

## **1 PETER**

### **INTRODUCTION**

None other of the Christian writings has caught more of the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ than has 1 Peter. It is a profound writing bearing the evidence of the holy inspiration which is claimed for it. It has been called preeminently an epistle of hope; but it is also an epistle of courage, fidelity, of perseverance and of confidence. The great majority of the doctrinal pronouncements of the Christian religion appear within it.

In this great epistle, Peter fulfilled his commission to “feed” the church of God; and there is absolutely nothing in it except basic Christian teaching.

The setting of the epistle is near the end of the five years of Nero, 64 A.D., becoming thereafter a savage campaign of hatred and persecution of the church. Just as Peter had once stemmed the tide of defection from the Savior (John 6) with his immortal words, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68-69) In the rising tide of evil against the beloved church; with the imperial authority perverted as an instrument of Satan to destroy the faith of Christ, once more, “The Rock stepped into the breach with the powerful exhortation of 1 Peter. They were sufficient. The blessed church survived the atrocious flames of Nero’s gardens, the wild beasts of the Coliseum, and every instrument of cruelty and hatred that evil men could devise against them, until, finally, the historical church recaptured its status of legality by the placement of a Christian upon Caesar’s throne!

There is a precious sacredness in this epistle that shines across the long centuries since it was written.

The following “outline” is being presented to introduce the material which Peter wrote, and it will help us to have a better understanding what he is writing in his commission to “feed” the Lord’s church.

- I. **CONCERNING THE APOSTLE PETER**
- II. **1 PETER'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST**
- III. **AUTHORSHIP AND CANONICITY**
- IV. **WHEN, WHERE, AND TO WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN?**
- V. **OUTLINE**
- VI. **ABBREVIATIONS**

### **I. Concerning the Apostle Peter**

Great, impetuous, loyal, and very human, Peter was a gifted leader of men, his name always being mentioned first in the quadruple catalogues of the Twelve.

His first appearance in the New Testament (John 1:35-42) came from his acceptance of his brother Andrew's invitation, to meet the Savior whom John the Baptist had identified for his disciples as the Messiah.

Peter, like the others, was successful, industrious, and endowed with extraordinary capabilities. He was endowed with a great mind, a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, a fearless disposition, and a moving power of eloquence, as indicated by his sermons. (Acts 2) He was also a man of great physical strength; and even at a time in life when he had slowed down a bit (John outran him), he did not hesitate to plunge into the sea for a swim of a hundred yards after working all night! (John 21:8)

#### **A. Events in Peter's Life Prior to the Ascension**

This portion of Peter's life covers those events from his call to leave the fishnets of Galilee to that rendezvous with Jesus on a mountain in Galilee, where the Ascension occurred, and which was the great appearance of Christ to more than "five hundred brethren at one time." (1 Corinthians 15:5)

#### **B. Events in Peter's Life After the Ascension**

The events in this period fall naturally into two classifications:

- (a) those occurring In Jerusalem in the early days after Pentecost, and
- (b) those connected with events on the mission field.

### **C. Regarding Peter's Character**

Peter was impetuous, bold, fearless, aggressive, dynamic, as a great leader of men as any who ever lived. The early Christians are said to have called him “The Big Fisherman” or “The Rock.”

### **D. Special Questions Connected with Peter**

- (a) Was the church built upon Peter?

No! The church was built upon the glorious fact which Peter had just confessed, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:13ff)

- (b) Did Peter have preeminence over the other apostles?

No! Except in one sense alone, Peter being the first to receive promise of “the keys” and his being the first of the apostles privileged to use “the keys.” All of the other apostles received exactly the same promise. (Matthew 18:18)

- (c) Was Peter, in any special sense, entrusted with the “keys”?

Peter’s possession of the “keys” was upon exactly the same basis as the possession of the same authority by all Twelve. (Matthew 18:18)

A certain preeminence did pertain to Peter in the fact of his being the spokesman for all the Twelve on the day of Pentecost, and the first to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven for mankind; but this all lies wholly within the framework of the absolute equality of all the apostles.

- (d) What about successors to Peter’s office and authority?

There are absolutely no successors to Peter, nor to any other of the apostles.

## II. 1 PETER'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

- (A) Peter's favorite title for the Master is the compound Jesus Christ, used 11 times in 105 verses. Jesus Himself gave men that title of Himself for the first time in His great prayer. (John 17:3)
- (B) He stressed obedience as an absolute prerequisite of salvation and purification. (1:1, 22) "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them may be compared to a wise man, etc." (Matthew 7:24ff)
- (C) "Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hopes completely on the grace to be brought to you, etc. (1:13) "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lighted." "And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, etc." (Luke 12:35-36)

## III. AUTHORSHIP AND CANONICITY

There is no rational doubt whatever that the apostle Peter wrote this epistle or that it belongs in the sacred canon of the New Testament.

### A. CRITICAL OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

The letter shows a command of the Greek language incredible in a person like Peter.

- (a) His very business would have required him to know Greek. What the critics need to do is to take account of the mind and ability of this great man, chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself precisely for those great abilities which the Lord knew that he possessed.
- (b) The epistle does not bear the marks of one who had been with Jesus. This is the most unreasonable, unscholarly and ridiculous charge imaginable. Little time needs to be spent on nonsense like this objection: as Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 79, succinctly but it, "To say that the epistle shows little knowledge of the life and teaching of our Lord is simply not true."

- (c) It implies a time when the mere profession of Christianity was a crime, that is, the first decade of the second century. In this context, it has been asserted that the reign of Trajan 98-117 A. D. was the first period of Roman history during which the mere profession of Christianity was a capital offense. Were not Peter and Paul both martyred during the reign of Nero? Did not Nero destroy thousands of Christians in the arena? Even covering them with inflammable materials and used their flaming bodies as torch lights for revels and debaucheries in the imperial gardens? It is alleged that this was punishment for “crimes.” What crimes, other than that of being Christians?

The major premise of this critical syllogism is therefore a fraud. The other premise, namely, that 1 Peter implies a time when the mere profession of Christianity was a crime is likewise untrue.

- (d) There is more Paul “language” in the epistle than could be expected if Peter was indeed the author. This also is not true. Paul’s letters had been in circulation for years when 1 Peter was written. There are vast differences between 1 Peter and the Pauline letter. Peter’s use of “flesh” and “soul” is different from Paul’s. J. R. Dummelow, One Volume Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 1038, wrote, Such an objection as this “disappears when the epistles, and the relations of Peter and Paul are carefully studied.”

## **CHAPTER 1**

Following the greeting and salutation (verses 1-2, there is a doxology, extolling the mercies of God who had given Christians a marvelous birth, a glorious inheritance, and the salvation of their souls, a salutation which even the prophets of old, and actually the angels, had sought to understand more perfectly (verses 3-12). The final verses of the chapter (verses 13-25) interweave the practical commands to “gird up the loins of the mind,” to be “children of obedience,” not to participate in their former lusts, and to “love one another,”

with some of the most magnificent teaching in the New Testament regarding the Father who is judge of all men, the redemption of Christians through the blood of Christ, the new birth accomplished through obedience to the truth, and a pointed identification of the Christian gospel as “the word of the Lord” that “abides forever.”

### **Verses 1-2**

William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, p. 165, wrote, “One of the outstanding things about this passage is that it takes words and conceptions which had originally applied only to Jews and applies them to Christians.” These are elect, Chosen, Dispersion, and Sojourners.

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ . . .” “Peter was the beloved name that Jesus Himself had bestowed upon this apostle, and is the Greek form of the Aramaic name meaning “*stone*” or “*pebble*.” (John 1:42; Matthew 16:18)

“An apostle of Jesus Christ . . .” There was never any need for Peter to defend his apostleship for it was not questioned as was sometimes true with Paul. Note also that he did not write “THE Apostle,” but “an apostle.” He was always careful to acknowledge his own equality with all the Twelve and with Paul also. W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words*, Vol. 1, p. 20, wrote, “Peter knew no higher title to bestow on himself than that which he held in common with the other eleven.”

“Jesus Christ . . .” Peter used this compound title of the Master eleven times in the 105 verses of this letter.

“To those who reside as aliens” These are the great words, once applicable to Jews only, which have now been given by God Himself to the church of Jesus Christ which has become through ancient Israel’s rejection of the Messiah the true and only Israel of God in the new dispensation.

“Who are chosen . . .” The Greek word thus rendered literally means “picked out, chosen.” Jesus Christ said to His followers, “I have chosen you.” (John 15:16, 19) Christians are the new chosen people. These people are said to be chosen out of the world, in the world, but not of it. (John 15:15ff)

Christians are citizens of another country, even heaven itself (Philippians 3:20); their head and Lord is in heaven; their treasure is there (Matthew 6:19); their affections are there (Colossians 3:2); their hope is centered there; and it is a poor Christians indeed who considers the present world to be his permanent dwelling place. The Old Testament Israelites were also sojourners. Abraham said to the sons of Heth, "I am a stranger and sojourner among you." (Genesis 23:4)

Many orthodox Jews, regardless of how large and beautiful a house they may build, always leave some specified portion of it unfinished as a symbolical confession of their being sojourners.

The Christians too, like the Jews after the removal of the ten tribes and the Babylonia captivity, are "scattered" all over the earth, being separated, not merely from each other, but from the heavenly Jerusalem as well.

"In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia . . ." These were the provinces lying south of the Black Sea and west of the Taurus Mountains, "including the whole of what we call Asia Minor." (J. R. Dummelow, One Volume Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 1040)

"According to the foreknowledge of God the Father . . ." That God did indeed foreknow the calling of the Gentiles to be among those chosen people is proved by the dozens of prophetic references to this very event in the Old Testament. Paul, in the ninth and tenth chapters of Romans, quoted no less than nine Old Testament prophecies predicting the calling of the Gentiles.

God's purpose, namely, that in Abraham "all families of the earth" should be blessed. (Genesis 12:3) The unfortunate pride, self-righteousness and vanity of Israel caused that nation either to ignore this or forget all about it.

"The sanctifying work of the Spirit . . ." The Holy Spirit sanctifies "through the word of God." (John 17:17) Thus obedience to the gospel with the consequent indwelling of the Spirit provides the initial sanctification belonging to every convert to Christ. Thus Paul was enabled to address the Corinthian church as "those sanctified in Christ Jesus." (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11) Raymond C. Kelcy, The Letters of Peter and Jude, p. 18 wrote, "This phrase clearly is to be

connected with the word ‘chosen.’” This shows that God chooses only those who will consent to obey the gospel and receive the earnest of the Holy Spirit.

“That you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood . . .” This also has reference to a post-conversion quality leading to a greater degree of sanctification.

How are we sprinkled with the blood of Christ? Perhaps no better answer to this has ever been given than that of James Macknight, Macknight on the Epistles, Vol. V, p. 434, when he wrote, “So all who receive the gospel are emblematically sprinkled with the blood of Jesus in the Lord’s Supper.” Full agreement is felt with this, for on the very night of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, the Savior said of the cup, “This is the blood of the New Testament shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:26)

Peter said in this passage, the *sine qua non* of all heavenly blessing is obedience on the part of the one to be blessed, obedience being one heavenly requirement that is never waived. Of course it is God’s free grace that saves; and even the obedient are not saved either by works or by merit, but the disobedient are not going to be saved at all. (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

“May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure . . .” Judging from the frequent use of this greeting in the letters of Paul, it would appear to have been the general practice of the early church to avoid slighting either Jewish or Gentile elements in the churches.

### **Verse 3**

“God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .” The fountainhead of all blessing and salvation is God Himself. Peter showed that Christianity was in no sense a departure from the God of Israel and of the Hebrew patriarchs, but was still a worship of that same God through the acceptance of God’s only begotten Son; for the same God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the very one who has begotten us.



“According to His great mercy . . .” Every hope of eternal life, of forgiveness of sins, of every conceivable measure of salvation—all hope springs ultimately from the unmerited favor and mercy of an almighty God.

“Born again to a living hope . . .” This makes God the Father of every Christian, the means by which that hope is conveyed to them being the new birth, of which Peter will shortly speak again.

“Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . .” This does not deny that Christians are born again through obeying the word of God (verse 22), but refers to the source of that word, Jesus Christ, and the mighty act wrought by God in His resurrection of our Savior from the tomb, the same being the enabling charter, the vast achievement which made the salvation of men possible.

It is most appropriate that the apostle Peter would have focused upon the resurrection at the very outset; because as Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 92, wrote, “The resurrection had made all new in Peter’s life, had turned tragedy into triumph; so it is altogether fitting that his epistle should begin with this paean (hymn) of it.”

The word “blessed” as used of God in this verse is a special word. A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 388, wrote, “It is a word consecrated to God alone in the New Testament.” It is utterly different from the term “blessed” as used in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 20 informs us that the word reserved for God is *eulogetos*; and the other one is *makarios*,” both of which, however, are translated “blessed” in the common versions.

#### **Verse 4**

Here again the continuing contrast between the old and new Israel is in view. The inheritance that pertained to the old Israel was their literal possession of the land of Canaan; and in speaking of the marvelous reward that shall at last result from the Christian life, Peter called it an inheritance. Also, in the case of Christians, it is really an inheritance, something they are born into, through means of the new birth, just as the Israelites who possessed Canaan received it

through their being the actual posterity of Abraham. Four things are stated with reference to that glorious inheritance.

“Is imperishable . . .” Paul also spoke of the Christian’s inheritance (Ephesians 1:14; Colossians 3:24), and all of the sacred writers extolled the virtues of it. Canaan, the inheritance of the old Israel, had indeed been corrupted; foreign enemies invaded it and subjected the people to slavery; evil kings arose from themselves who oppressed and devoured the land; but the heavenly inheritance cannot be corrupted.

Even the very best of earthly treasures are destined to failure and decay at last when not even the earth itself shall stand.

“And undefiled . . .” The old Israel’s inheritance (Canaan) had been indeed defiled. Again and again the people had fallen into idolatry; oppression of the poor was everywhere; even the sacred temple itself had not been exempt from the heel of the invader and the pollution of the most holy altar by the sacrifice of a sow.

“Will not fade away. . .” The fading nature of all earthly and temporal things contrasted with the eternal reward of the saints in Christ Jesus. No matter what wealth, honor, power, glory, popularity, beauty, or success may come to one on earth, it is only for a moment. All of the strength, achievement, and desire of mortals quickly end in the tomb, fading away, and are soon forgotten by the fleeting generations of men; but not so the everlasting inheritance of the saints in light.

“Reserved in heaven for you . . .” It is reserved for them that shall be entitled to it; it will be there ready for them; none other shall preempt it or take it away from them.

### **Verse 5**

“The word 'protected' here is a military term,” Christians are garrisoned by the power of God and are safeguarded by the Father Himself. The Christians themselves, under the terms of the Father’s will, contribute to that safety. How? The next phrase explains how.

“Through faith . . .” This cannot bear the meaning that the Christian’s sole act of believing provides any safety. A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 389, wrote. “Faith” as used here means “staunch fidelity” as well as trustfulness.”

Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament, Peter*, p. 114, summarized the thought of this verse writing: “The idea is that there was a faithful guardianship exercised over them to save them from danger, as a castle or garrison is watched to guard it against the approach of an enemy.”

“A salvation ready to be revealed in the last time . . .” “The last time” here has reference to the final judgment day when Christ will raise the dead and summon all men to the judgment of the White Throne.

David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p. 1239, wrote, “In these verses salvation is seen in all its tenses (past, present, and future), Christians have been born anew by the mercy of God, and are being guarded by the power of God, and look forward to obtaining complete deliverance from all evil in the last time.”

