

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;

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 area 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 νήφω, 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 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 ἀναστροφῆ, 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 $\mu\epsilon\nu$ in the first part of this verse, and $\delta\grave{\epsilon}$ 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.

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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 superceded 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).