

1 Peter

A Study Book by

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The Author: The Apostle Peter

There are 154 references to Peter in the New Testament (in 150 verses), and there is only one person with that name. Here are a few verses – just to remind us about Peter:

Matthew 14:28—*Peter said to Him, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”*

Matthew 16:16—*Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

Matthew 16:18—*“I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church.”*

Matthew 26:75—*And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.*

John 6:68—*Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.”*

John 13:6—*So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, “Lord, do You wash my feet?”*

John 18:10—*Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s slave.*

John 21:15—*So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My lambs.”*

Acts 2:38—*Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 5:3—*But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 5:29—*But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”*

Acts 8:14—*Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John.*

Acts 10:13—*A voice came to him, “Get up, Peter, kill and eat!”*

Acts 10:44—*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those ...*

Acts 12:5—*So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.*

1 Corinthians 9:5—*Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?*

Galatians 2:11—*But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.*

Chapter 1

You Shall Be Holy

A. Introduction – 1:1-2

Verse 1—*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen*

Peter began with his name Πέτρος (*Petros*), which is not his birth name. His birth name was Σίμων Ἰωάννου, *Simon of* (meaning, “son of”), *John* – John 21:15). The name “Peter” was assigned to him by Jesus (Matthew 16:18). In John 1:42, Jesus addressed him as *Cephas*, which is the Aramaic word for the Greek Πέτρος (for Peter). Interestingly, he is the only person in New Testament called Peter.



Until recent times, there have been no significant arguments against the claim that the letter comes from Peter. For example, letters from Polycarp, Clement, and Irenaeus show that the early church unquestionably accepted the authenticity of 1 Peter. The recent criticism is centered on the fact that Peter was basically an uneducated fisherman (Acts 4:13), and 1 Peter is an artistic piece of Greek literature. The answer to this accusation is simple. Peter did not have a higher education like Luke and the Apostle Paul, but he was not illiterate, simple, or unwise. Peter led the early church to its first outreach and taught regularly. As to its literary style, the letter of 1 Peter was written with the help Silas, as his stenographer (1 Peter 5:12). Silas, though a Jerusalem Christian, was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:36-37), accomplished in the Greek language.

The name Peter means “rock,” and Jesus went on to say, *upon this rock I will build my church* (Matthew 16:18). But the word for *rock* in this *church* statement is πέτρα (*petra*), which indicates more of a bedrock or rock layer, whereas Peter’s name is more like a large individual rock, like maybe a boulder. Just before this, Jesus asked Simon/Peter who he thought Jesus was. Peter answered: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*. It seems that Jesus was referring to that statement as the bedrock (πέτρα) upon which the church would be built. But Peter (Πέτρος) would be an individually significant rock in the beginning of that church. So Peter began with his assigned name.

Next, he called himself *an apostle of Jesus Christ*. He also called himself a *fellow elder* in 5:1. So Peter addressed the church as one of the 12 apostles, one of those originally sent by Christ with the Gospel.

The next word in the Greek text is ἐκλεκτοῖς (*eklektois*), *to those who are chosen*, but he doesn’t continue that thought until verse two, so we shall discuss it there.

Next, Peter identified his readers. He was not writing to any one specific church. The word “church” does not occur in any form in either 1 or 2 Peter. Peter was writing to individual believers, who have been scattered throughout what is today northern Turkey. It is the area outlined in gray on the map. Specifically, Peter mentioned 5 regions: the Roman provinces of *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*. It was an area increasingly hostile to the Gospel, so this is a good place to introduce the theme of the book. The **theme of 1 Peter is: A holy life must be lived in a hostile world.**

Subject: A Holy Life

Complement: Must Be Lived in a Hostile World

Peter referred to his readers as *παρεπιδήμους* (*parepidemois*) *resident aliens*. The word is a combination word. The first part (*para*, from which we get parachurch, paramedical, etc.) means “along side of or apart from.” The second half is the word for “home” (literally, “in-a-domicile”) or country. The point is: Peter’s readers were only para-citizens of their provinces. They were citizens of heaven, not any province on earth.

Verse 2—according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

Now Peter explained what he meant by his word *ἐκλεκτοῖς* (*eklektois*), *to those who are chosen* (in verse 1). It means the believers he is writing to, and all believers, for that matter, are *chosen, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*. So there are two separate but related doctrines: foreknowledge and predestination. God foreknew who would be saved, and God predetermined who would be saved.