## **Verse 6**

“In this . . .” There are several notions in vogue as to what exactly, is the antecedent; but the most obvious meaning is that the whole “situation” just discussed is being given as the logical reason why they greatly rejoice, or are commanded to greatly rejoice. David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p. 1239, wrote, The Greek verb might be taken also as an imperative, “Therefore rejoice.”

“Greatly rejoice . . .” This is a simple statement of fact, rejoicing being mentioned almost continually throughout the New Testament, as when Paul and Silas rejoiced and sang hymns in the night. (Acts 16:25)

“Though now for a little while . . .” This is not to be understood as a prophecy that their trials would be of short duration, but relates to the fact of earthly life being almost infinitely shorter than eternal life.

“You have been distressed by various trials . . .” The trials coming upon the Christians to whom Peter wrote were more than were normally expected. Stephen W. Paine, *Wycliffe New Testament Commentary*, p. 970, wrote, “Here is a reference to the weight of persecutions being felt by Christians.” Later in

the letter, Peter will give a number of glimpses of the hatred, vilification, and evil speaking which, even then, were an increasing storm of opposition to the faith.

### **Verse 7**

This rather complicated verse is not a comparison of faith with gold, Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 96, wrote, “But there is an analogy between the testing of character (faith) and the refining of gold.” If men go to the trouble to test gold, how much more should it be expected that God will test faith? Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, p. 116, also stressed this writing: “This does not mean that their faith was more precious than gold (though of course it is), but that the testing of it . . . was a much more important and valuable process than that of testing gold by fire.”

Faith is more precious than fine gold, the reason for this, as pointed out by E. M. Zerr, *Bible Commentary*, p. 253, wrote, “Even while the earth remains, that joys that gold may procure for us are uncertain and often flee like the dew of the morning; but the happiness that is obtained by an enduring faith will not pass away.”

By Peter’s striking this note of suffering early in his letter, he was only stressing that which had been stressed by the Master Himself (Mark 8:31-38); and Peter would return to this, again and again, throughout the epistle (2:21; 3:14-22; 4:12-19; 5:1, 10). Thus the sufferings of a Christian must not be viewed as any “unscheduled disaster overtaking him without the will of God, but on the other hand as the very route by which the Lord Jesus wrought His wonderful redemption.” (G. J. Polkinghorne, *op. cit.*, p. 587)

### **Verse 8**

The apostle who has seen, admires and appreciates the love and joy of the brethren who have not seen! This reminds us of the words of Jesus, “Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” (John 20:29)

The Greeks had three words for love, these being *agape*, *eros*, and *philo*. It is the first of these that Peter used here; and Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 26,

has an excellent word on the meaning of it, “It indicates an intelligent and purposeful love, the love which recognizes its object for what it is; it is the love of consideration and care, the love of good will, and the love which desires to serve and promote the best interests of its object.”

How can such unspeakable joy and rejoicing exist in the hearts of those whose hearts are burdened with manifold trials and temptations? The answer to this is thundered in the next verse.

### **Verse 9**

“Obtaining as the outcome of your faith . . .” This means the goal or purpose of faith, that which is the ultimate result of the obedience of faith. Stephen W. Paine, *op. cit.*, p. 970, based his conclusion on the construction of the Greek, wrote, “This is not a future, but a present reference,” thus making the salvation to be that which they already had. Of course, this harmonizes with the view in Acts that those who were “being saved” were added to the church. (Acts 2:47) There was surely a sense in which Peter’s addressees were already saved, that is, from their old sins,” as Peter explained in 2 Peter 1:9.

”The salvation of your souls . . .” J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 1041, pointed out that, “the Greek has no word for ‘your,’” which, accordingly, is italicized in our version. If read without the italicized word, then the verse has ‘the salvation of souls,” this being indeed the objective or end of all believing, the holy purpose toward which the whole eternal plan of the heavenly Father is directed. The churches of the current era have tended to overlook this.

“The purpose” of God’s church in the world is the salvation of men’s souls, not their take-home pay, nor the quality of housing, which looms in Scripture as the great commission of the church.

### **Verse 10**

Here Peter called attention to the curiosity that the ancient prophets of the Old Testament had with reference to their own writings! Of course, New Testament critics would find fault with a truth like this, suggesting that Peter “built” this verse on one of the statements of Jesus “reported differently” in

Matthew 13:17 and Luke 10:24! There are plural errors in a view like this. First, there is the denial that Jesus made both statements. The foolish notion that similar statements in the New Testament are invariably founded upon “an original” is ridiculous. All of the New Testament sayings of Jesus are originals! Secondly, there is the notion that Peter had to “build” words. Peter’s teaching in this verse could well have been founded upon the personal words of Christ, but whether this is true or not, it is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore true.

“The prophets . . .” These were the prophets of the old covenant, the writers of the Old Testament, whose hundreds of prophecies of Christ’s coming into the world make up the burden of the Old Testament.

E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, p. 131ff, argued, “That these are not the prophets of the Old Testament at all, but the apostolic church!” However, the very fact of the prophets Peter mentioned having prophesied the sufferings and glories of Christ identifies them with the Old Testament, not the New Testament.

“Made careful search and inquiry . . .” What did the prophets search? The Holy Scriptures which they had written, of course! The following verse shows that it was the “testimony” of the Holy Spirit regarding the sufferings and glories of Christ—it was that “testimony” which they did not understand (though they had written it), the point of their misunderstanding being the “time” when such things would occur. Now these testimonies of the sufferings and glories of Christ were not “private longings” of the prophets, but the plain words of the Scriptures which they wrote. Besides these obvious facts, who ever heard of a man “searching and inquiring into” his private longings!

The word for “inquiry” is used only here in the New Testament, and has the meaning of “to search out, to trace out, or explore.” (Albert Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 120) Albert Barnes, *Ibid*, explaining, what this verse means, wrote: “The prophets perceived that in their communications there were some great and glorious truths which they did not fully comprehend; and they diligently

employed their natural faculties to understand that which they were appointed to impart to succeeding generations.”

### **Verse 11**

The exact nature of the puzzlement of the prophets is here given. It regarded the “time” of the marvelous events which they foretold. The exact answer to their questionings, however, was not revealed to them, only that it was not scheduled for their own generation, but for subsequent ages.

The phenomenon of prophets not being able to comprehend fully their own writings is one of utmost consequence in biblical interpretation for it requires the deduction that the Spirit of Christ, speaking through them, did not merely give them the correct ideas, or thoughts, which they then were to present in their own words, but, contrarily, the words of truth were exactly what they did receive, words with ideas and thoughts contained which they did not understand at all!

“The Spirit of Christ within them . . .” The Spirit of Christ here is the “Holy Spirit,” who was also called by this title by Paul. (Romans 8:9) James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 439, gave as the meaning of this verse the observation that, “From this it appears that, in many instances, the prophets did not understand the meaning of their own prophecies, but studied them, as others did, with great care, in order to find out.”

### **Verse 12**

This verse says some wonderful thing about preaching, as summarized by William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 180, who wrote, “That it is the announcement of salvation that it is of the Holy Spirit, and that angels themselves are intensely interested in it.”

Peter’s mention of the Holy Spirit’s being sent forth from heaven implies that the word of the apostles is even superior to that of the prophets, being the result of a more glorious endowment by the blessed Spirit. Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 99, wrote, “The primary reference (in this) is to the descent of the Spirit on Pentecost. (Acts 2)

“Things into which angels long to look . . .” In emphasizing the greatness of the salvation that has come to Christians, Peter in this affirms that even the angels of heaven are deeply concerned and interested in this salvation; and why not? For their own who had sinned, there was no day of grace, no offer of pardon, no opportunity to seek a remedy. The same verse of the word of God which relates their sin also relates there being cast out of heaven! No wonder they were interested in this new thing wherein God would forgive sinful and rebellious men!

“Long to look . . .” These words are significant because of the root meaning. J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 1042, wrote, “The Greek word means to look as out of a window;” but a variant meaning is evidently the one here. Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 29, wrote, “To look” comes from a word which indicates a stooping over in order to see more clearly.” James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 441, also agreed to the certainty of this meaning here, “The Greek means literally to stoop; but stooping, being the attitude of one who desires to look narrowly into a thing; it is properly translated look at attentively.”

It will be noted that this meaning focuses upon the stooping posture of the angels above the mercy seat.

### **Verse 13**

Jesus used these words of being prepared for the Second Coming, and that is exactly the way Peter used them here.

“Gird your minds for action . . .” “Gird” meant tying up one’s loose outward garments as a prerequisite to being able to work unencumbered. It had the rough meaning of, “Roll up your sleeves, and go to work.” Sure enough, the mind cannot roll up any sleeves; but the mind can be disciplined and prepared for the future by diligent prayer, study and contemplation. It was of this that Peter spoke.

### **Verse 14**

“As obedient children . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 100, wrote, “Despite its emphasis on Christian freedom, obedience is one of the cardinal



virtues of the New Testament.” Here is another metaphor. Obedience is represented as the mother of Christians.

“Do not be conformed to the former lusts . . .” Through the practice of wickedness, men fashion themselves in the likeness of the sins they commit; and thus they become “sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2; 5:6; Colossians 3:6), the very opposite of what Peter required for Christians here.

“In your ignorance . . .” The very nature of not having Christ in your life is that it is controlled by lust, grounded in ignorance, and destined to end in futility.

### **Verse 15**

Hunter, *Ibid*, p. 101, properly discerned that the requirement here is about the same as that of Matthew 5:48, namely “perfection.” The great premise here is that children of such a God must themselves be holy “in all manner of living.”

The theologians may speak as long and as lustily as they like about being saved “through faith alone,” but this and a thousand other New Testament passages teach otherwise. Nor is this to allege that man has the ability to achieve this apart from being “in Christ.”

### **Verse 16**

Raymond Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 33, wrote, “Thus it is seen that holiness is basic to true religion in both the Old Testament and the New Testament; without it, no one shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14)

### **Verse 17**

“And if you address as Father . . .” Peter’s familiarity with Jesus’ instructions with reference to God as Father is reflected in this; but his admonition seems to be that, “Although you familiarly address God as Father, do not overlook the fact that He is also the Judge of every man, “Who impartially judges according to each man’s work.”

“According to each man’s work . . .” This teaching is not peculiar to Peter; Paul declared that, “God will render to every man according to his deeds.” (Romans 2:6)

The notion that being under the grace of God, and being saved by grace through faith, nullifies Scriptures such as these is extremely erroneous.

“Conduct yourselves in fear . . .” Some have alleged a contradiction between this and John’s words, “Perfect love casts out fear,” (1 John 4:18); as B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 9, wrote; “The fear which both Peter and Paul (Philippians 2:12) commended is holy fear, the fear of a son for a loving father, the fear of displeasing God before whom we walk, the very God who gave His blessed Son to die for us, and will judge us at the last.”

### **Verse 18**

“You were not redeemed . . .” This is one of the great ransom passages of the New Testament, along with Mark 10:45, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Timothy 2:5, Revelation 1:5, and many others.

“Not redeemed with things like silver or gold . . .” These are some of the corruptible things cited as examples; nothing of earthly value or merit made up the purchase price of Christians, but only the blood of Christ.

“Futile way of life . . .” Inherent in all redemption is the state from which we are redeemed, namely, a state of sin. Peter here notes that Christians were redeemed “from the futile way of life;” and this is in every way consonant with what the angel said to Joseph, speaking of Christ, “It is He that shall save His people from their sins.” The vanity, futility, lustfulness, and ignorance of the Christian life are pointedly stressed in this chapter.

“Inherited from your forefathers . . .” Ah! Here is the secret of most of the error on earth. James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 444, wrote, “In general, the strongest argument for false religions, as well as for errors in the true, is that men have received them from their fathers.”

### **Verse 19**

Peter uses the Old Testament figure in describing the glorious redemption of the Christians. G. T. Polkinghorne, *op. cit.*, p. 588, wrote, “The Passover lamb (Exodus), as the sacrifice whereby Israel was delivered from bondage and

separated to the Lord, is richly significant in context, as is also the lamb of Isaiah 53, the passage so largely quoted in 2:22-25.”

“But with precious blood . . .” This passage, with the preceding verse, sets forth Christ as the paschal lamb for Christians and describes the nature of the ransom price. Christ’s purpose of redeeming men was the great motivation of coming into the world.

Salvation by the blood of Christ is the crimson thread that runs from Matthew to Revelation, and there is no adequate theology that fails to take this into consideration.

### **Verse 20**

“He was foreknown before . . .” The redemptive visitation of our world by the Son of God was known in purpose from the beginning, but “which has been kept secret for long ages past” (Romans 16:25); it “in other generations was not made known to the sons of men” (Ephesians 3:5); it was, “hidden from the past ages and generations.” (Colossians 1:26)

“Before the foundation of the world . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 103, wrote, “This means before creation.” God chose us in Christ “before the foundation of the world.” (Ephesians 4:16) There is no full understanding of such a thing as this by futile intelligence; but the heart of faith believes it without reservation or doubt.

Alan M. Stibbs, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 1 Peter, p. 92. wrote, “The Christian dispensation, the point and period in history of Christ’s coming, is here regarded as the climax and consummation of previous ages. (Hebrews 1:1-2; 9:26)

By his use of “foreknown,” Peter also witnesses in this to the preexistence of Christ and the doctrine of the incarnation. It cannot be said of any ordinary man that “he was foreknown.”

“In these last times . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 103, wrote, “Peter regarded the Christian era as the last period in the religious history of man.”

### **Verse 21**

“Who through Him are believers in God . . .” This tells to whom Christ has been manifested, that is, those who believe in Him and His resurrection and in the glory that God gave Him. E. M. Zerr, op. cit., p. 254, wrote, “Not that any secrecy was kept from the world in general, for the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven.”

“So that your faith and hope are in God . . .” This translation makes the purpose of Christ’s resurrection and glory to be that of creating faith in God. David H. Wheaton, op. cit., p. 1240. wrote, “In fact, faith and hope in God are both the purpose and the result of Christ’s resurrection and ascension.”

### **Verse 22**

J. H. A. Hart, op. cit., p. 52, paraphrased the meaning of the first clause here writing, “They must realize that they have cleansed themselves ideally at baptism;” and that this is surely the meaning of it appears to be certain when the passage is compared with Acts 2:40. On Pentecost Peter admonished those whom he was exhorting to be baptized to, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” Here it is evident exactly what Peter meant by one’s saving himself or purifying himself, the same being references to one’s obeying the gospel of Christ.

It was altogether proper for an apostle of Jesus Christ thus to speak with reference to men’s saving themselves, because there are certain things one must do to be saved; and the people who do them are indeed saved, and those who neglect or refuse to do them cannot be saved at all, at least as far as any promise of the Christian gospel is concerned.

The Spirit of God aids Christians in their obedience after their conversation, there is a prior, antecedent obedience that must precede the Spirit’s entry into Christian’s hearts; that obedience must be provided by the one who would be saved; and it is of that Peter speaks here.

“In obedience to the truth purified your souls . . .” It is therefore a clear reference to the conversion which comes at the beginning of the Christian life, and not to subsequent spiritual endowments of the Christian.

“In obedience to the truth . . .” means simply, “by your obeying the gospel.”

“Sincere love of the brethren . . .” One is not merely saved, but saved for some holy purpose; and, in this passage, the love of the brethren is identified as that holy purpose.

“Fervently love one another from the heart . . .” This shows that Peter had not forgotten the Savior’s commandments to this very end. Of particular interest is the word “fervently,” which may also be translated “earnestly.”

David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p. 1240, wrote, “It denotes with supreme effort, ‘with every muscle strained.’”

