments are negative showing that the main problem in human conduct is to keep us from doing the wrong thing.

Well, when we are saved, we soon find that, while we want to live peaceably with everyone, yet these problems keep coming along, and we still have troubles with other people. After the Apostle Paul in Romans 12 had given many short commands telling the Roman Christians what to do, or what not to do, as they faced all of the changing circumstances of life, many of them having to do with our relationships with other people, both Christian and non-Christian, he said, “if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18). So the Scriptures indicate that sometimes it is not possible. But I want to call you attention to six words in that verse which are extremely important, and which can easily be passed over as we read the verse or even quote it from memory. They are the words, “as much as lieth in you.”

Paul was teaching the believers in Rome, exactly what Peter was teaching the believers in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. We have no control over our circumstances, nor do we really have control over other people. We don’t even have control over ourselves. But where we all need to give our attention, is to what “lieth” in us. Some people look to religion for help. Others turn to psychology. Everybody makes some attempt at self-reformation. But while there might be some measure of improvement in some of these so-called remedies, yet none of them has the answer. We need someone or something that can change our hearts, and God is the only One Who can do that. And where He starts is with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is by God’s work in our hearts that we are made new creatures in Christ. We experience the new birth. We have God’s life in us, eternal life. God has a place in our lives that He never had before. Christ comes to live in us. But we need to do what Peter exhorted us to do at the beginning of this chapter which we are concluding. We need to grow, to grow in grace, as Peter called it in the last verse of this epistle. And to enable us to grow the Holy Spirit has come to live in each one of us. And Paul told the Galatian believers, who also received this letter from Peter, that if we will “walk in the Spirit,” walk in dependence upon the Spirit, we will “not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” That is in Galatians 5:16. “The lusts of the flesh” are going to be with me, and they are going to be with you, until we are in heaven. And one of the strongest lusts of my old nature, and yours, is that nobody is going to get the best of us. With all of the conflicts that we have with people, or with circumstances, by nature we are determined that nobody and nothing is going to get the best of us. And then we spent our lives trying to get back on our feet after we have failed again.

What does the Holy Spirit do for us? He bears “fruit” in our lives. And notice that I said “fruit,” singular, not *fruits*, plural. The fruit is packaged together, and it has nine characteristics, or features to it. You can see them in Galatians 5:22-23:

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is (1) love, (2) joy, (3) peace, (4) longsuffering, (5) gentleness, (6) goodness, (7) faith,

23 (8) Meekness, (9) temperance: against such there is no law.

What does the Holy Spirit have to work with? Where does all of the ugliness of human beings come from? I have the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ behind me in answering that question. Listen to what He said:

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:20-23).

This is what it means that we are sinners by nature. We were born like this, totally depraved. The Holy Spirit does not remove these terrible characteristics, but He overpowers and suppresses them with His own “fruit.” And the last of these is “temperance” which is self-control. Self, our old sinful nature, can only be controlled

by the Holy Spirit. And does this by using the Word of God in our hearts. To walk in the Spirit is to depend upon the Holy Spirit to enable us to live according to God's Word, to live in obedience to the Word.

So He, the Holy Spirit, a Person, a Person of the Godhead, Who is living in you and me if we are saved, will enable us, not to be perfect, that is coming later, but will enable us to respond in a completely different way to the frustrations and conflicts of life in this world. I hope we all understand this, believe it, and act upon it.

But with that digression, let me go back now to 1 Peter 2:20. After telling us that it is really shameful if we do the wrong things, and get punished for them, he indicates that while we can't ever avoid all of the conflicts of life, yet we can react differently by the grace of God when they come our way.

2:21 "For even hereunto were ye called." Christians are a called people. We have been called to Christ. We did not come on our own; we came to Christ because we were called. We were chosen in eternity past. In our lifetime we were called. We were not only called, but we were drawn to Christ. So when Peter said "were ye called," that was the same as saying, *that ye were saved*. We have been saved for many reasons, but one of them is that by our lives we may be able to show that the Lord has changed us so that when bad things are done to us, or said about us, which we do not deserve and which are not true, we can respond in a way that will attract the attention of the people we are dealing with because it is so different from what they expected from us. And the reason it is possible to react in such a different way is because "Christ also suffered for us."