- Foreknowledge is prior knowledge of future events.
- Predestination is the prior planning of future events.

Peter involved the whole Trinity when he said believers have become the chosen of God:

- *According to the knowledge of God the Father* – the predestination of our salvation
- *By the sanctifying work of the Spirit* – the means of our salvation
- *To obey Jesus Christ* – the purpose of our salvation
- *[To] be sprinkled with His blood* – the provision for our salvation

All this Peter gave his readers before he greeted them with: *grace and peace, in the fullest measure*. The phrase *grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure* is also used in 2 Peter 1:2. God’s grace was significant to Peter. He referred to it 10 times in this epistle (1:2, 10, 13; 2:19-20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12).

B. The Security of Our Inheritance – 1:3-12

Verse 3—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

Peter began his letter with salvation theology. First, he blessed God. The word for *Blessed* is *Εὐλογητὸς* (*Eulogetos*), “to say good words about.” It is the word used for prayer when, for example, Jesus blessed the bread before He ate. It is not the word for “blessed” in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says: *blessed are the poor ...*, etc. That word means “happy.”

Here he blessed God with four basic and significant theological concepts surrounding our salvation:

1. [It is] *according to His great mercy*. Mercy is the **unmerited compassion** of God by which He does not give us the punishment we deserve. [Grace is unmerited favor. Mercy is unmerited compassion, or unmerited non-punishment.]
2. [God] *has caused us to be born again*. Both Jesus (John 3:3, 7) and Peter (1 Peter 1:3, 23) used this concept to express the justification necessary for salvation.
3. [We are saved] *To a living hope*. Hope is the **expectation of a desired outcome**. Here Peter

called it a *living* hope. For him, theology is a living thing. Peter used the word *living* six times (1:3, 23; 2:4-5; 4:5-6).

4. [It was accomplished] *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. As Paul said: *if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

Before we leave verse 3, we should notice that God the Father is said to be both the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This identical phrase is used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:3. It indicates that Jesus was deity because God was His Father. But Jesus is also eternally in submission to the Father because Jesus' Father was also His God (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Verse 4—to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you

In verse 4, Peter described the results of our salvation as an inheritance. The idea is not one of present possession but of future benefit. This word for *inheritance* is used in the Septuagint to refer to Israel's promised possession of the land (Numbers 26:54, 56; 34:2; Joshua 11:23). But the believer's inheritance is described with three words and a phrase. He said their inheritance is:

- *Imperishable*. The word can also mean “immortal” or “incorruptible.”
- *Undefiled*. The word is used for *pure and undefiled religion* in James 1:27.
- *Un-fade-able*. This is all one Greek word, like a colored garment that will not fade in sunlight.
- *Reserved in heaven for you*. The word *reserved* also means “kept” or “guarded.”

The salvation Peter referred to is not for this life. It is not now but reserved in heaven. It is completely secure. It cannot be lost or diminished in any way. But it is not something believers have, it is something believers will have. The next verse emphasizes that idea.

Verse 5—who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The first word *who* is a masculine plural, so it seems to say the **people** of God are protected, not just their inherence. The word *protected* is a present tense, which has the sense of “keeping on.” It's from the word φρουρεω (*phroureo*), meaning “to guard, keep or set a garrison.” This is a military term, used to refer to a garrison guarding a city. Paul also used this word in Philippians 4:7, when he said: ... *the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*.

But how does God do that? Peter said He does that διὰ πίστεως (*dia pisteos*), *through faith*. So here is the difference between the **security** of salvation and the **assurance** of salvation. Salvation is eternally secure for those who are saved. But one can only have assurance that they are saved if they continue to be faithful. That's because God is protecting the faith of those who will inherit salvation. Can we say that we are saved now? In a sense, there is a past, present, and future aspect to salvation.

- Salvation was accomplished on the cross – in the **past**.
- I am saved in that I am a new creature in Christ when I receive Him – in the **present**.
- But Peter spoke of salvation as an inheritance – in the **future**.



Questions for Discussion

1. The name *Peter* came from (what source)? _____ It means _____. How many others in the New Testament had that name? _____ Peter's birth name was _____.
2. The theme of a book consists of two parts. There is a **subject**, which is the answer to the question: "What is the author talking about?" And there is a **complement**, which is the answer to the question: "What is the author saying about what he is talking about?" In those terms, what is the theme of 1 Peter?
The subject is: _____
The complement is: _____
3. What is the explanation for the different literary styles between 1 Peter and 2 Peter?
The difference in styles is because _____
4. In verse 2, Peter said God:
 - A. Knew ahead of time those who would be saved
 - B. Chose those who would be saved before they were believers
 - C. Predetermined the destiny of the elect
 - D. All of the above
5. Jesus and Peter said we must be *born again*. Who else in the Bible used the idea of being *born again* to identify our salvation? _____
6. Match the words from verse 3 with their definitions.