### **Verse 23**

“You have been born again . . .” This is positive proof that Peter was speaking of the new birth in the preceding verse.

“Not of seed which is perishable . . .” Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 40, wrote that Peter in this stressed that, “It is the word of God through which God brings forth new creatures.” The apostle James taught the same thing (1:18), as did also the evangelist Luke (8:11). “The seed is the word of God.” The seed is able of itself to reproduce. (Mark 4:26-29) The seed itself is living and active. (Hebrews 4:12)

It is the seed itself which produces the new birth and the consequent indwelling of the Spirit. It is the word of God that abides forever.

### **Verses 24-25**

The Scripture here is from Isaiah 4:6-8. The passage in Isaiah stands in the forefront of magnificent proclamation of the Messianic kingdom, especially as that pertained to “all flesh” and not merely to Jews only. A. J. Mason wrote, “Peter was here calling attention to the absolute equality of Jew and Gentile.”

E. M. Zerr, *op. cit.*, p. 255, made an interesting comment on this passage writing, “The new birth does not consist of some mysterious operation of God upon sinful men, it is a simple matter of believing and obeying the gospel. The reader is not left in any uncertainty as to what is meant by the spiritual seed of reproduction . . . it is the gospel.”

Albert Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 132, made an eloquent tribute to the power and beauty of the gospel writing, “It is unmoved, fixed, and permanent. Amidst all the revolutions on earth, the fading glories of natural objects, and the wasting strength of man, God’s truth remains unaffected. Its beauty never fades; its power is never enfeebled. The gospel system is as lovely now as when it was first revealed to man, and it has as much power to save as it had when first applied to the human heart.”

Men may busy themselves with studies of theology and a multitude of religious matters, but the means of saving the world from sin is the same as it always has been, namely, that of preaching the gospel to all men.

The church’s chief mission on earth is the proclamation of the word Peter mentioned here; failing in that, a church becomes not merely useless but abhorrent. What can give men the new birth and save their souls? The answer lies in the last verse of this chapter —it is, “The word of good tidings which was preached you.”

## CHAPTER 2

In this great chapter, Peter stressed the duties of the church as the new Israel of God, who were bound by their privileges to exhibit lives worthy of their sacred calling (verses 1-10); and then he gave the first of a number of admonitions directed to the Christians with regard to their obligations to the outward society (verses 11-25).

### Verse 1

“Therefore putting aside . . .” This is from *apothesthai*, “which is the word for stripping off one’s clothing.” (William Barclay, *The Letters of James and*

Peter, p. 189) The child of God must denounce and turn away from all manner of wickedness, just as one might strip off filthy clothing. The words here are strongly suggestive of what occurs at the time of baptism. B. C. Coffin, Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 20, 1 Peter, p.68, wrote, “Paul connects the putting on of Christ with baptism (Galatians 3:27); and Peter, when speaking of baptism in 3:21, both used the Greek word which corresponds to the word here, “laying aside.”

Archibald M. Hunter, Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. XII, p. 105, also agreed that the words here have the meaning of, “Since you are born again.” The sins about to be enumerated being by implication survivors from the old bad way of life.

“Guile . . .” is deceitfulness, especially lying and false speech; thus it is usually spoken of as being on the lips, or found in the mouth.

“Hypocrisy and envy . . .” Hypocrisy was the leaven of the Pharisees, according to Christ Himself, the same being a way of life for the religious leaders of that day. It is pretending to be what one knows he is not.

“Envy . . .” William Barclay, op. cit. p. 190, wrote, “So long as self remains active in one’s heart, there will be envy in his life.” It springs from jealousies which are, in fact, concealed malice in hearts that are displeased with all beauty, achievement, virtue, or any other desirable quality in others.

“And all slander . . .” All slander, or evil speaking, is prohibited to Christians, whether against brethren, officers, of the state, or any other persons.

## **Verse 2**

“Like newborn babes . . .” Peter stresses the appetite which all Christians should have in order to grow. All Christians should have a constant and intense longing for the word of God.

“Long for the pure milk of the word . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, op. cit., p.106, wrote, “The milk of the word— the word being the gospel.”

“That you may grow in respect to salvation . . .” This indicates that salvation is a mature state, Hunter, Ibid wrote: “Not something achieved *per saltum* (at a leap) at conversion.”

It should be noted that it is not the word of God mixed with human activities that enables men to grow unto salvation; but it is the pure word of God. James Macknight, Macknight on the Epistles, 1 Peter, p. 450, wrote, “The milk of the word will not nourish the divine nature in those who use it, if it is adulterated with human mixtures.”

### Verse 3

In this verse from the 34<sup>th</sup> Psalm, Peter applied to the Lord Jesus the great Old Testament word for God, “the Lord.” The writer of Hebrews (6:4-5) also mentioned “tasting” as a metaphor of understanding and appropriating to one’s own needs the word of God.

It is quite evident that the metaphor of Christ as the bread of life (John 6:35) lies behind the thinking of the apostle in this verse. The “if” which stands at the head of the verse, Raymond C. Kelcy, The Letters of Peter and Jude, p. 43, “Has reference to a fact, rather than to a condition.”

### Verse 4

Peter here combined the thought of Isaiah 28:16ff, 8:14ff, and Psalm 122:18 in his presentation of Christ the Stone, living, elect, foundation, precious, rejected, the chief corner, and the stone of stumbling, in one of the most beautiful metaphors of the word of God.

It must surely be true, as William Barclay, op. cit., p. 195, wrote, “Peter could hardly have spoken of Jesus in this manner without thinking of Jesus’ words to Himself, “On this rock I will build My church, etc.” (Matthew 16:13ff); and yet Peter, in this passage, made no connection with his own person, stressing the view that Christ is the foundation, not Peter. He did not use either of the words *Petros* or *Petra*, but spoke of Christ as the *lithos*.”

“A living stone . . .” This is an appropriate metaphor for Christ who is Lord of Life. He is the eternally living one.

“Rejected by men . . .” Jesus Christ the Messiah was the true and only foundation of this spiritual temple; but He did not fit the design and purpose of



the “builders” in Jerusalem, who found Him totally unsuitable for any use at all in the building they had in mind; therefore, they rejected Him.

Really this should have been expected, because the concept of a temple for God was precisely like that of the idol temples which filled the world of that era, namely, a pile of stone, timber and gold.

The purpose of building a spiritual temple upon the Lord Jesus Christ was God’s purpose from the beginning. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) It was of Christ and the spiritual temple “in Him” that Nathan spoke to David (2 Samuel 7:13); and in the light of that promise, it is clear enough that even the temple of Solomon was not God’s plan for a temple. It was David’s idea, not God’s; God never gave a pattern for building of it, as He did the tabernacle; and, if it had been truly God’s temple, God would never have destroyed it.

“Precious . . .” All honor and glory is due to Jesus Christ who is the cornerstone and foundation of God’s true temple. The contrast is between the worthless status accorded Jesus by the Pharisees, who found no use at all for Him in their plans, and the fact of our Lord’s being God’s most precious and only begotten Son.

The great prophecies of Isaiah foretold, “The formation of the Christian church, for the spiritual worship of God, under the image of a temple, which God would build on the Messiah as a foundation-stone thereof.” (James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 451)

The conception of Christ as the Stone goes back to the Savior Himself. (Matthew 21:42f)

### **Verse 5**

“You also, as living stones . . .” The figure of the spiritual temple of God is continued in this; just as Christ is the living stone, so also are the Christians. And why, “living?” Because; the Lord is the Living One, the Life-giving One, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

As members of Christ's spiritual body, Christians partake of the same nature as their Lord, and they too are "living stones, endowed with a measure of the Spirit which shall raise them up at the last day.

James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 451, wrote, "The words 'living stone' and living 'stones' are to be understood as 'distinguishing the Christian church, the spiritual temple of God, both from the temples of the idols and the temple in Jerusalem, which were built of dead materials.'"

It is not enough, then, to see the spiritual temple of God, which is the church, as merely attaining a higher glory than the Jewish temple; the true temple is of a totally different kind, the same being the only kind God ever wanted.

"Are being built up as a spiritual house . . ." It is important to note that house here bears its ecclesiastical sense of temple. Jesus Himself used the word in that same sense when He declared, "Behold your house is being left to you desolate." (Matthew 23:38)

In this statement, Peter gave the same teaching that Paul gave who said, "You are a temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16f), and "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone." (Ephesians 2:20)

### **THE TRUE TEMPLE OF GOD**

This was never the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. True, God permitted that temple to be built and accommodated Himself to it in exactly the same manner as He did the secular kingdom of the Jews; but neither that secular kingdom nor the temple was ever, in any sense, a fulfillment of God's will. It was the rejection of God's government that led to the formation of the secular kingdom (1 Samuel 8:7); and it was the rejection of the tabernacle that led to the building of the temple (2 Samuel 7:13)

That this is true regarding the temple is apparent from a number of considerations:

- (1) It is called in Scripture Solomon's temple, and that is exactly what it was; and who was Solomon? He was a debauchee whose life was the scandal of ten generations. As the martyr Stephen sarcastically put it, "Solomon built him a house." (Acts 7:47) Did God dwell in Solomon's temple? Of course, He did not.
- (2) Every statement Jesus ever made concerning the temple corroborates this view, "My house (the true temple) shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a robbers den." (Matthew 21:13)
- (3) The very idea of building a temple for God was David's idea, not Gods (2 Samuel 7): and Nathan's prophecy that after David's death one of his seed should rise up after him and build God a house, whose kingdom would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:13), refers to the kingdom of Christ and the true spiritual temple of which Peter was writing in this passage.
- (4) When the apostles and elders in Jerusalem sent out that letter to the churches, they quoted Amos 9:11-12 which records God's promise of rebuilding again "the fallen tabernacle," not the ruined temple.
- (5) All of the typical material in the book of Hebrews has reference to the tabernacle, not to the Solomonic and Herodian temples.
- (6) God permitted the destruction of their Solomonic temple, which He would not have done had it been God's true temple.
- (7) The early church found the Jewish temple to be the center of enmity and hatred against the church. It was the masters of the temple that bribed witnesses to lie about the resurrection of Christ; they imprisoned, beat, and threatened the holy apostles; they forbade them to preach in the name of Christ; and, as for the character of the temple establishment, it was as corrupt as anything that history records.

- (8) The apostle Paul, upon his conversion, went to the temple; and while there he saw a vision of the Lord, but the Lord commanded him to get out of the temple and even out of the city of Jerusalem (Acts 22:17ff); but Paul had difficulty understanding this, and seemed to think that something could still be accomplished in the temple,

Although expressly forbidden to go back to the city of Jerusalem (Acts 21:4), Paul, through some misunderstanding of the Spirit's message, even though it was reinforced by the entreaties of Luke (Acts 21:12), nevertheless went to Jerusalem and even into the temple, where except for God's repeated intervention, he would have suffered death. The temple establishment organized a mob to slay Paul; through the duplicity and disapproval of the high priest himself, they set up a phony trial in the hope of assassinating him; a group of brigands under the direction of the high priest bound themselves with an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had slain Paul. After those wicked events, there is never any record of any child of God subsequently entering that temple again.

(9) It was the secular temple that, more than anything else, blinded Israel to the recognition of the Messiah. The religious leaders were so blinded by their own ideas of a temple that they were never able to understand the nature of that holy institution which Jesus came to establish.

(10) The fundamental error of David himself in planning to build God a temporal house was evidently the same identical error that led to the formation of the secular kingdom, that is, the desire to be like the nations around him. There were great idol temples all over the world in David's day; and, in the last analysis, Solomon's temple was exactly like all the rest of the human temples, beautiful edifice enshrining the nation's vanity, and controlled by an unscrupulous band of pirates.

"To be a holy priesthood . . ." The original purpose of God was that all of the Israelites should be a nation of priests (Exodus 19:6); and the subsequent development of a special priestly class came about as a result of the wickedness and sins of the people. God's purposes are eternal; and therefore the same goal of having a "holy nation" a "kingdom of priests" still prevails. The priesthood of

every believer in Christ (that is obedient believers) is evident in a statement like this. This conception is also in the book of Hebrews and in Revelation 1:6, where it is written that God made Christians to be a “kingdom and priests unto God.” It should be noted especially that it is a “holy” priesthood to which Christians are ordained. All wickedness must be put away, stripped off, renounced by all who would participate in the priesthood mentioned here.

“To offer up spiritual sacrifices . . .” The type of sacrifices to be offered by God’s nation of priests is given, that is, “spiritual” sacrifices. A closer look at this is necessary.

### **CONCERNING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES**

Under the old law, sacrifices were dead, bloody, burned with fire, smeared with fat, carnal, temporal, and salted with salt. (Leviticus 2:13; Mark 12:49) By contrast, in the church, sacrifices are spiritual, living, clean, pure, holy, and acceptable to God. They are described as “better sacrifices.” (Hebrews 9:23)

Although Christians must offer sacrifices to God, such are always “lesser sacrifices,” the one true, great, and efficacious sacrifice already having been offered, namely, Christ Himself. Christ’s blood alone is the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20; 10:29)

Nevertheless, there are sacrifices which God’s holy nation of the new Israel, which is the church, must now offer according to the will of God. And, what are these?

- (1) Our faith is our sacrifice. (Philippians 2:17)
- (2) The love of God is our sacrifice. (Mark 12:33)
- (3) Our repentance is our sacrifice. (Hosea 14:2) It is safe to assume that if repentance, even under the old covenant, was a “sacrifice,” so it still is.
- (4) Our confession of faith in Christ is a sacrifice. (Hebrews 13:15-16)
- (5) Our baptism into Christ is our sacrifice. (Romans 12:1)
- (6) Our praise of God is our sacrifice. (Hebrews 10:19-22)

- (7) Our contributions are our sacrifice. (Philippians 4:18)
- (8) Our songs are our sacrifice. (Colossians 3:16) By virtue of these songs being “unto” God,” they are understood as sacrifices.
- (9) Our prayers are our sacrifices. (Malachi 1:11)
- (10) The whole life of honor and love on the part of devoted Christians is their sacrifice. (2 Timothy 4:6); (Ephesians 5:2)

Faith, love of God, repentance, confession, baptism, praises, contributions, songs, prayers and a total life of devotion—these are our sacrifices; no wonder they are called “better sacrifices.”

“Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ . . .” B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 70, wrote, “Through Christ alone are these spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. They are offered through Christ, and only through Him.”

### **Verses 6-8**

“Behold I lay in Zion . . .” Zion is the poetic name for Jerusalem; and James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 451, wrote, “The laying of this precious cornerstone in Zion for a foundation signifies that the Christian church, the new temple of God, was to begin in Jerusalem.”

“A precious corner stone . . .” The type of stone meant here is not the kind usually called by that name today. Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 109, wrote, “It was the stone at the extremity of the angle which controls the design of the edifice and is visible.” In the church, Christ is both the foundation stone (1 Corinthians 3:11) and the corner stone.

### **CHRIST THE CORNER STONE**

In Christ, the Law of Moses ended; and the gospel began.

In Christ, the Old Testament culminated; and the New Testament began.

In Christ, all history split into B.C. and A. D.

In Christ, the wicked find their doom, and the saints salvation.

In Christ, the old Israel perished, and the new Israel began.

In Christ, the infinite past and the infinite future met.

In Christ, God and humanity came together.

In Christ, God's humiliation and man's glory united.

In Christ, the destiny of everyman is turned, those on the right entering His joy forever, and those of the left departing from His presence forever.