Peter will go into the death of our Lord when we get down to verse 24, but Peter wants us to see in the Lord the Example of what we are to be and do. We are to follow in His steps. We are to live like He lived. And no one ever suffered at the hands of men like Jesus Christ did, and for Him it was all undeserved. Pilate could find no fault in our Lord. His wife had a dream in which she suffered much, and she warned her husband, "Have nothing to do with this just man." The centurion whose men nailed Christ to the Cross said, Truly this was a Son of God." And even Judas came back to the Jewish authorities to return the money that they had given him, and he said, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Even the thief on the Cross told the other thief that they were getting what they deserved, but that Jesus had done "nothing amiss."

Now in spite of all of this testimony Jesus Christ was arrested, put through a mock trial, and crucified. But how did He behave during that entirely horrible ordeal. Words fail us when we try to describe how terrible it was. Peter said that our Lord left his readers, and all other believers, an Example.

2:22 Notice the list:

- 1) "Who did no sin." He not only was free of any criminal charges, but His record on earth was perfect before God.
- 2) "Neither was guile found in His mouth." Not only could it be said that He "did no sin," but neither did He sin with the words of His mouth.

2:23 The list showing the Example of Christ continues in this verse, and this in particular speaks of the way in which our Lord did not sin with His mouth.

- 3) "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again." To revile means to vilify or to slander. They reproached him for the claims that He made for Himself as though they were false. But He did not slander them in return although they gave Him every reason to do so. Instead, He prayed for them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
- 4) "When He suffered, He threatened not." He had ever right to threaten them with judgment, especially for what they were doing as He was hanging, dying on the Cross.
- 5) And this part is so important. Instead of being consumed with words of judgment for them, He "committed

Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” Again He prayed: “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” Never before nor since, has there been such a display of absolute confidence in the sovereignty of God. From the standpoint of the Romans and the Jews who were responsible for the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, there was never a greater display of unrighteousness.

It is difficult to read these words of Peter without thinking also of the words of Isaiah in that great OT Gospel passage: Isaiah 53.

But Peter cannot leave this terrible scene without telling why all of this happened to our Lord.

2:24 The Lord Jesus willing bore our sins in his own body on the tree, the Cross, for two reasons: 1) that the penalty upon us might be satisfied, and 2) that we might live unto righteousness, having been delivered also from the power of sin. The judgment He suffered on the Cross secured our deliverance from sin’s penalty and sin’s power, and ultimately from the very presence of sin in our lives.

2:25 Again drawing upon Isaiah 53, “we were as sheep going astray, but have now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop (Overseer) of our souls.”

As I have mentioned more than once, after we are saved, the Lord leaves us here for two purposes. And both of them are mentioned in this chapter. The first is that we might grow, might mature in the likeness of Christ. The second is that we might be witnesses to a lost world of the only Savior from sin. But we often think of our witness as the verbal testimony we give to others of the Gospel. That is certainly an important part. But how do we get people to listen to a message that they don’t want and really can’t understand. In Acts 1:8 the Lord Jesus in leaving His disciples to return to heaven, spoke of their reception of the Holy Spirit, but not just that they would talk to people about the Lord, but that they should “be witnesses unto Me,” is what the Lord said.

This is what Peter was talking about. Peter was saying that if we react to our trials as the Lord did to His, the difference between what the world usually sees when there are troubles and conflicts, the love, the joy, the peace, and so on down the list, this will awaken people to the fact that there is a reality to the Gospel, and that, as Peter went on to mention in chapter 3, verse 15, instead of our having to look for opportunities to talk to people about the Lord and the Gospel, people will begin to ask us about the reason for the hope that we have which has caused such a great change in our lives.

The household servants were in an ideal position to be witnesses of Christ. Their subservient place gave them unusual opportunities to demonstrate, to show, to a fallen, wicked world, the reality of faith in Jesus Christ.