Grace	a. That without which your faith is useless
Mercy	b. Unmerited compassion
Hope	c. Unmerited favor
Born Again	d. Necessary for justification
Resurrection	e. The expectation of a desired outcome
7. According to verses 4 and 5, our salvation is:
 - A. Past
 - B. Present
 - C. Future
 - D. All of the above
8. In verse 5, the word *protected by the power of God* means:
 - A. To be assured of our salvation
 - B. To be secure in our position before God
 - C. To keep on being guarded by God
 - D. To know for sure of our future salvation

Answers: (1) Christ; rock; no one; Simon son of John. (2) The subject is: A holy life. The complement is: must be lived in a spiritually hostile world. (3) Silas was Peter's stenographer for 1 Peter, and 2 Peter was apparently penned by Peter himself. (4) D (A is in verse 1, B is in verse 2, C is a definition of choosing). (5) No one, only Christ and Peter did. (6) Grace is c. Mercy is b. Hope is e. Born Again is d. Resurrection is a. (7) C (reserved in heaven for you). (8) C (The present tense has the sense of something continuing on, and the word means protected or guarded.)

Verse 6—*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials*

Verse 6 continues the second paragraph of chapter 1, which I have called B. The Security of Our Inheritance – 1:3-12. This begins a four-verse-long sentence which tells us that, because of this (the previously stated theology), we can *greatly rejoice*. The point is: rejoicing is based on theological truth, not our circumstances, acceptance by others, or earthly trials. Hence verse 6 says we rejoice even though we are *distressed by various trials*.

Verse 7—*so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ*

Notice that Peter says the distress of verse 6 and the testing by fire of verse 7 proves your faith. He does not say those things establish or strengthen your faith. What generates faith is the revelation from God about the doctrines of the previous verses.

Verse 8—*and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory*

Peter then said what he and the apostles saw was unusual.

They saw Jesus, lived with Jesus, walked with Jesus, and heard Him teach. The rest of the church does not, and will not, see Christ during our life on earth. We are in the position of loving Him and believing in Him without ever seeing Him. We are reminded of Jesus' words to Thomas: *Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed* (John 20:29).



Verse 9—*obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

Faith results in salvation. But notice:

- The object of saving faith is the historical, biblical Jesus.
- The substance of faith is a rational decision, not an irrational leap.
- The reason for faith is ultimately a profit motive, to obtain the salvation of our souls.

Verses 10-12—*As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.*

Peter had one more point to make before leaving this section. This salvation he was talking about was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets. The prophets predicted both the suffering of the Messiah (Isaiah 53) and the glory of the Messiah (Isaiah 11). But Peter said the prophets, being moved by the Holy Spirit (*the Spirit of Christ within them*), *made careful searches and inquiries*. We think of prophets as receiving revelation from God, then writing it down for us to read. But Peter told us they also searched, apparently their own revelation and that of other prophets, to know *what person* the Messiah would be and what time the Messiah would come.

The Old Testament prophets never figured out that there would be a church age because God never revealed it to them (Ephesians 3:3-9; Colossians 1:26-27). But what they did figure out was that they were writing to believers, like the church, who were on the other side of the suffering of the cross of Christ. Peter said the prophets *were not serving themselves, but you*.

C. The Need for Holiness – 1:13-16

Verses 13-16—Peter gave five commands which prepare the way for the main point of holiness:

1. *Therefore, prepare your minds for action*, literally, “gird up the loins of your mind”
2. *Keep sober in spirit*, literally, “be self-controlled” (one Greek word)
3. *Fix your hope completely* (or “perfectly hope”) *on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*. This is the fourth time Peter has spoken of Christ’s return and accompanying salvation (verses 5, 7, 9, 13).
4. *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts* (or “desires”) *which were yours in your ignorance*.
5. *But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior* (“way of life” or “lifestyle”) *because it is written, “You shall be holy for I am holy.”*

D. The Need for Fear – 1:17-21

Verses 17-19—*If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

The main idea in this paragraph is to fear God. And Peter gave us two reasons why we should conduct ourselves in fear:

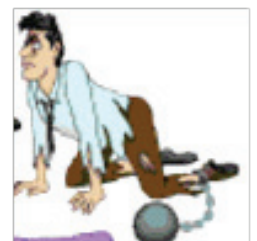
1. [God] *impartially judges according to each one’s work*
2. *You were ... redeemed... with ... the blood of Christ*

There is no reason to assume that this fear is to be restricted to a sense of awe, respect, or worship. This is fear in the sense of being afraid of God. And because God is your judge and provided for your salvation, you are to conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.