"This precious value . . ." A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 401, wrote, "Peter's quotation here is as much intended to show his Hebrews' readers the sweeping away of the carnal Israel was to encourage them in their Christian allegiance." These passages cited by Peter, especially in their Old Testament context, show that, "Even while the Mosaic service was in force, the Lord was planning on another one and made predictions concerning it." (E. M. Zerr, *Bible Commentary, 1 Peter*, p. 256)

"And he who believed in Him shall not be disappointed . . ." In view here is the eternal shame which attaches to the Jewish nation for the rejection of the Messiah, the shame simply this, the very Christ whom they contemptuously rejected was chosen by God to be the head of the new Israel; and the Father gave him "a name which is above every name." (Philippians 2:9) On the other hand, fidelity to Christ brings honor and glory to the believer, since he partakes of the honor and glory of Christ Himself.

"This precious value, then, is for you who believe . . ." All honors and benefits are denied to unbelievers. Only the Christian shares the joy of redemption in Christ Jesus.

"The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone . . ." It should be pointed out that this famous line is founded upon an actual event. In the building of Solomon's temple, the first stone that came down from the quarry was very remarkably shaped, having been marked and cut at the quarry. The builders of the temple did not know what to do with it, and it was dragged to a place apart and became finally hidden by debris and rubbish. Dean Plumtre, as quoted by R. Tuck, *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 15, ii, p. 356, wrote, "It was afterward found to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, the chief corner stone where the two walls met and were

bonded together.” This incident of the rejected cornerstone is the perfect illustration of how the “builders,” the Jewish hierarchy, rejected the true and only head of all holy religion. Peter was fond of this illustration and told the Sadducees to their face that they were the “builders” who had rejected the Chief Corner Stone. (Acts 4:11)

James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 456, paraphrased this verse, “To you therefore who believe is this honor of being built on him, and of not being ashamed. But to the disobedient is the dishonor written (Psalm 118:22); the stone which the builders rejected the same has become the head of the corner of God’s temple.”

“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense . . .” Some have been puzzled by Peter’s putting these two passages from the Psalms and Isaiah together, exactly as Paul did in Romans, and have therefore supposed Peter’s dependence on Paul; but such a device is both erroneous and unnecessary. Peter was present no doubt and heard the Lord Jesus Christ Himself put the two passages together in exactly the same manner as here. (Luke 20:17-18) Therefore, neither Peter nor Paul was dependent upon the other, their teachings, as in the case of all the sacred writers, going back to Christ Himself, the fountain source of the entire New Testament.

The particular application of “stumbling stone” as a figure of Christ is that of comparing him to a heavy stone blocking a path or road that men travel, resulting in their stumbling and falling. Christ, as the aged Simeon prophesied, was, “set for falling and rising of many in Israel.” (Luke 2:34) Men, through their pride, stumble at the lowly birth of the Savior and at the humility of His followers, the stern morality of His teachings, and His sharp exposure of their sins.

“For they stumble because they are disobedient . . .” Macknight, *Ibid*, p. 456, wrote, “Peter does not mean that they stumbled at the preached word, but against Christ Himself, one of whose titles is the Word.” (John 1:1)

“To this doom they were also appointed . . .” This does not mean that God foreordained, or appointed certain individuals to fall; but it means that God has finally and irrevocably appointed all disobedient souls to stumble. When the



proud hierarchy of the ancient Israel refused to believe in Christ, they hereby thrust themselves under the blanket indictment of all unbelievers; and they fell, as God had ordained and appointed all unbelievers to fall. The indictment still stands and unbelievers still incur the wrath of God through their unbelief.

### Verse 9

Here are repeated one after another all of the glorious titles which once belonged exclusively to the old Israel, the Hebrews, the children of Abraham, but here Peter trumpeted the bestowal of all those titles upon the new Israel, now no longer restricted to those of Abrahamic descent, but available to Jew and Gentile alike “in Christ Jesus.” Peter had already cautioned his readers (verse 5) to be what they were supposed to be, and to show the kind of life and character that would be pleasing to God, thus warning them to avoid the mistake of the old Israel who had failed so spectacularly in that very duty.

“You are a chosen race . . .” Just as the living stone was elect, so are the living stones who make up His spiritual body; but they are not elect in their own right, being elect “in Christ.” It is true of the elect, no less than of the disobedient, that they are “appointed” unto their destiny. This means that God has predestined and appointed all who shall be found in Christ to eternal glory; but men come under the benefits of such an appointment only when they are baptized into Christ and are “found in Him” at last. (Revelation 14:13)

“A royal priesthood . . .” Jesus Christ is the true king, and therefore those “in Christ” are a royal priesthood, being themselves also, through their union with Christ, in a sense, even kings.” (Revelation 1:6)

“A holy nation . . .” Nothing can diminish the obligation of Christians to be in fact what their lawful title implies, that is, a truly “holy,” nation.

“A people for God’s own possession . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 111, wrote, “The phrase literally means ‘a people for (God’s) possession.’” There is also a meaning of “especially, for His very own” in the words.

“That you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you . . .” “Proclaim,” has the meaning of “to tell out,” or “to tell forth.”

Christians are not saved for themselves, and their own sake only, but for the purpose of enlisting as many other souls as possible in the service of our excellent God. It was precisely here that the ancient Israel failed wretchedly. Hugging to themselves the precious promises of God, they made no real effort to extend to the Gentiles any saving knowledge of the Lord, coming more and more to despise the very nations they were commissioned to enlighten.

God grant that His holy church shall not flounder and sink upon this same shallowness.

“Out of darkness . . .” There is an indication here that many of Peter’s readers were converts to Christ from heathenism, for such is the usual import of the word.

“Into His marvelous light . . .” The marvelous light of God, in its fullness, is unapproachable (1 Timothy 6:16); and yet it is into that very light that we are called. The children of God are children of the light, or of the day; and the sons of the evil one are children of darkness.

#### **Verse 10**

The sweep of the paragraph concluded here is infinite. The vast dimensions of the love of God and of His overflowing mercy to all men, even to those who had fallen into shame and debauchery, are as wide as heaven and earth.

The “no people” are now the people of God; and the people without mercy have now received it through Christ. How marvelous indeed is such wonderful love.

By Peter’s use of “no people” in this verse, it should be concluded that Peter’s letter was to Christians of Gentile origin. “No people” refers to all, regardless of race, who are in rebellion against God, and that it is quite obvious that Peter was writing to Christians of both Jewish and Gentile origins who were then “one new man in Christ.”

## **Verse 11**

“Beloved . . .” This term of endearment carries with it a certain feeling of concern and pity, for no one knew any better than Peter the fury of the gathering storm that was so soon to break over the defenseless heads of the Christians.

“I urge you as aliens and strangers . . .” Like the overture to a great opera which gathers the dominating strains of the whole production these words suggest the tragedy that lies so close at hand. A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 405, wrote, “These words, when compared with Psalm 39:12, from which Peter drew them, prepare for the description of distress which is to follow.” The word “pilgrim” means primarily, “one who journeys.”

“Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul . . .” The metaphor of warfare is an apt one for the Christian life. That life is a constant struggle against many enemies, both within and without. The social order itself is basically hostile to Christianity, and the inward desires of the flesh and of the mind also constantly tend to erode spirituality.

## **Verse 12**

The winning of acceptance in a hostile environment is here held forth as the motivation or righteous behavior in the midst of the alien Gentile population.

“They slander you as evil doers . . .” Already, despite the fact of the first great Roman persecution being yet a little while in the future, there were widespread antagonisms vented against Christians in the form of every kind of slander and reproach. Why? The Christians were the noblest, purest and most loved people ever to appear on earth, and yet they were hated. Why? Stephen W. Paine, *op. cit.*, p. 975, wrote, “Christianity by its very essence opposed the vanities of paganism at every turn.” Like ancient Noah, the very purity of their behavior “condemned the world (Hebrews 11:7),” and that was reason enough for the world’s hatred. There was a double source of hatred for Christians, their model demeanor being one, and their also being widely confused with the Jews another. The Jews themselves were hated and expelled from Rome in apostolic

times, and many vile slanders against them were circulated in connection with such displacements. Many of the people identified Christianity as a form of Judaism and therefore transferred to them the existing hatred of the Jews. Regarding the nature of slanders against the church, William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 203, pointed out that, "They were accused of cannibalism . . . this took its rise from a perversion of the words of Jesus, "This is my body . . . this is My blood, etc." They were accused of killing and eating a child at their feasts. They were accused of immorality and incest. The famed Agape, or love feast, was misrepresented as a sensual orgy. They were accused of turning slaves against their masters. They were accused of "hatred of mankind." They were accused of disloyalty to Caesar, due to their refusal to worship the emperor."

"On account of your good deeds as they observe them . . ." A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 406, wrote, "The good works here were not what are commonly called acts of benevolence." The thing which the non-Christian beheld was the beautiful moral conduct of the Christians, emphasized by their adamant refusal to indulge in the sensualities of paganism.

"Glorify God . . ." Peter had learned his lesson at the Master's feet, because Christ Himself taught this same principle in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:16)

"In the day of visitation . . ." Whether the day here is understood as the final judgment, or sometime of future conversion, it yields the same basic meaning; because as Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 54, wrote, "The glorification of God on the day of judgment would presuppose their previous conversion."

William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 204 said of this verse, "Here is our challenge and our inspiration. It is by the loveliness of our daily life and conduct that we must commend Christianity to those who do not believe."

### **Verse 13**

"Submit yourselves . . ." This means "be subject, or obey." C. J. Polkinghorne, *A New Testament Commentary*, p. 590 wrote: "It is the key word in this epistle, occurring here and in 2:18; 3:1,5, 22, and in 5:5, six times in all."

“To every human institution . . .” James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 459, translated this, “to every human creation of magistrates,” making it clear that Peter rejected the sophistry of the zealots who maintained that obedience was due only to those magistrates appointed by God. Yes, it is human governments which Peter here commanded Christians to obey.

“For the Lord’s sake . . .” Jesus is still Lord; and under certain circumstances, Peter himself affirmed that, “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

“Whether to a king as the one in authority. . .” One might have expected Peter to say, “to the emperor, as supreme,” but the meaning is the same.

B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 73, wrote, “By “the king” is meant the Roman Emperor, who was frequently so described by the Greek writers. Nero was emperor when St. Peter wrote. Christians were to obey even him, wicked tyrant as he was; for his power was given him from above, as the Lord Himself had said of Pilate. (John 19:11)

The existence of human governments is here revealed to be God; and this is not hard to understand when the alternative chaos that would ensue without them is contemplated. Even the worst of governments is better than none at all.

#### **Verse 14**

“Or to governors, as sent by him . . .” Actually in Rome at the time of Peter’s writing, the emperor was the actual ruler, the many governors of the provinces being no more than deputies whose authority and tenure were subject absolutely to the whim of the current Caesar.

“For the punishment of evil doers and the praise of those who do right . . .” This states the general purpose of human governments and may not be understood as a declaration that the governors sent by Nero were scrupulous to observe such guidelines.

#### **Verse 15**

“For such is the will of God . . .” refers to the institution and continuity of human governments.

“That by doing right, you may silence the ignorance of foolish men . . .” There is a charge in this that the slanders of the Christians were grounded in the ignorance and foolishness of their accusers; but there is a definite culpability both in such ignorance and in such foolishness.

Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, 1 Peter, p. 146, wrote, “In the Bible, ‘foolish’ is often used in the sense of evil-disposed or wicked.” The kind of ignorance that repeats a vicious slander without checking the truth of it is likewise reprehensible.

“You may silence . . .” The original word here properly signifies to muzzle a beast, to hinder it from eating, or from biting.” Peter’s method of doing this, of course, was that of doing so by righteous conduct. As Albert Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 147, wrote, “One of the best ways of meeting the accusations of our enemies is to lead a life of strict integrity. It is not easy for the wicked to reply to this argument.”

Is our situation with reference to government today any different from that when Peter penned this epistle? There is, of course, the principle that in a democratic society, the people themselves are those who govern; and there is a vast difference in that. The difference, however, still does not license illegal and rebellious behavior against the duly constituted authorities. The great practical difference is that a Christian should actively participate in the affairs of his government. Agreement is felt with William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 206, who wrote, “it is tragic that so few Christians really fulfill their obligation to the state and the society in which they live.”

### **Verse 16**

B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 74, wrote, “The meaning of this verse is that Christian freedom must show itself, not in license, but in willing obedience to constituted authorities.”

A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 407, warned that no Christian, “Should mistake the nature of his Christian liberty so as to dream of an exemption from obedience either to God or man.” It is evident that there are many today who have done

exactly that, even claiming that it is not necessary or essential for them to obey even God!

### **Verse 17**

It is perhaps best to understand this verse in two parts:

- (1) honor all men, but go much further than this and love the brotherhood particularly, and
- (2) fear God first, and in all that is consistent with the fear of God, honor the king. It appears that “fear God,” standing just ahead of “honor the king,” as some qualifications in it with reference to the latter command.

“Honor all men . . .” This is a difficult commandment, but no more so than Paul’s admonition for every man to “count others better than himself.” (Philippians 2:3)

“Love the brotherhood . . .” C. J. Polkinghorne, *op. cit.*, p. 591, said, the Greek term “brotherhood,” that Peter used here and in 5:9 occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.”

“Fear God . . .” The beginning of all spiritual wisdom is in this (Proverb 6:7) ; and the commandment is actually a short form of the entire duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

### **Verse 18**

“Servants, be submissive to your masters . . .” Christianity was squarely opposed to the institution of slavery; but there were considerations of the most weighty nature that forbade any such thing as a campaign against it. Such an attack would have intensified the persecutions coming upon the church; and equally important is the fact that any overt championship of the cause of slaves would have promptly inundated the church with a whole army of sinful persons, seeking not Christ, but their freedom from slavery. It was Christ’s purpose to change the world, but not with dynamite; the holy faith acts as leaven.

“But also to those who are unreasonable . . .” Peter took into account the two kinds of slave masters, the good and the bad, cautioning the slaves to give

loyal and true service to both kinds, because that was God's will. Up to here, Peter had only vaguely mentioned the suffering coming upon the church, but in this he passed to, "A class who were (already) sufferers indeed, the slaves of the household." (J. R. Dummelow, Commentary on the Holy Bible, p. 1044)

Even such wicked masters were to be honored and faithfully served by the Christians who were slaves.

### **Verse 19**

"For the sake of conscience toward God . . ." Raymond C. Kelcy, op. cit., p. 59, wrote, "This comes from a Greek phrase which means awareness of God." The point of its inclusion here is that of forbidding the notion that patient suffering is in itself pleasing to God, which is not the case at all, unless it is grounded on consciousness of God's presence.

"Bears up under sorrows . . ." This is a reference to the cruel, and even inhumane, sadistic treatment the slaves of that era often received from their masters. They had no legal rights whatever; they could be beaten, maimed, burned with fire, or tortured in any manner that a wicked imagination might suggest. What an achievement for Christianity that such a scourge was finally banished.

### **Verse 20**

This is another verse in this epistle which carries the true hallmark of consonance with the teachings of Jesus Christ, who in the Beatitudes blessed not those who were persecuted, but those who were persecuted "for righteousness sake" (Matthew 5:10), there being no honor for those who, thorough their own sins, might have been persecuted.

### **Verse 21**

This and the following four verses are some of the noblest scripture in all the Bible. In these five verses, there are no less than six references to Christ as the Suffering Servant. It is just what should have been expected from the apostle who so boldly identified Jesus as, "God's Servant Jesus." (Acts 3:13)



“You have been called for this purpose . . .” Christ suffered vicariously for all men; and it is incumbent upon His followers that they should not shrink from any duty because of any suffering that might be incurred. There is also the thought here that, just as slaves were obligated to obey their masters, so Christians are also obligated to obey Christ.