A few other things should be noted before we leave this sentence.

- This is one of the basic passages describing the doctrine of redemption. There are three words for redemption used to describe our salvation in the New Testament: ἐξαγοράζω (*exagoradzo*) in Galatians 3:13—**to purchase out of**; αγοράζω (*agoradzo*) in 2 Peter 2:1—**to purchase in**; and λύτρον (*lutron*) in Matthew 20:28, which has **the same root word used here—a ransom or purchase to set free**. All three words have to do with a purchase, but this last word would be used of a slave whose freedom had been purchased but was now free to choose to be independent or become a voluntary slave.
- Peter said we are redeemed *with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ*. Notice: there is no access to God without a blood sacrifice. From Cain and Abel, through Noah, Abraham, and Moses, up to Christ, there is absolutely no access to God without a blood sacrifice. But we have the perfect *unblemished and spotless blood of Christ*. In this sentence, Peter eliminates all other religions. Rabbinic Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism do not have a blood sacrifice.



Verses 20-21—*For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

- The word προεγνωσμένου (*proegnomenou*), *foreknown*, is the same root word translated *foreknowledge* in 1:2. Peter’s point is that Christ was eternally known by the Father.
- Peter said that the one who was known in eternity past has appeared *in these last times*. What the apostles always mean, when they refer to these times as being the *last times*, is that there are no other ages, no other times, after *these times* before the judgment of God upon the earth.
- The appearance of Christ as a man on earth was for those who would become believers. Christ did not come to make the world a better place to live or to minister to unrepentant sinners. He came *for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God*.
- Peter repeated two things God did for Christ: *raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory*.

E. The Need For Love of the Brethren – 1:22-25

Verse 22—*Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart.*

Before commanding us to love one another, Peter gave two preconditions:

1. [To be] *in obedience to the truth*
2. [To have] *purified your souls*

So a general love, even a love for fellow believers, could be inappropriate, misguided, even harmful, if it is not in the context of obeying the truth of the Word of God and using that truth to purify our souls.

Then Peter used both common Greek words for love, φιλαδελφίαν (*Philadelphian*), “brotherly affection” and ἀγαπήσατε (*agapasate*), “giving expecting nothing in return.” This indicates we should both have affection for one another and give to one another. But it also shows that there is not a huge distinction between the two most common Greek words (*phileo* and *agapao*) for love.

Verses 23-25—*for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. “For, all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass, the grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” And this is the word which was preached to you.*

This last comment serves to conclude chapter one and introduce chapter two. It would be legitimate to include it as an introduction to chapter two. But the last sentence seems to tell us Peter intended it as concluding chapter one.



Here Peter quoted Isaiah 40:6ff to tell his readers that their salvation is *through the living and enduring Word of God*. Once again, that surprises us. We would expect Peter to say that our salvation is through Christ (which it is). But his conclusion is that we are born again (1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3, 7) through the Word of God. This is clearly a reference to the written revelation of God through the prophets and apostles of the Old and New Testaments. Peter said

this is the Word which was preached to you. Peter’s point is: we know this promise is true, we know this imperishable inheritance is real, we know we are born again, and we know all that because it is part of *the Word of God*. *Because the Word of the Lord endures forever. And God said: I am watching over My Word to perform it* (Jeremiah 1:12).



Questions for Discussion

1. True or False? Verse 6 says we should rejoice because of our various trials.
2. True or False? Verse 7 says your faith is strengthened when it is tested by fire.
3. True or False? Verse 8 says we believe in a God we do not see.
4. Verses 1 and 2 say we are **chosen according to the foreknowledge of God**. Verse 9 talks about: *obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls*. So which is it that saves us?
 - A. Our being **chosen**
 - B. Our **faith**
 - C. **Both** our being chosen and our faith
5. True or False? According to verse 14, knowledge is essential for good morality.
6. In verse 15, Peter told his readers: *But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior because it is written, "You shall be holy for I am holy."* What is the difference between goodness and holiness?
7. In verse 17, Peter told his readers to *conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth*. What's the biggest problem with restricting the fear of God to awe and respect?
8. According to verses 17-19, a person could not be saved being a Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, or Jew because:
 - A. They are religions based on silver and gold.
 - B. They are religions which are not based upon a blood sacrifice.
 - C. They are religions focused on this life and this world.
 - D. They are religions which do not follow the New Testament.
9. In verse 21, Peter said that your faith and hope are in God. Hebrews 11:1 says: *faith is the assurance of things hoped for*. Hope is:
 - A. Self-oriented
 - B. Others-oriented
 - C. Love-oriented
 - D. God-oriented
10. In verse 23, Peter said: *for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring Word of God*. Peter meant:
 - A. A saved person can never lose their salvation.
 - B. A saved person can never lose the assurance of their salvation.
 - C. A saved person is saved as long as they follow the enduring Word of God.
 - D. A saved person can never know for sure he or she is saved.

Answers: (1) False. We rejoice in trials because of the salvation theology of verses 1-5. (2) False. Faith is tested by trials but strengthened by revelation, which for us is the Bible – Romans 10:17. (3) True. (4) B. We are saved by our faith— see also John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9. (5) True. Verse 14 says, *do not be conformed to the former lusts* (or desires) *which were yours in your ignorance*. (6) Goodness is a righteous act, but we can do good at the same time we sin, holiness is a separation from sin. (7) Awe and respect are on our terms, fear is on God's terms. (8) B. Saved people are *redeemed with...the blood of Christ*. (9) A. Hope is an expectation of desired future benefit. The other answers are all expressions of love but not hope. (10) A. The person described is said to be saved which, according to Peter, means they were chosen and foreknown to be saved. To lose actual salvation would question the sovereignty of God. But notice that you would not know that for any real person because you would not know for sure he was actually saved.

Chapter 2 (actually 2:1–3:7) Submission



Unfortunately, when the chapter divisions were added to First Peter, the middle of the book was divided poorly. It is clear that 2:11–3:7 is about submission – to government, to masters, to husbands. But the traditional division puts the submission to husbands in chapter 3. Peter’s next line of thought begins in 3:8, so I have begun what I call chapter 3 with 1 Peter 3:8. This chapter can, then, has three subjects:

- A. Longing for The Word of God – 2:1-3
- B. The Priesthood of the Believer – 2:4-10
- C. Submission – 2:11–3:7
 - Submission to the Government – 2:11-17
 - Submission to Masters – 2:28-25
 - Submission to Husbands – 3:1-7

A. Longing for The Word of God – 2:1-3

Verses 1-3—*Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.*

Peter began chapter 2 with Αποθέμενοι (*Apothemenoi*), an aorest middle participle which has the sense of you take it upon yourself to put off (or set away from yourself). He then added the word *therefore* to connect it to the salvation theology of chapter one. Next, he listed five attitude sins to put off:

1. πᾶσαν κακίαν, *all evil* (or *malice*, or *trouble*)
2. πάντα δόλον, *all deceit* (the word means *deliberate dishonesty*)
3. ὑποκρίσεις, *hypocrisy* (a combination word *under-judgment*)
4. φθόνους, *envy* (meaning *resentful* or *discontent*)
5. πάσας καταλαλιᾶς, *all slander* (or *backbiting lies*)

Verse 2 begins with a comparison of the believer to new born babies. The word βρέφη (*brephe*) is not the word for “child” but *new born infant*, or even *unborn infant*. Peter’s point was not that these believers are new baby Christians but that they should long for the Word of God as a new-born longs for his mother’s milk. Neither was Peter using milk to contrast it with solid food as in 1 Corinthians 3:2 and Hebrews 5:12. Here the whole point is ἐπιποθήσατε (*epipotesate*), *to greatly desire* the pure milk of the Word.



The word λογικὸν (*logikon*), for *Word* is also interesting. “Thayer’s Lexicon” defines it as “agreeable to reason, following reason, or reasonable.” It clearly has the same root as λογος, the basic term for the “written Word.” But this particular word is where English gets the word “logical.” Paul used it, too, for

reasonable service of worship in Romans 12:1. So Peter was calling them to long for the pure milk of the reasonable, rational, logical Word.