“Leaving you an example . . .” David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p. 1242, wrote, “The word from which ‘example’ comes is found nowhere else in the New Testament.”

This is therefore a valuable witness for existence of a heavenly pattern, not merely for the building of the church and the ordering of its worship, government and program, but also for the behavior and lifestyle of Christians was well.

#### **Verse 22**

The absolute sinless Lord is affirmed by this Jesus, despite the perfection of His life, suffered; and the thought for the slaves is that even if they could be sinless, there would still be occasions of suffering. And how shall the soul endure such injustice? “By remembering that the Sinless One also suffered for us.”

#### **Verse 23**

This is a further deployment upon the sacred page of the beautiful and sinless character of the Savior.

“Entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously . . .” Although Jesus submitted to Pilate’s judgment, He did so in full realization that Pilate had no power but from above. (John 19:11) Jesus committed both Himself and His cause to God.

#### **Verse 24**

Scripture could not state more plainly the great redemptive offering of Christ for our sins on the cross. In what way did Christ bear our sins? He bore the consequence of our sins, which is death itself; He suffered separation, though briefly, from the presence of God; He was numbered with transgressors;

and they made His grave with the wicked and with a rich man in His death. He endured a lifetime of exposure to the outrageous opposition of evil and unscrupulous men. How have we died to sins?

What kind of holy medicine is this, in which the physician pays the price and the sufferer receives the healing! Jesus was chastised literally; His precious body was marked with the stripes that redeemed us.

### **Verse 25**

The two titles, Shepherd and Guardian, are here applied to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14), appropriating the title in such a manner as to affirm His Godhead, without giving the Pharisees any excuse for charging Him with sedition. Furthermore, no other title of Jesus our Lord ever so completely captured the hearts and imaginations of the primitive church in exactly the same manner as did this one: W. A. Snively, *Biblical Illustrator*, 1 Peter, p. 242, wrote, "There is no symbol upon which the early church seems to have dwelt with more delight than that of Christ as the Good Shepherd, bringing home to the fold the lost sheep. It was engraved on gems; it furnished the legends of seals; it gives today an almost fabulous value to fragments of broken glass; it was painted upon the chalice of the Holy Communion; and it was carved upon the tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs!"

There can really, therefore, be no other way of understanding these two magnificent titles than as being ascribed here to the blessed Savior.

## **CHAPTER 3**

The apostle in this chapter continued giving instructions to classes or groups of people:

- (1) to wives (verses 1-6),
- (2) to husbands (verses 7-12),

- (3) to the community of Christians as a whole; and then, perhaps with the looming terror of the Neronian persecution in mind, he spoke of the blessedness of suffering for righteousness sake. (verses 13-22)

### **Verses 1-2**

“Be submissive to your own husbands . . .” Note also that this is extended to include the submission of a Christian wife to a pagan husband. Although it may be supposed that both the husband and wife, many times, would be converted together, there would inevitably be occasions when only the wife would become a Christian with her husband continuing in paganism. J. H. A. Hart, *Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. V, p. 63, wrote, “Paul found it necessary to impress upon the Corinthian church that this incompatibility of religion did not justify dissolution of marriage.” (1 Corinthians 12:10ff). As a matter of fact, there is no evidence that conversion to Christianity was ever considered to be a cancellation of any legal contract, not even the status of slavery.

“Are disobedient to the word . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. XII, p. 121, wrote, “The word here is the gospel, and the clause means, ‘If any are not Christians.’” In this verse Peter means, “The husband should be the head of the house, and the wife should recognize the fact.”

“They observe your chaste and respectful behavior . . .” The literal meaning of verse 2 is, “Having kept, or when they have kept an eye on your chaste conversation.” The husband in such a marriage would be jealously on the watch to see what effect would show in her life after embracing those foolish notions, as they might have appeared to him.

### **Verse 3**

Does this mean that it is a sin for a Christian woman to wear a God jewel, or to braid her hair, or to put on clothes? To ask this question is to answer it. E. M. Zerr, *Bible commentary*, 1 Peter, p. 259, wrote, “The unavoidable conclusion is that she must not depend on the display of the articles mentioned.” It is the inordinate stress of outward adorning of the person which Peter here condemned.

In ancient times, extravagance of dress went beyond all reason. William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, p. 221, wrote, “Nero even had a room with the walls covered with pearls; and Pliny saw Lollia Paulina, wife of Caligula, wearing a dress so covered with pearls and emeralds that it cost more than a million dollars.”

#### **Verse 4**

“Hidden person of the heart . . .” This verse deals with the duties of wives. The “hidden person” is the same as Paul’s “inner man” (Ephesians 3:16), meaning the actual person, the private being which every person knows himself to be. Paul described a real Jew as being a Jew who is one “inwardly,” which stresses the same thought. (Romans 2:28f)

“Imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit . . .” A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 413, wrote, “Paul assures us in this passage that the moral characteristics gained in this life remain our characteristics in the next.” All of this warning against outwardly display of expensive dress and ornaments indicates that many of the Christians of that period were wealthy. (1Timothy 6:17f)

#### **Verse 5**

“Who hoped in God . . .” There is a subtle indication in this that the position of Christian women to whom Peter wrote is superior to that enjoyed by the wives of the mighty patriarchs who merely “hoped” in God, whereas the Christians having received the precious promises which their predecessors had only hoped for, were the actual possessors of the glorious gospel and all of its spiritual endowments.

#### **Verse 6**

“Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham . . .” It should not be thought that Sarah’s obedience to Abraham was in any sense servility. On one occasion she ordered Abraham to “Cast out the bondservant and her son,” a “request” that sorely grieved and distressed Abraham; but he obeyed her. (Genesis 21:10-12)

Nevertheless, there was the utmost respect and honor accorded her husband by the noble Sarah.

“Calling him lord . . .” The significance of Sarah’s doing this lies in the fact that this is what she called him in her own heart, not merely when others might hear her.

The real test of what one is, or what one thinks, lies in the content of what they say to themselves, not in what they might say to others. (Genesis 18:12)

“You have become her children . . .” Paul extensively developed the thought of Christians being the children of Abraham, a principle given by Christ Himself. (John 8:39ff) Being sons of Abraham, as all Christians are, (Galatians 3:29), they are also children of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

“If you do what is right . . .” This qualifier stands over against all Christian privilege. The thing that disqualified the Jews of Jesus’ day as true sons of Abraham was disobedience. If they do not do well, they shall become, like the disobedient Jews of Jesus’ day, “Sons of the devil.” (John 8:44)

‘Without being frightened by any fear . . .’ Archibald M. Hunter, op. cit., p. 123, wrote, “Peter is apparently thinking of some attempt (by a pagan husband perhaps?) to scare a woman out of her Christian faith.”

## **Verse 7**

In Christianity, obligations are never a one-way street, but reciprocal by nature. If slaves have obligations, so do their masters; if children have duties toward their parents, so do parents have duties toward their children; if wives have duties to fulfill, so do their husbands. This is noticed extensively in Ephesians and Colossians where such duties are spelled out reciprocally for all of the classes here mentioned.

“You husbands likewise live with your wives in an understanding way . . .” James Macknight, Macknight on the Epistles, Vol. 5, p. 473, translated this verse . . .” “Husbands cohabit with your wives according to knowledge,” which, in the light of the probable meaning of next to the last clause appears to be the likely meaning of it.

“As with a weaker vessel . . .” Modern women resent such a view as this; but the unanimous opinion of all mankind for centuries confirms it as a fact.

Plato, as quoted by Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 124, wrote, “Lighter tasks are to be given to women than to men because of the weakness of their sex.”

In those lands where women do not enjoy the chivalrous preference and honor which Christianity has brought to them, their status is invariably one of progressive reduction and oppression. In turning away from Christianity and staking all of their hopes upon a newly won legal status, the great mass of womankind will eventually find that they have been woefully short-changed and cheated.

“Grant her honor . . .” The honor given to women through obedience to this great Christian ethic cannot fail to be forfeited through acceptance of the current temptation of women to rely, not upon this chivalrous honor which God through His gospel has conferred upon them, but upon a projected legal status which they view as giving them something better; whereas there is nothing better than the holy reverence that Christians have for the person and personality of women, and particularly their wives. This honor has been manifested in many small things, such as offering women seats in crowded rooms, or removing hats in elevators (things which have certainly gone out of style); but they were signs of a deeper respect and reverence for women which were essential features of the Christian ethic toward women.

For the Christian, the loving appreciation and holy regard for women can never go out of style, because they are firmly grounded in the word of the apostles, as in this verse.

“A fellow-heir of the grace of life . . .” The meaning usually given to this clause makes “the grace of life” to be that of eternal life; and, of course, this is frequently the meaning of it throughout the New Testament; however such a view of it here would make a pagan husband a joint-heir with his wife, of eternal life; and that cannot be true. It would seem better, then, to understand it as did A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 415 when he wrote: “The grace of life is life in the natural sense, the mysterious and divine gift (not apart from one another, but conjointly), which they are privileged by the Creator’s primeval benediction

(Genesis 1:28) to transmit. They have the power no archangel has, to bring human beings into existence.”

“So that your prayers may not be hindered . . .” As Raymond Kelcy, *The Letters of Peter and Jude*, p. 67, wrote, “This is an illustration of the fact that one cannot be right with God when his relations with another human being are wrong.”

### **Verse 8**

Not merely women are the recipients of the honor which springs from the vital Christian recognition of the sanctity of all life, because every human being is recognized as a mortal brother, created in the image of God, a beneficiary of the blood of Christ, and a potential heir of everlasting glory! This respect and reverence belongs to all men, in the Christian viewpoint; but even over and beyond that there is a vital and passionate love of the brethren especially. This love is designed to knot the Christian community into a unit having “like mindedness,” having for all of its members a loving, compassionate tender-heartedness, free from the selfishness and self-centeredness which are the distress of the unregenerated.

### **Verse 9**

“Not returning evil for evil . . .” This, of course, was an accepted ethic of paganism; but it is rejected by Christians. “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone . . .” (Romans 12:17) This was not an ethic developed by the apostles, but one handed down directly from the mouth of the Lord Himself, who said, “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” (Luke 6:27-28)

(Note: All of the apostolic teachings should be understood to have originated, not with them, but with the Lord Jesus Christ.)

### **Verses 10-12**

The apostle here quoted Psalm 34:12ff, but with variations from both the Hebrew and LXX texts; but, as A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 416, wrote, “The divergence is probably due to a confusion of memory, but (as often) designed to

bring out an additional significance.” J. H. A. Hart, op. cit., p. 66, wrote, Peter’s use of the variation, “Makes it mean eternal life . . .”

However, Raymond C. Kelcy, op, cit., p. 69, wrote, “It seems clear that both the psalmist and the apostle use the word to refer to the present life on earth.”

We shall leave it to those skilled in such matters to determine which is correct; and from the point of view of this writer, it makes no difference, being true both ways!

Those who would love eternal life must heed the exhortations here; and likewise those who would have a joyful life on earth must follow the same instructions.

“Let him seek peace and pursue it . . .” The true peacemaker is not passive but active, and must take the lead, not merely in keeping the peace himself, but in the earnest inducement of others to do likewise.

“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous . . .” Jesus said, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 20) That verse has the same meaning as the clause here.

“But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil . . .” Not only are wicked men denied the solicitous care of God, but their unrighteousness has actually incurred the displeasure of God. The Lord is angry with the wicked every day.

### **Verse 13**

Peter begins in this paragraph to speak guardedly about the terrible persecution coming upon them. He did not mean by this question that Christians were not in any danger of bodily harm from their enemies; what it meant was that no matter what might happen to their bodies, nothing, really, could happen to them.

Peter was in complete harmony with the Lord is such a viewpoint. “It means that men and devils may do their worst, as they did to Jesus, and cannot harm us.” Note: See what our Lord said in (Luke 21:16-19).



We must believe, therefore, that it was this safety through persecution that Peter had in mind here. There is a quotation from G. A. Studdent-Kennedy regarding one who was asked if prayer would render a man invulnerable to shot and shell, and who replied that, “Fellowship with God through prayer would make a man sure that though his body was shattered, his soul would be untouched.”

#### **Verse 14**

“Even if you should suffer . . .” What does this mean? A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 417, wrote, “It means the horrors of capital punishment.” The undeniable meaning of, “Christ also suffered for sins once” (verse 18) confirms this understanding of “suffer” here.

“And do not fear their intimidations . . .” Christians must not fear the things that men generally fear. The terror that men can bring to those having their own value-judgments is indeed awesome; but the child of God lives by a different set of values.

“Do not be troubled . . .” Like in so many other places in this great epistle, there is a suggestion here of the words of Jesus who said, “Let not your heart be troubled.” (John 14:1)

#### **Verse 15**

The prophecy of Isaiah 8:13 reads, “It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear. And He shall be your dread.”

“Sanctify . . . Christ as Lord . . .” What is meant by sanctifying the Lord? A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 418, wrote, “It is closely akin to “hallowing” the name of the Father in heaven, as in the Lord’s prayer (the only other place in the New Testament where this expression occurs), defining “to sanctify” as “to recognize, in word and deed, His full holiness, and therefore to treat Him with due awe.”

“Always ready to make a defense to everyone who asks . . .” All Christians, at all times, should have a full grasp of the rational basis for espousing the holy religion they have accepted, as well as possessing a thorough knowledge of the great doctrines of the New Testament; for there will be countless occasions in

every life when such knowledge and understanding can be made a vehicle for enlisting others in the holy faith.

“For the hope . . .” The primacy of hope in the motivation of Christians shines in this, there being a glorious sense in which, “We are saved by hope.” (Romans 8:24)

“Yet with gentleness and reverence. . .” Why this? There are many reasons.

- (1) Christians should manifest meekness at all times. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5) In addition to this, there is no situation in life that demands such an attitude any more than that which appears on an occasion of religious questioning and response.
- (2) A lack of meekness can prejudice judges, if one is in a court of law.
- (3) A lack of it can antagonize earnest questioners who seeking after the truth can be easily frustrated by an arrogant, overbearing, or discourteous attitude.

And why fear?

- (1) In all situations where a Christian is attempting to answer the questions of others, or to restore one who has fallen into sin, there is danger to the Christian himself. As Paul put it, “Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, looking to yourself, less you too be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)
- (2) There should be fear that the answers might not be given in the right spirit, or that the answers might not be correct. The failure of many really to know, the truth about their own religious views is widespread; and every teacher should concern himself to know the right answers, to avoid becoming a teacher of falsehood. Fear is a proper motive for all who presume to teach the word of the Lord.

## Verse 16

“And keep a good conscience . . .” The key admonition recurs again and again in this epistle: “zealous for good works . . . for righteousness’ sake . . . sanctify the Lord . . . with meekness and fear etc.,” all of these in this very paragraph.

“You are slandered . . .” They were spoken against because of the manner of their lives; but they are told to make their lives so beautiful that they will shame the evil critics.

“In that name let him glorify Christ . . .” This is one of the great phrases of the New Testament, being used 164-172 times (depending on the version) in the writings of Paul alone; but although Paul laid the greatest stress on it, the conception of being “in Christ” is not Pauline, going back to our Lord Himself who said, “You in Me and I in you,” (John 14:20. Also, “I am the vine and you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit.” (John 15:5) What is meant by being “in Christ”? Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 130, wrote, “The clue . . . is in the Hebrew conception of corporate personality.”

The church is Christ, and is called Christ’s spiritual body. Archibald M. Hunter, *Ibid*, wrote, “To be in Christ, therefore is to be a member of the redeemed society, that is, the church, of which Christ is Head . . . the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.”