He ended this (three-verse) long sentence by returning to the salvation of chapter one. Here he described salvation as having *tasted the kindness of the Lord*.

So we grow with respect to salvation when we:

- Get rid of those sinful attitudes. (We will not grow, even studying the Word of God, with sinful attitudes.)
- Long for the Word of God (like a newborn longs for milk).
- Do a rational study of the Word of God. (So reading the Word mystically, allegorically, or by reading into it some extra-biblical information, is unhelpful in growing with respect to our salvation.)

B. The Priesthood of the Believer – 2:4-10

Verses 4-5—*And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

First Peter described Christ as *a living stone*. Ryrie (“Ryrie Study Bible,” p. 1979) points out: “Christ is:

- *the living stone* (v. 4)
- *the corner stone* (v. 6)
- *the rejected stone* (v. 7)
- *and the stumbling stone* (v. 8)

[The photo is of a corner stone designated for the future third temple in Jerusalem.]



Peter also pointed out that Jesus Christ, the *living stone*, was *rejected by men*. There is nothing that will divide up a room faster than bringing up Jesus Christ. If you want to end a conversation fast, mention Jesus Christ. Why? Because He is *rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God*.

Our *coming to Him* is as a priesthood. He developed it like this:

[We believers] *are being built up as a spiritual house*

[the purpose for that building up is for us to become] *a holy priesthood*

[The purpose for the priesthood is] *to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Verses 6-8—*For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed?” This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone” and, “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.*

Next, Peter used three Old Testament “stone” references to describe Christ:

- Isaiah 28:16, Christ is the *chosen and precious corner stone*



- Psalm 118:22, Christ is *the stone which the builders rejected*
- Isaiah 8:14, Christ is *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense*

Jesus is both the way to God and a stumbling block
in the way of those wishing to get to God some other way

Notice, too, that those who reject Christ do so for two reasons:

1. *They stumble because they are disobedient to the Word* – they choose to be disobedient
2. *To this doom they were also appointed* – they were appointed to be disobedient

Verses 9-10 can be outlined as follows:

But you are

a chosen race,

a royal priesthood,

a holy nation,

a people for God's own possession,

*so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness
into His marvelous light;*

for

you once were not a people,

but now you are the people of God;

you had not received mercy,

but now you have received mercy.

Here the church is compared with Israel. The words *race*, *priesthood*, *nation*, and *possession* are things literally true of Israel and metaphorically applied to the church. The point is very similar to the grafting in and out of Romans 11:18ff. We Gentile believers were not a people of God, now we are. We had not received God's mercy, now we have.

A Few Additional Thoughts

- The church is a unique age. Take discipleship, for example. Jesus Christ created it and designed it for this church/grace age. Discipleship, as taught by Jesus and practiced by the apostles, was not possible in the Old Testament ages (because believers were not all indwelt with the Holy Spirit), and it will be unnecessary in the Millennial Kingdom (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The command to *Go therefore and make disciples* (Matthew 28:18-20) requires every believer to be a priest, to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, and gifted by the Spirit. This is uniquely true of this church/grace age.
- After referring to Christ as the cornerstone of the church, Peter continued the analogy by saying: *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood*. This makes the church a house of believer priests, where every member is crucial. Paul calls the church a body, where each member is irreplaceable (Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:4, 12, 16). The Bible never calls the church a community. In a community, nobody is crucial, and anybody can be replaced by somebody else.

The church is a body, not a community

Questions for Discussion

1. True or False? In verse 2, the phrase *like newborn babies* means new Christians should long for the Word of God.
2. True or False? In verse 3, the phrase *tasted the kindness of the Lord* means those who are already saved believers.
3. Peter said we grow with respect to salvation when we
 - A. Get rid of sinful attitudes
 - B. Long for the Word of God
 - C. Do a rational study of the Word of God
 - D. A and B
 - E. All of the above
4. Between verses 4 and 8, Christ is described as what four kinds of *stone*?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
5. In verse 8, Peter said Christ is a rock some stumble over. Why do they stumble over Christ?
 - A. Because they choose to be disobedient – by their free will choice
 - B. Because they were predestined to be disobedient – by God’s sovereign choice
 - C. Because they follow their old Judaism rather than Christ – by way of their traditions
 - D. None of the above
 - E. A and B above
 - F. All of the above
6. In verse 9, Peter told his readers: *you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation*. These phrases are:
 - A. Literal for Israel but metaphorical for the church
 - B. Metaphorical for Israel but literal for the church
 - C. Literal for both Israel and the church
 - D. Literal for individuals but metaphorical for the church
7. Why is the discipleship Christ taught the apostles, and commanded them to reproduce (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8), not possible in the Old Testament?
 - A. The grace of God was not offered to the individual in the Old Testament.
 - B. It was not part of the Old Testament dispensation.
 - C. It required the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who did not indwell all believers in the Old Testament.
 - D. All of the above.
 - E. None of the above. Discipleship was possible in the Old Testament.
8. It is better to call the church a body than a community because _____

Answers: (1) False. [It means all believers should long for the Word of God like a newborn longs for milk.] (2) True. (3) E. (4) The living stone (v. 4), the corner stone (v. 6), the rejected stone (v. 7), and the stumbling stone (v. 8). (5) E [Peter said that *they stumble because they are disobedient to the Word, and to this doom they were also appointed.*] (6) A (Although, one could make a case that Israel was only metaphorically a royal priesthood.) (7) D [As to A, the grace of God was displayed in the Old Testament and offered to Israel as a nation but not offered to the individual until the church age, or (option B) this dispensation, also New Testament discipleship depends upon (C) the indwelling Holy Spirit. (8) In a body, every member is significant and makes a unique contribution according to their gifts. In a community (as in Communism), the group (nation, race, etc.) is significant as a whole, and positions within that group can be easily filled by others from the group.

C. Submission – 2:11–3:7

This section could be taken as a chapter by itself. It's Peter's instructions about submission, applied in three areas: submission to governments, masters, and husbands.

1. Submission To Government – 2:11-17

Verse 11—*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.*

Peter began this section with the word *Αγαπητοί* (*Agapetoî*) *beloved*. This is clearly the beginning of a new subject. It's almost like he was starting a new letter. He even used the same word *παρεπιδήμιους* (*parepidemous*) *aliens*, to describe them, as he did in 1:1. And then he added the word for *strangers*. So this is like a whole new letter, but with the same subject. Remember, the subject of 1 Peter is:

A holy life must be lived in a hostile world

There were two things Peter wanted to tell these believers before he got into the subject of submission.

The first was to *abstain*, or *keep away from σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν* (*sarkikon epithumion*) *fleshly desires*. This word *ἐπιθυμιῶν* (*epithumion*) for *desires* is usually translated *lusts*. So now we learn more about desires or lusts. They are good when they *long for the pure milk of the Word*, but they are bad when they are fleshly.

This is one of the things that separate us from the animals. Animals only have fleshly desire. If they avoided their fleshly desires, they would starve, not reproduce, and go extinct. But when humans act like animals and pursue *fleshly desires*, it *wages war with their souls*. What Peter meant by *your ψυχῆς* (*psuches*) *soul*, is not just your personality (intellect, emotion, and will) but your spirituality (morality, notions of purpose and destiny, and creativity).

Secular liberals believe we are just evolved animals. So, for them, there is nothing wrong with pursuing fleshly desires. For example, the reason secular liberals are in favor of abortion on demand is because it allows them to have sex more freely. That way, they can act more like an animal. They believe a *fleshly desire/lust* for sex (or food or drugs or drink or excitement or exhilaration) does not wage war with our soul because we don't have a soul, just an advanced complex personality. So we need counseling, not morality. But Peter says when you treat fleshly desires like an animal does, it wages war on your soul.

Verse 12—*Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

The command is literally *keep on having a good lifestyle among the Gentiles*. The reason seems to be that the Gentiles might come to faith in Christ because of the believer's good lifestyle.

Next, he said the believers have been slandered as evildoers. That's historically clear. Early Christians were accused of burning Rome (which may have happened just before Peter wrote this letter). They



Nero watching Rome burn

were accused of being atheists because they had no idols. They were accused of cannibalism because the Communion assembly was referred to as eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ. Peter said to counter that by having a good lifestyle.

Then he said one (not the only) purpose for their *excellent behavior among the Gentiles* is *δοξάσωσιν* (*doxasosin*), *that they might glorify, God, in the day of visitation*. The verb for glorifying God is in the subjunctive, the mood of uncertainty. So they might or might not glorify God, depending upon the believer's lifestyle.