## Verse 17

Peter seems to accept the certainty of Christian suffering; for suffering is a basic component of life on earth. “If indeed we suffer with Him . . . we may also be glorified with Him.” (Romans 8:17) However, there is a more specific suffering in view here. “Suffer,” as in verses 14, 18, here means “suffering death.”

As A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 419, saw it: “Peter was thinking of the legal process of verses 14, 18, coming to a verdict of guilty. He was himself daily expecting such a death.”

## Verse 18

“For Christ also died for sins once for all . . .” The great atonement of Christ is denoted by this. Stephen W. Paine, *Wycliffe Bible Commentary, New Testament*, p. 977, pointed out that there are visible in this epistle, “Three stands of Peter’s thought about the atonement.” It is compared to the paschal lamb (1:19), the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 (1:24) and to the scape goat (1:24).

“Died for sins once . . .” “Once” is the great New Testament word from the Greek *hapax*, meaning “once for all.” It is used of:

- (1) Christ’s coming in human form (Hebrews 9:26),
- (2) Christ’s death (Hebrews 9:28),
- (3) the deliverance to mankind of the faith (Jude 3),
- (4) the offering of Christ’s blood in heaven (Hebrews 9:12, 26),
- (5) the appointment to die (Hebrews 9:27),
- (6) God’s shaking the earth and the heavens so as to remove them (Hebrews 12:27), and
- (7) the suffering of Christ for sins, (1 Peter 3:18).

“The Just (Christ) for the unjust . . .” Let it be strictly observed that Peter in this does not say, “That He might bring God to us,” but “that He might bring us to God.” There was nothing in the atonement that was designed to change God in any manner; for it was man who needed to be changed. A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 420, wrote, the separation between God and man, “is one-sided.”

The suffering of Christ was not to satisfy God but for the purpose of getting the attention of rebellious men. God had already loved humanity before the atonement was even possible.

“Having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit . . .” The first clause is clear enough being a reference to the crucifixion of our Lord; but there is a wide disagreement among scholars as to the meaning of “made alive in the Spirit.”

“Made alive . . . “ It is amazing that some read this as if it meant, “Kept alive,” or, “Continued alive;” whereas the true meaning of the words, as in the text, is “made alive, resurrected!” These words must be understood to mean the resurrection of the Son of God from the grave, the same being the only way in which Jesus Christ was ever “made alive.”

But who did the making alive? This is easily resolved. It was achieved by “the Spirit of Holiness.” (Romans 1:4)

But, did not Christ declare that He Himself would raise Himself up from the grave? (John 10:17) Yes, indeed; but there are hundreds of examples in the New Testament where something was done by one member of the Godhead is attributed to another member of it. The resurrection of Christ is also ascribed to the Father, (1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 1:20) thus being ascribed to all three, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **Verse 19**

“In which . . .” The Spirit by which the preaching in view here was done was the blessed Holy Spirit, by whom and through whom all the preaching has been done throughout the ages.

“He went and made proclamation . . .” is just a Biblical way of saying he preached. Albert Barnes, Barnes Notes on the New Testament, p. 176, wrote, “No particular stress should be laid on the clause, he went.” Speaking of the preaching of the apostles themselves, Paul said that Christ “Came and preached peace to you that were afar off,” (Ephesians 2:17), but Christ preached to the Ephesians through human instruments, nevertheless it is said that He “came and preached” to them. Therefore, James Macknight, op. cit., p. 480, wrote, “If Christ is said by Paul to go and do, what he did by his apostles, Christ may with equal propriety be said by Peter to go and do what he did by Noah.”

“To the spirits now in prison . . .” The meaning of this is that the preaching mentioned in the previous verse was directed to living men and women on earth at the time the preaching was done, but who at the time of Peter’s mentioning this were “in prison,” that is, in a deceased state, under the sentence of God like the angels who are cast down and reserved unto the day of judgment and

destruction of the wicked. There is another possibility, namely, that the whole antediluvian world to whom the preaching was directed were said by Peter in this passage to have been “in prison” at the time of the preaching of Noah. If that is what he meant, then the figure harmonizes perfectly with Jesus’ preaching to the citizens of Nazareth and others of that generation, referring His message as “a proclamation of release to the captives,” that is, the captives in sin. (Luke 4:18) There is no Scriptural reason whatever for not referring to that whole generation which rejected the preaching of Noah as, “The souls in prison;” however, Peter wrote, “spirits in prison;” and, for that reason, we must refer the words “spirits in prison” to their present status at the time of Peter’s writing. They, like the fallen angels, were then “spirits in prison.”

It is clear then that the meaning attributed to “spirits in prison” turns altogether upon the fact of when the preaching was done. The next verse makes it certain that it was during the generation of Noah, a time when the “spirits” here mentioned were not “spirits” merely, but “souls;” therefore, “spirits in prison” is a reference to their status at the time Peter wrote.

### **Verse 20**

“Who once were disobedient . . .” “Who” flies like a banner over the whole passage; those souls Peter identified as “spirits in prison” when he wrote were living souls generations earlier in the time of Noah. In the time of Noah they were disobedient; in the time of Noah Christ preached to them; in the time of Noah, most of them rejected salvation; in the time of Noah, “few” were saved. A few “spirits,” no indeed! a few “souls,” that being what all of them were at the time of the preaching. There is absolutely no hint whatever in the entire New Testament of any spirits, at any time whatever, ever having been saved, or for that matter, even preached to. All of the nonsense that one reads about Christ preaching to the spirits in Hades is a fabrication built like a superstructure above and beyond the New Testament text.

Men would like to have a second chance. Having rejected Christ in their bodies, they dream of getting preached to “as spirits! The popular notion held by many that Christ preached to disembodied spirits is rationally inconceivable.

If He had done such a thing, why should Noah's generation alone, of all who ever lived on earth, have been singled out as the beneficiaries? No. We must agree with Roy S. Nicholson, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Vol. 10, p. 291, who wrote, "The passage holds out no hope for the impenitent; it forbids the notion that those who during their earthly life refuse the gospel of God's grace may have a second chance in the world beyond, and may be ultimately saved."

"When the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah . . ." This is another clause pertaining to the "who once" was "when" the longsuffering of God waited.

"Days of Noah . . ." Why is Noah introduced in this context? It was because of the figure of our salvation inherent in the event related here; and what the apostle designs to show by this is that at the same spirit that preached through Noah is exactly the same Spirit now preached through the apostles, a fact Peter had already categorically stated in verse 1:11.

Another very obvious purpose of Peter is to encourage the saints under threat of impending persecution by calling attention to the fact of "few" being saved through the great debacle of the flood, with the inherent warning that it may also be "few" who will be saved through the looming terror. Thus it is clear that the preaching Jesus did (verse 19) was done through Noah. If Christ had desired to communicate to either spirits or living souls in any kind of spiritual state, it would not have been necessary for Him to enter our earth-life at all. Not even the Holy Spirit addresses men directly. As Jesus said, "He will not speak on his own." (John 16:13)

"During the construction of the ark . . ." is a reference to a period of some 120 years during which Noah preached to the rebellious world. He is called a "preacher of righteousness." (2 Peter 2:5) Albert Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 178, wrote, "The language here is consistent with the thought that Christ did the preaching through the instrumentality of another, to wit, Noah."

"The ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons . . ." These were Noah, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and their respective wives.

“Through the water . . .” Just as the waters of the flood separated between Noah’s family and the rebellious antediluvian world, just so the water of Christian baptism separates between God’s people today and those who are unsaved.

#### **Verse 21**

“And corresponding to that . . .” The figure, pattern, or type in this verse, is the salvation of Noah’s family “by water.” The common misunderstanding that makes baptism the figure in this place is totally wrong, baptism being the antitype, the reality which was only symbolized by the salvation of Noah. How does the salvation of Noah prefigure the salvation of Christians?

(1) It was the water of the flood that separated Noah from the disobedient generation that perished; and it is the water of Christian baptism that separates between the saved of today and the disobedient who perish.

(2) Noah (and family) were borne through the flood for a period of nine months; and as James Macknight, *op. cit.*, p. 483, wrote, “Noah’s coming forth from the water to live again on the earth, after having been full nine months in the water, might fitly be called his being “borne of water.” Christians too must be “born of water.” (John 3:5)

(3) The same water which destroyed the antediluvians was the water which bore up the ark and delivered Noah and his family into a new life. It is the water of baptism that destroys the wicked today, in the sense that they rebel against God’s command, belittle and despise it, refusing to do it at all, or downgrading any necessity of it, even if they submit to it; while at the same time, it is the water of baptism that buries the Christian from his past and “into Christ,” from which he, like Noah, “rises to walk in newness of life.”

(4) The same element is prominent in both deliverances, that of Noah and that of Christians, the same being water; and it is exactly the same kind (who ever heard of different kinds of water?) of water that is evident in both salvations, his and ours. The water that caused the flood is one with the water of Christian baptism.



(5) It was the water of the flood which washed away the filth of that evil generation; and it is the water of Christian baptism that, in a figure, washes away the sins of Christians. (Acts 22:16) There is a variation in the figure here, which Peter pointed out; namely that, whereas it was actual filth that was washed away by the flood, it is moral and spiritual filth which are washed away in baptism. The former affected the flesh and not the conscience; the latter affected the conscience but not the flesh.

(6) Only a few were saved through the flood; and (in the relative sense) only few will be saved in Christ.

“Baptism now saves you . . .” Some versions of the Bible read. “Doth now save you, even baptism . . .” This is as awkward a translation of this as the ingenuity of man could have devised. “Baptism,” is the subject of the clause and should be first, reading “Baptism now saves you . . .” This simple statement of truth should upset no one, for Christ Himself said, “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16) Peter said no more than what the Lord said there.

“Not the removal of dirt from the flesh . . .” it was the polluted flesh that was destroyed and removed by the flood, it is a moral and spiritual cleansing effected in baptism.

All history denies the notion that baptism is not an external rite. On the other hand, it most assuredly is an external rite. Christ was baptized in a river. It took a laver (baptistry) to perform it in the day of the apostles. In Titus 3:5, the “laver of regeneration” is mentioned. It was performed in pools of water like those men pass by on the road when traveling (Acts 8:36); and even today there is hardly a church of any name in all Christendom that does not have in its place of worship either a baptistry or the vestige of one (the font); and it may be inquired where did these come from? if Christian baptism is not an external rite?

“But an appeal for a good conscience . . .” The word of the Lord seems to have been designed in order to give men who will not believe it some kind of crutch upon which to rely in their unbelief. Someone has said, “There is hardly

a text in the Bible that does not have a nail in it where the devil can hang his hat.”

No man, as long as he has not obeyed the Divine commandment to be baptized, can ever have, even if he should live 200 years, a good conscience as long as he is unbaptized. Therefore, full agreement is felt with Roy S. Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 293, whose endorsement of the New American Standard Bible’s rendition wrote, “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Peter’s great Pentecostal sermon has the same meaning where he declared that believers should repent and be baptized in order to receive the forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38)

“Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ . . .” Peter kept coming back again and again to the fountain source of all blessing. Even the disobedience of the gospel by sinners is not the source of their redemption, despite being one of the conditions of its bestowal. The resurrection of Christ is everything in the Christian religion.

E. M. Zerr, *op. cit.*, p. 261 was faithful to point out that there is also in this text an effective argument for immersion as the action that truly is baptism in the New Testament sense. He wrote: “Had the rite been performed by sprinkling, all would have known that such an act could not cleanse anything,” certainly not any filth from the body.

## **Verse 22**

The same magnificent truth proclaimed by Jesus in Matthew’s great commission (28:18-20) is also enunciated here. The universal power and godhead of the Son of God is a cornerstone of Christian doctrine.

## CHAPTER 4

### INTRODUCTION

The visible divisions in this chapter are:

- (1) the security of the faithful in judgment (verses 1-6),
- (2) the destruction of Jerusalem prophesied (verses 7-11),
- (3) special instructions to the Christians as the approaching terror develops (verses 12-19).

#### Verse 1

“Christ has suffered in the flesh . . .” This merely means, “For as Christ died.”

“Arm yourselves also with the same purpose . . .” This is equivalent to Paul’s, “Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:5)

“He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin . . .” This does not mean that Christ, after suffering, rested from sin; on the other hand, the entire final clause of the verse regards the status of Christians. As B. C. Caffin, *Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 22, 1 Peter, p.170, wrote, “The apostle first spoke of the Master, then turned to the disciple.”

As baptized believers in Christ, Peter’s readers, so soon to undergo persecutions, are here admonished to live above sin. “In Christ” they are already dead to sin; they must live above sin.

Raymond C. Kelcy, *The Letters of James and Peter*, p. 82, wrote, “Not that the one who has ceased from sin is without sin, but that his life is not a life of sin.” (1 John 1:8, 10)

David H. Wheaton, *The New Bible Commentary, Revised* p. 1246, wrote, “The thought of this whole verse is that, just as Christ’s suffering preceded His glorification, so also, for the Christian, his death to sin, and the patient endurance even of physical death itself, if necessary, shall likewise precede a similar glorification for him.”

## Verse 2

Stephen W. Paine, Wycliffe Bible Commentary, New Testament, p. 981, wrote, “He who has shared Christ’s cross is no longer alive to the pull of sin through the ordinary human desires, but is alive only to the pull of the will of God.” The complete effectiveness of the new status of Christians, however, will always be more or less, depending upon the individual’s own attention and zeal in spiritual matters.

## Verse 3

Like other lists of sins given in the New Testament, this one is by no means exhaustive. Peter here links together a number of related sins typical of the conduct of the wicked. J. H. A. Hart, Expositor’s Greek Testament, Vol. V. p. 71, wrote, “Here, violence and lust are classified with drunkenness which fosters them.”

The climax of the list is “abominable idolatries,” identifying the scandalous idol temples as the general source and encouragement of Gentile licentiousness.

“For the time already passed . . .” This, along with “the rest of your time” in verse 2, comprises the whole earthly life of the people Peter was addressing.

“Time already past is sufficient . . .” The primary thought here is that through their own experience those Christians who had forsaken Gentile debaucheries to obey the gospel already knew the frustration and emptiness of such a life. Peter’s words here imply, “Surely you have already had enough of such things.” Paul made exactly the same appeal in Romans 6:21.

## Verse 4

“You do not run with them . . .” Perhaps here is the source of a common expression, “running with,” this or that social set, or with certain friends or associates.

Excess of dissipation . . .” The tendency of all dissipation (riot), lust, violence, etc., is for the indulgence to increase, being multiplied geometrically beyond all consideration or reason. Those who indulge are like an engine with no governor and subject to unlimited acceleration until it is destroyed.

“They malign you . . .” No one is any more unpopular at a drinking party than a teetotaler; and the same is true of all abstainers from popular sins.

### **Verse 5**

Bold and uninhibited sinners, arrogantly indulging to excess in every form of wickedness, and speaking evil of those who will not join in their orgies, shall give an account of their deeds. God will judge the living and the dead.

“Living and the dead . . .” From the inception of Christianity, this appears to have been somewhat of a stereotyped way of speaking of the final judgment.

Peter himself used it at the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:42), and it appears in Paul’s charge to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:1), such early usage of the expression pointing back to Jesus Himself as the author of it. It refers to the fact that the final judgment will gather earth’s total population, the dead of all ages, as well as the living generation which shall be upon the earth when the time comes; and they shall all be judged at the same time. (Matthew 25:31-46)

It is likely that the mention of “Him who is ready” in this verse is to be understood as a reference to Christ.

### **Verse 6**

“For this purpose . . .” has the effect of “with the final judgment in view.” “The gospel . . . preached even to those who are dead . . .” here are exactly the same as the dead in the previous verse, that is, all who had lived on earth and had died previously from the time of Peter’s words, there being, it seems, a particular reference to Christians who had recently died and who were the object of certain anxieties on the part of their Christian relatives.

Albert Barnes, Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, p. 191, wrote, “It was natural in such a connection to speak of those who had died in the faith, and to show for their encouragement that, though they had been put to death, yet they still lived to God.”

The dead mentioned here, Raymond C. Kelcy, op. cit., p. 86, wrote, “The dead here were not dead when the gospel was preached to them.” Fancy theories built upon ignorance of what this verse says and envisioning all kinds of

campaigns to preach to the hosts of the dead, with the postulation of a glorious second chance for all who were disobedient in life—such notions are not merely preposterous; they are contradictory to many plain teachings of the New Testament.

“Judged . . . as men . . . live . . . according to the will of God . . .” F. F. Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 129, gives an excellent explanation of this writing, “Deceased Christians, are not, deprived of the benefits of the gospel. “According to men,” they are judged in the flesh (suffered bodily death); yet “according to God” (from God’s point of view), the spiritual life which they received . . . endures forever.”

Daniel D. Wheedon, *Commentary on the New Testament, Vol. V*, p. 216, also wrote, “The plain meaning is that the gospel was preached to men when living, who are now dead; just as it would be perfectly correct to say that it was preached to saints in glory, or to souls that are in perdition, meaning that it was preached to them when on earth.”

This verse with such a mention of preaching “to the dead” has been grossly misunderstood; but the real motivation for the misunderstanding does not lie in any unusual difficulty in the text itself, but in the desire of men who are enraptured with the thought of a second chance. As William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 249, put it, “It gives a breath-taking glimpse of a gospel of a second chance!”

Peter’s thought here is squarely directed against objections which the Christian community encountered from their pagan contemporaries, the thought of the objection being, “You people die just like the rest of us; what then could be the advantage of being a Christian?” David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p. 1245, gives what he believes Peter would have said, “No,” those people have died (the dead) may be judged in the flesh like men, by suffering physical death; but because the gospel was preached to them (when alive, when they responded, they are now living in the spirit like God.”

## **Verse 7**

Such a verse as this, along with many others similar to it, is a problem to some people. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12); “The Lord is at hand;” (Philippians 4:5); “The coming of the Lord is at hand” (James

5:8); “It is the last hour” (1 John 2:18); “The time is near” (Revelation 1:3). What is actually meant by all such expressions in the New Testament? Throughout this series, it has been repeatedly pointed out that neither Christ nor any of the holy apostles believed that the time of the Second Coming of Christ was a thing of their lifetime.

The entire New Testament was written as a spiritual guide for the redeemed, and it is most likely that every one of such expressions noted above was for the purpose of inspiring watchfulness and preparedness on their part. Christ plainly said that not even He knew the “day or the hour” of the events of final judgment (Matthew 24:36), and it is irresponsible for anyone to affirm that the apostles decided, in spite of this, that they knew when the Second Coming would be.

William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 251, wrote, “For every one of us the time is near. The one thing that can be said of every man is that he will die. For every one of us the Lord is at hand; and we cannot tell the day or the hour when we shall go to meet Him . . . all life is lived in the shadow of eternity.

It is not therefore the true meaning of the apostles that trouble people; it is the false meaning imported into such texts by the grossly literal fundamentalist modernists who, like Pharisees of old, pervert every spiritual statement in the New Testament to support their evil insinuations. Their purpose in perverting the meaning of these is to support their false claims that Christ and the apostles were ignorant in thinking that the end of time (with Christ’s coming) was an event to be expected speedily.

There is no excuse for taking the expressions at the head of his paragraph in the grossly literal, restricted meaning. The saints of all ages have understood them, as they were intended, to be warning inducements to readiness for the appearing of the Lord whenever He may come, His coming for every one of us, in the personal sense, being indeed imminent and speedy for us, and therefore fully justifying the texts as they stand.

“The end of all things is at hand . . .” It is the sobriety and prayerful watchfulness of the Christians which Peter sought to inspire by these words, it is most likely that this has no reference whatever to the Second Coming of Christ.

The time of Peter’s writing was about 65 A. D.; and what took place within the next five or six years explains this verse perfectly as a true prophecy of what happened:

The Neronian persecution broke against the Christians, sending countless thousands of them to their flaming death as torches to light the orgies in Nero’s gardens, or feed the wild beasts in the Coliseum, or to be crucified, tortured, burned alive, beheaded, or suffer any other horrible death that the pagan mind could invent. All earthly possessions of Christians perished in that holocaust.

The Jews made an insurrection against Rome; and, following the death of Nero, the pagan empire organized a war of extermination against them. Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, some 1,100,000 of its population including Jews throughout the area being butchered by the Romans. Thirty thousand young Jewish males were crucified upon the walls of the ruined city, the lumber stores being exhausted to supply crosses.

The nation of Israel perished from the earth, never to rise again until nearly two millenniums had passed.

The sacred temple, so dear to the heart of Jews everywhere, was burned with fire, demolished stone by stone, and completely ruined never to be rebuilt.

The whole religious system of Israel with its marvelous typical prefiguration of Christianity perished. The daily sacrifice ended forever; the high priesthood came to an end; and the judgment of God was vindicated against that nation which had officially rejected the Christ. The Sanhedrin never met again; and there began another Dispersion that salted the earth with the once “chosen people.”

These events, and many others, justify fully Peter’s blunt prophecy. Peter himself was a Jew; and, in view of the above events, which he accurately understood as having been prophesied by Jesus, and which he accurately



foresaw as being so soon to be fulfilled and executed upon that generation, it was quite proper and accurate for him to refer to them prophetically as “the end of all things.”

The destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, only five years after our epistle, was the greatest single event of a thousand years, and religiously significant beyond anything else that ever occurred in human history. “End of all things?” It was indeed that to anyone who contemplated the significance of it, and especially to a Jew like Peter.

“The end of all things . . .” It is alleged by the critics that Peter believed the Second Coming of Christ would happen simultaneously with the fall of Jerusalem; and it may be freely admitted that Peter might have thought so.

But what is really significant is that whereas Peter might indeed have supposed that the Second Coming would occur at the time of the fall of the Holy city, he never said so. This verse we are studying does not say so, and none of the apostles ever said so. Soon after the fall of Jerusalem, however, the whole church soon understood that the first event was a precursor and prophecy of the Second Coming, and that Jesus had so given His teaching as to make His meaning understandable in the light of future events.

### **Verse 8**

The approaching holocaust was to be met by Christians, conscious of the community of their interests and of the deep love that each was to have for every other. A number of other very practical teachings are stressed in order that the Christian community might enter the period of fiery testing with their full moral and spiritual strength.

“Love covers a multitude of sins . . .” David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p. 1246, wrote, “The meaning is that love will overlook its neighbor’s faults.”

### **Verse 9**

Hospitality is frequently commanded in the New Testament; but with the looming persecution and the disorders that would inevitably flow out of it, the

grace would not only be especially commendable, but absolutely necessary to the survival of some.

”Without complaint . . .” Hospitality that is extended in a grudging or complaining manner would not fulfill the apostolic desire written here. The comfort, safety, joy, and well-being of the guest, is a first duty of hospitality.

### **Verse 10**

Any gift that one may have received from God, any talent, wealth or ability—everything that one has is viewed by the Christian as an endowment from God Himself, which is to be used for ministering (serving) the body of Christ. Men’s possessions are not theirs in a selfish sense, for they are considered to be stewards of God’s gift.

### **Verse 11**

“The utterances of God . . .” Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 91 wrote: “This is a word used to refer to the laws given to Moses (Acts 7:38), to the Hebrew Scriptures (Romans 3:2), and to the word of God. (Hebrews 5:12)”

“By the strength which God supplies . . .” The whole duty of Christians is classified under the general heading of “speaking” and “doing;” but it is actually God who does both! He supplies the words which the speaker is to speak, and the means or strength by which the minister does.

A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 429, wrote, “Thus the wealthy Christian who supports the church and relieves the poor is not really the church’s patron, but a good manager. The paymaster is God.” The same is true of the one who teaches God’s word. The end of all speaking and doing is that “God might be glorified through Jesus Christ.”

### **Verse 12**

In this verse the third and final major division of the epistle begins, and in it Peter gives the climax of his urgent warning and strengthening of the church against the terrible persecution, already under way, but soon to issue in the death of countless numbers of the faithful.

First of all, this verse says, in effect, it is natural for the world to hate you; do not think there is anything strange or unusual happening to you. All of the apostles had already discovered the truth of the savior's warning. (John 15:18-20)

Just before giving this warning, Jesus said, "I command that you love one another;" and significantly Peter prefaced these warnings of impending persecution with the same admonition that the Savior gave in His warning. (verse 8)

"The fiery ordeal . . ." The literal word here is "burning," as in Revelation 18:9, 18, suggesting perhaps that those shameless burnings of Christians to illuminate the gardens of Nero might already have begun. A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 429, wrote, "The fiery trial was not future but present; already the Asiatic Christians are enduring a fierce persecution." Thus the words, "For your testing . . ." Earlier in this letter, Peter had already established the principle that such trials were for the purpose of testing the faith of Christians, and that such a testing was very precious in the eyes of God. (1:7ff)

### **Verse 13**

"You share the sufferings of Christ . . ." How is the Christian's suffering a sharing in the sufferings of Christ? First, their sufferings are caused by the same thing.

Christ died for testifying under oath that He is the Divine Son of God, and the Christians of Peter's day who were confessing the same eternal truth were due shortly to suffer even as Christ suffered. Over and beyond this is the identity of the church as Christ's spiritual body, making the church's sufferings to be those of Christ Himself.

"At the revelation of His glory . . ." Peter used this same expression in 1:7; and, in both places, it is better to understand it as a reference to the Second Coming, the general revelation of Christ before all men as the Redeemer and Judge. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)

## Verse 14

It should be observed that the only wrong alleged against those persecuted ones was that of having accepted the faith of Christ. B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 174, wrote that the meaning of this is, “When you are reviled because you belong to Christ, because you bear His name, because you are Christians.”

“The Spirit of Glory and of God . . .” These are apparently synonymous; and, if so, they mean the Holy Spirit. It was one of the glorious fruits of the indwelling Spirit in Christian hearts that produced the vast spiritual strength enabling the Christian to go on wearing the name, go on being a Christian, go on loving and believing Christ, in spite of being reviled and persecuted for it.

## Verse 15

“Murderer . . .” The crime of murder stands at the head of the list here; and we should not be surprised at Christians being warned against it. It would have been quite easy for Christians to have rationalized the extension of their right of self-defense (manslaughter) and to have made it include preventive murder. The people of God, the New Israel were to continue as honorable, law-abiding citizens, not attempting to take justice into their own hands.

“A troublesome meddler . . .” The word from which this comes is one of the most curious in the New Testament, William Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 259, surmised that, “Peter may well have invented it.” Raymond C. Kelcy, *op. cit.*, p. 94, wrote, “The word is *“allogriepiskopos.”* The last part of this word, of course, is the one from which we get the word “bishop;” and as the first part of it means “pertaining to others,” it is clear enough that the word bears the translation, “bishop of other people’s business!”

In the turbulence of those evil times, Christians would have found it exceedingly wise and prudent to avoid any kind of conduct with outsiders, or even contact with them, that would have resulted in their arraignment and death.

## Verse 16

By any calculation, this is one of the great verses of the New Testament.

- (1) In context, “if any one suffers as a Christian” has the meaning of “if any man is put to death for being a Christian,” exploding in one short text the false theory that the mere profession of Christianity did not become a capital offense till the times of Domitian.
- (2) It identifies the divinely authorized name which was bestowed upon Christ’s followers by the mouth of God Himself, that is, the name Christian.
- (3) The chosen people, the new Israel of God, the church of Christ is commanded to glorify God in this name.

## REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME CHRISTIAN

It is distressing that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the old lie that Satan is the author of the name “Christian” is still widely circulated, and alas, accepted as gospel truth even by Christian commentators who certainly should know better. The Bible reveals that in the new dispensation, the children of God are to be called by a new name which the “mouth of the Lord” would name. (Isaiah 62:2)

The name Christian glorifies Christ as head of the church; and could there be anything reasonable in the supposition that evil men, under the influence of Satan, would have concocted a name that would glorify the Lord Jesus Christ?

This very verse is the place in the New Testament where the apostle Peter, in a sense, used, “The keys of the kingdom of heaven,” being the first of the apostles, and even the only one, to bind the name “Christian” upon the Lord’s followers as their official, holy name.

One of the most significant facts in the New Testament is that the name “disciple” which was everywhere applied to Jesus’ followers throughout the gospels and Acts, absolutely disappears from the New Testament from Acts to Revelation! The apostle John used the expression “disciples” some 77 times in his gospel, but never once in the three short epistles that bear his name, nor in the book of Revelation.

Matthew's commission reveals Jesus commanding the apostles to, "Make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:18-20); but that same commission reveals that all such disciples were to be "baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The name "Christian" is the name of the Father in the sense of His having sent His only Son who is honored by the name; and it is the name of "the Holy Spirit," because the Holy Spirit conveyed the name through Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Syria. One of the ways therefore in which Christians "put on Christ" in baptism (Galatians 3:27) is by putting on the sacred name of "Christian" by the very act itself.

One other thought regarding the origin of this holy name is in order. Although our view is that "the Lord Himself" gave the new name, it is not in harmony with this to suppose that the Spirit-filled church might have begun to apply the name as suggested by Wheaton below; however, it does not seem consistent with Divine origin to suppose that an epithet hurled by the enemies of the truth would in fact become the name. David H. Wheaton, *op. cit.*, p.1246, wrote, "The Latin suffix-*ianus* may have been added to the Greek word Christ to indicate "supporter of," in the same way that Herod's followers were called Herodians. (Mark 3:6) A Roman custom followed in adoption was that of taking this same suffix and adding to it the name of the one doing the adopting. Thus one adopted by Domitius would call himself Domitianus. The Christians may well have applied the name to themselves as having been adopted into Christ's family.

"In that name let him glorify God . . ." How shall the followers of the Lord honor such a commandment. The fact of the commandment having been given only once in the New Testament cannot reduce the binding nature of it. As regards the question of "how" to glorify God in this name, a number of things must be included:

- (1) It should be worn as the exclusive religious name of the child of God, not hyphenated with another name.
- (2) A godly, obedient, holy and devoted life should be exhibited by the wearer.

- (3) One should repeat the name under all circumstances where it would be appropriate, not being ashamed, ever to do so.

### **Verse 17**

Hardly any verse in the New Testament has been misunderstood any more than have this one and the next. Does Peter, for one moment, mean to say that Christians shall hardly be saved at all? Certainly not! Did not Peter say, “The entrance into the eternal kingdom . . . will be abundantly supplied to you.” (2 Peter 1:11) What is in view here?

“For it is time for judgment to begin . . .” This does not mean the eternal judgment is about to begin, but it refers to the judgment against Jerusalem impending in the total destruction of it, and prophetically foretold by both Christ and the apostles.

“Begin with the household of God . . .” From the beginning, it had been the Jews who enlisted the power of the Roman state against Christ and His church; and their hatred they had fostered against Christianity throughout the empire was about to become a roaring tornado of extermination and death venting its full fury against the church of Jesus Christ. Yes, indeed, the judgment would begin, “At the house of God,” that is, the true temple of God, which is the church. Little could the Jews have seen in the approach of this destruction, which they had done so much to foster and encourage, little could they have seen that it would also encompass themselves even more completely and more terribly than that coming on the Christians.

“What will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God . . .?” The “them” of this place is the secular Israel. The introduction of “house of God,” with its meanings of the true temple, makes it virtually certain that the old Israel with “their house,” the Herodian temple, are those designated as the ones who “obey not the gospel.”

And it worked out exactly as Peter prophesied. The Neronian persecution soon ended in the shameful, wretched death of Nero; but his successors went on to put down a Jewish insurrection, which ended in the cataclysmic destruction

of Jerusalem and over a million of the Jews by Vespasian and Titus, A. D. 70, only five years after Peter wrote these lines.

Peter foresaw that and accurately foretold here the onset and progress of the holocaust.

“Obey . . . the gospel . . .” is an excellent term for conversion, and it may only be deplored that current religious culture has found so little use of it.

Obedience of the truth is a *sine qua non* of salvation in Christ. Paul revealed fully the fate of persons who will not “obey the gospel.” (2 Thessalonians 1:8)

### **Verse 18**

The righteous (the Christians) were indeed “scarcely saved,” if Satan had had a better administrator than Nero, if circumstances had been only slightly different from what they were, Christianity might indeed have been exterminated from the earth; but, of course, the providence of God did not allow that to occur.

### **Verse 19**

“Suffer according to the will of God . . .” Throughout this letter, “suffer” is to be understood in the sense of capital punishment, and in a few instances the lesser sufferings that often preceded it.

“According to the will of God . . .” Christians were expected to accept the harsh penalty afflicted by the pagan empire, as being in truth “the will of God.” This is the way Paul and Peter accepted it; and, if the ancient testimony regarding the martyrs is accurate, we may well believe that they too in uncounted numbers did so in faith, committing themselves, as Peter admonished here, “to a faithful Creator” who has the power to make all things work together for good to them that love Him and are the called according to His eternal purpose.

Although it is the prophetic destruction of Jerusalem which Peter had primarily in mind in these verses, it should never be overlooked that the event itself was a type of the ultimate judgment of the Second Coming, giving all of



the apostle's teaching here a spiritual application for all generations to come, and Peter's word is skillfully written to cover both meanings perfectly.

This is in all likelihood the reason for his choice of such a word as "suffer," meaning capital punishment in the first instance and being extended to include all kinds of sorrows and sufferings in the second.

## CHAPTER 5

This chapter concludes the epistle with exhortations concerning the eldership and the general attitude of submission and obedience for all (verses 1-11) and ending with salutations and benediction, (verses 12-14).

### Verse 1

In this verse, Roy S. Nicholson, Beacon Bible Commentary, Vol. 10, p. 299, wrote, "There is neither self-examination nor disparagement, nor any hint of primacy, such as some have claimed for Peter." The storm of persecution coming upon the church naturally focused Peter's mind upon "the need for adequate leadership."

"The elders among you . . ." Since these men are those exercising the oversight of the church (verse 2), the church officials of that name are meant here. Significantly, in some of the older manuscripts "exercising the oversight is omitted, probably for the purpose of denying the eldership the same authority which came, in time, to be attributed to "bishops" only. However, as Archibald M. Hunter, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. XII, p. 147, wrote, "In New Testament times the government of the local church was in the hands of a body of men called almost indifferently elders or overseers (bishops).

"The elders among you . . ." E. M. Zerr, Bible Commentary, 1 Peter, p. 265, wrote, "Elders have no authority over disciples among whom they are not residing." This is the reason that the apostle commanded elders to be ordained in every church. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)

“As your fellow-elder . . .” The authority of the eldership is in the group sharing the office and is not to be exercised individually, each elder himself being subject, as is the whole church, to the eldership.

“Witness of the sufferings of Christ . . .” Primarily, this is a reference to Peter’s apostleship; for J. H. A. Hart, *Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Vol. V, p. 76, wrote, “The qualifications of an apostle in the strict sense limited the office only to those who were companions of the Twelve in all the time from John’s baptism to the Assumption, or at least witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 1:22).

‘Peter could well have been among the number mentioned by Luke who beheld the event “from afar” (Luke 23:49); for Mark, shortly after saying that all the apostles forsook Him and fled, placed Peter in the courtyard as an observer of the trials (Mark 14:50-54); and even beyond this, there is the fact that Peter witnessed the agony in Gethsemane.

“Partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed . . .” E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, p. 229, thought this clause has reference to the transfiguration which Peter, along with James and John, had witnessed during the Lord’s ministry, wrote, “Peter had experienced and was known to have experienced the special revelation of the glory that had been restored to Jesus at the Ascension . . . and would be manifested to all when He came again at the End.”

## **Verse 2**

“Shepherd the flock of God . . .” The flock does not belong to the elders, but to God. The word here is exactly the same that Jesus used when He admonished Peter to “shepherd His sheep.” (John 21:16)

J. R. Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, p. 1047, and many others, who stressed, “Elders were not then distinguished from bishops as they soon afterward were.” Very soon, however, the elevation of so-called “bishops” to a rank and dignity they did not have in the New Testament began to appear; and B. C. Caffin, *Pulpit Commentary*, Vol; 22, 1 Peter, p. 206, wrote, “The omission of this clause from the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS was prompted by ecclesiastical

reason,” for the fear that elders might be supposed to have equal authority with bishops, which was of course true.

“Not under compulsion, but voluntarily . . .” J. H. A. Hart, op. cit., p. 76, wrote, “In times of persecution, lukewarm elders might regret their prominence,” thus Peter admonishes elders not to quail (draw back in fear) under the pressure of the time.”

“According to the will of God . . .” Peter had just spoken of them as “partakers of Christ’s suffering” (4:13), and this clause shows that all Christians elders included, are called to suffer for the cause of the Lord. As Paul put it, “If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.” (2 Timothy 2:12).

Many Christians fail because they do not properly discern the nature of the life to which they are committed. It is not one unending “high” comparable to a stroll along some flower-lined pathway to the accompaniment of sweet music. It is a fight (2 Timothy 4:7); it is like being a soldier (2 Timothy 2:4), subject to disagreeable and difficult assignments; it is like training for an athletic contest (2 Timothy 2:5), involving all kinds of austerity, self-discipline and hard work; it is called “taking up one’s cross.” (Matthew 16:24)

“Not for sordid gain . . .” This shows that, “Even in the earliest times, the elders received money in payment for such services as they rendered to the other brethren.” (James William Russell, Compact Commentary on the New Testament, p. 587)

Another thought based upon this verse was given by E. M. Zerr, op. cit., p. 265, who wrote, “These principles disprove a popular notion that a person can be a member of a congregation even though he is too far away to be among the elders and the other members. The idea that a person can live in one community and “have his membership in another one” has no Scriptural authority.”

### **Verse 3**

This verse is somewhat difficult. The New Testament clearly teaches that in a sense (limited of course), the elders are “lords,” or “rulers”

over their congregations; and what is prohibited here is not the exercise of their lawful authority, but the improper exercise of it.

E. M. Zerr, *op. cit.*, p. 266, wrote, “The Englishman’s Greek New Testament renders it, “Not as exercising lordship over your possessions.” . . . If a man considers the church as his own, then he is indeed likely to rule in an improper manner.”

The power motive is present in every church, and according to Elmer G. Homrighausen, *Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol. XII, p. 151, who wrote, “There is no corruption so odious as that which in public purports to be benevolent and disinterested.” The desire for power is an ever-present threat to every congregation on earth.

#### **Verse 4**

“The Chief Shepherd . . .” is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ who called Himself the “Good Shepherd.” (John 10:11)

“You will receive the unfading crown of glory . . .” B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 207, wrote, “The Greek word here means literally an *amaranthine* wreath.”

A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 433, wrote, “Amaranth is the name of a flower which, like our immortelles, does not lose its color or form.” However, Peter here used the word as the best figure available for describing the eternal glory of the heavenly reward, thus providing another example of the extensive use of such figurative language throughout 1 Peter.

#### **Verse 5**

“You younger . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 152, wrote, “The reference here is to age, not to official rank. Younger men are to defer to their elders.”

“And all of you . . .” Here there is indeed the transition to a larger group of the whole church, all of whom are commanded to be humble and submissive to others in the giving of loving service to brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another . . .” “Cloth yourselves” must evidently have been written by Peter in vivid remembrance of

that occasion when Jesus Himself clothed Himself with a towel and washed the disciple's feet, even Peter's (John 13:4), and that at a time when not a one of the Twelve consented to do such a thing. In this clause, the Greek word actually means, "an apron worn by slaves, which was tied around them when at work, to keep their dress clean.

James Macknight, Macknight on the Epistles, Vol. V, p. 503, wrote, "It is a frock put over the rest of the clothes, giving the meaning to be that humility should be visible over all other Christian virtues, in our whole behavior."

"God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble . . ."  
Throughout the Holy Scriptures, proud and haughty spirits are condemned. Pride leads the list of all of the sins. (Proverbs 6:16-18) Humility is such a wonderful virtue that all of the publican's sins did not destroy him because he had it; and all of the Pharisee's righteousness could not save him because he did not have it. (Luke 18:1-14)

### **Verse 6**

"Exalt you at the proper time . . ." Christians may not always be exalted in this life; and, indeed, it might be said that they seldom are; but the exaltation will come. Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, 1 Peter, p. 205, wrote, "It might be in the present life, but it will certainly be in the world to come."

"Under the mighty hand of God . . ." J. H. A. Hart, op. cit., p. 78, wrote, "This is a common Old testament expression used in connection with deliverance (Exodus 3:19; 20:33)." The author of James also remembered this same teaching of Jesus. (James 4:6, 10)

### **Verse 7**

The thought here contrasts the living and true God with the dumb idol gods of paganism who had no feeling, concern, or interest of any kind whatever in their worshipers. Even those pagan gods and goddesses who were supposed to be more glorious were always represented as being far off from their devotees, and as having no concern whatever for them. It is one of the most glorious teachings of the Bible that God, even the Almighty God, loves His children, is

concerned and interested in their welfare; and His eyes are always upon His beloved.

### **Verse 8**

This warning against the devices and evil intentions of man's inveterate foe, Satan, should be strictly heeded. Nothing could be any clearer than the presentation in Scripture of the kingdom of evil as an organized wickedness, directed by a powerful and malignant leader, a personal ruler of darkness, having as his objective the destruction of souls. The current theology which downgrades this danger, or even denies the reality of Satan, is wrong. It is contrary to the word of God.

"Like a roaring lion . . ." In the time at which Peter wrote, Satan was indeed, not a sly and stealthy serpent, nor disguised as an angel of light; but he was a roaring lion elevated in the person of Nero upon the throne of the Caesars and thundering his decrees of death and destruction, like a roaring lion! Many of the Christians would be terrified and intimidated, and some under threat of death would denounce their faith. Satan's true nature is more visible in this than in the other Scriptural likenesses; because he adopts other methods only when circumstances make it impossible for him openly and wantonly to destroy, as was the case in the Neronian persecution.

### **Verse 9**

"But resist him . . ." Satan is not to be yielded to; whatever he may do to the bodies of Christians, there is really nothing that he is able to do to them.

"Firm in your faith . . ." This is understood objectively as, "The Christian faith" not as a sinner's, subjective "trust/faith."

"Your brethren who are in the world . . ." Being "in the world," was one and the same thing as being under Nero and his persecution.

### **Verse 10**

"His eternal glory in Christ . . ." Peter's usage of this mighty phrase, both here and at the end of the epistle, indicates his respect and appreciation of the doctrine.

“After you have suffered for a little . . .” “little should here be understood for “the whole of life” and not as indicating the short duration of the persecutions. In the relative sense, even a long life is but “a little while.”

“Perfect . . .” This verb is the same that is used of “preparing” the earthly body for the incarnation of Christ in Hebrews 10:5. However, there is another Scriptural meaning of it. Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 157, wrote, “It is the word for mending nets (Mark 1:19) or setting a broken bone.”

This writer cannot resist the conviction, however, that “the absolute perfection of Christians in Christ” is what this speaks of. The very proximity of the phrase “in Christ,” seems to suggest this.

Something was about to happen which would indeed break the hearts of many Christians, recalling the words spoken by the blessed Christ who, “Learned obedience by the things which He suffered, having been made perfect.” (Hebrews 5:8-9) Many of the precious saints would be “made perfect” in the same sense, through the awful things they were about to suffer.

“Establish . . .” W. E. Vine, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p.41, says this word means, “to fix, to make fast, to set,” as when concrete sets.”

“Strengthen . . .” Vine, *Ibid* Vol iv, p. 81, says this means, “to make strong,” and suggests the strengthening that comes to steel, or iron, when it is heated with fire and suddenly cooled, thus “tempering” it and giving it much greater hardness and strength. The onset of the fires of persecution would harden and strengthen the faith of many.

### **Verse 11**

A. J. Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 435, wrote, “This is the true consolation in trouble, to extol the power of God.” If God indeed has the dominion forever and ever, the Christian may safely rest his case in God.

### **Verse 12**

“Through Sylvanus our faithful brother . . .” Archibald M. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 158, wrote, “On its narrowest interpretation, this mean simply that Sylvanus

was the bearer of the letter,” the same being the technical meaning of the phrase; and it is perhaps best to let that meaning stand.

“For so I regard him . . .” does not imply any lack of confidence in Sylvanus, the same being Pete’s manner of recommending him.

“Exhorting and testifying . . .” again, it is clear that “testifying” in apostolic times was not merely sounding off in public meetings, as the word is often understood today. It was exhorting and commanding the people to obey the word of God.

“This is the true grace of God . . .” The entire epistle Peter had written with its magnificent overtones of so many varied and profound Christian teachings—that is the true grace of God.

“Stand firm in it . . .” The unanimous appeal of the apostles of Christ was for Christians to stand firmly against every foe, not being swept off their feet, or made to defect from the holy faith by anything whatsoever.

### **Verse 13**

“She who is in Babylon . . .” It is almost certain that the church in Babylon is meant. But where was Babylon? If these words are a mystical reference to Rome, as there seems every reason to believe, then the reference is to the great capital of the Caesars which was the center of the persecutions.

The fact that ancient Babylon was destroyed never to be rebuilt; the total absence in the New Testament, as well as in history, of any reference to Peter’s ever having been in Babylon, literally; and the very early traditions that Peter did indeed preach in Rome and that he was martyred there (the same tradition having arisen much too early to be accredited to later claims of the apostate church); the pressing need, at the very time Peter wrote, to have spoken very guardedly concerning Nero and his city; the current usage of that very expression “Babylon”: to mean Rome, as in Hebrew poetry; and the similar usage of it in Revelation—all these considerations taken together have great weight in indicating that the meaning here is Rome on the Tiber.



“And so does my son Mark . . .” Peter was Mark’s mentor, not his actual father; and he is called “my son” in the sense that Paul thus referred to Timothy. It is almost universally agreed that this is the John Mark of Acts, who is the author of the second Gospel.

#### **Verse 14**

“Kiss of love . . .” Paul similarly commanded this greeting in (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26)

B. C. Caffin, *op. cit.*, p. 211, wrote, “The practice seems to have been universal in those times.

“Peace be to you all . . .” The peace in view is primarily the well-being of the soul, the harmony of the recipients with the Father in heaven.

“In Christ . . .” This incredibly important expression carries the thought that:

- (1) all blessings are exclusively for those in Christ, that is, His baptized followers;
- (2) perfection and holiness without which no one may see God are achieved by the Christian’s identity as Christ;
- (3) the ultimate grounds of all justification for human beings is the perfect faith and perfect obedience of the Son of God.

J. R. Dummelow, *op. cit.*, p. 1039, wrote, “Peter’s significant mention of this doctrine in this chapter fully establishes it as having been derived “from Christ Himself.”