The visitation comes from *ἐπισκοπή* (*episcopos*), which is the root word for *bishop* or *overseer*. So it is the *day of overseeing*. The Old Testament refers to the day of visitation as a time when God will draw near to His people, which might be for judgment or blessing (Isaiah 10:3; Jeremiah 27:22). Here, *the day of visitation* seems to be a general reference to the *visitation* of Christ. It refers to the coming of Christ, without specifying a distinction between the Rapture or the Second Coming because Peter does not know if those Gentiles will get saved or not. So it seems that one reason for excellent behavior among the Gentiles, who are slandering them, is that it gives those same Gentiles their best possibility of being among those who glorify God at the coming of Christ.

The most significant application here is, you don't reach unbelievers by living like they do but by having a good lifestyle of excellent behavior. The best way to reach unbelievers who get drunk, chase women, and use blasphemy is not to be a part of that but to stand apart from that with excellent behavior. It is often asked: "Won't I offend them if I don't participate?" Probably. But you will not be more likely to lead them to Christ by participating in their sinful activity. It is very important to not confuse being in the world and being of the world.

Verses 13-17—*Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond-slaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

The Bible often talks about submission. There are six main kinds of submission in the New Testament:

1. The submission of Christ to God the Father
2. The submission of the church to Christ
3. The submission of the church to its civil government
4. The submission of wives to husbands
5. The submission of children to parents
6. The submission of servants to masters

Peter deals with numbers 3, 4, and 6.

There are five things that should be noted here:

1. The first issue is, what happens when #3 (submission to government) comes in conflict with #2 (submission to Christ)? The answer is civil disobedience. Submission to government (and also to masters and husbands, for that matter) is conditioned upon it not being in disobedience to God. There are three prominent biblical examples of civil disobedience.
 - When Daniel's friends refused to bow down to a statue of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:16-18).

- When Daniel refused to stop praying to God when he knew the decree was signed forbidding him to do that (Daniel 6:10).
- When Peter and John refused to obey a command by the authorities to stop preaching the Gospel (Acts 4:19-20).



Painting of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin

2. Next, we should note that when Peter said: *Submit yourselves ... to every human institution*. He meant territorial government, like a king and governors. This does not include voluntary institutions, such as churches, clubs, sports teams, etc.
3. There are three reasons why we are to submit to human governments (also see Romans 13:1-7 and Titus 3:1-2):
 - They were set up by God.
 - It's *the will of God*.
 - *That by doing right, you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.*
4. When we submit to our government, we do it as the choice of a free person. We are not to see ourselves as slaves who are forced to obey our government. We are free people who choose to obey our government because it is the will of God for us to do that. This obedience would include things like obeying the speed laws, paying our taxes, and abiding by the city, township, county, and state regulations.
5. Finally, Peter gave us a perspective by listing four kinds of submission:
 - πάντας τιμήσατε (*pantas timesate*) honor all (*people*). [Actually, the word *people* is not in the text. *Honor* means “to fix the value” or “to price” (“Strong’s”). So it is about measured responsibility (as in honor your parents), not emotional attachment.]
 - ἀδελφότητα ἀγαπάτε (*adelphoteta agapate*) love (*the*) brotherhood. [Peter used the word *agape* applied to believers.]
 - θεὸν φοβεῖσθε (*theon phobeisthe*) fear God. [This is *phobia*, to be afraid of, not just reverence.]
 - βασιλέα τιμᾶτε (*basilea timate*) honor the king. [The same word for *honor* used of all (*people*) (above) should also be applied to the king, even if you do not like the king.]

Questions for Discussion

1. True or False? In verse 11, Peter said lusting was bad because it wages war on our souls.
2. In verse 12, *the day of visitation* refers to:
 - A. The Rapture of the church
 - B. The Second Coming of Christ
 - C. The Great White Throne Judgment
 - D. The Judgment Seat of Christ
 - E. A and B
 - F. C and D
3. List the six kinds of submission named in the Bible and note which ones of those Peter discussed here in 1 Peter.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
4. According to verses 13-17, one reason for government is:
 - A. To correct bad people
 - B. To keep bad people from destroying others
 - C. To govern society
 - D. To praise good people
5. Suppose your government is fighting a war you believe is immoral. That is, you believe your government is wrong to be engaged in this conflict. You have been ordered, or drafted, to fight for your government in this war. According to the Bible, what should you do?
 - A. Practice civil disobedience and refuse to go to war.
 - B. Go to war anyway because your government was set up by God.
 - C. Obey your government, go to war, but ask to be placed in a non-combat position.
 - D. Refuse to go to war and take a stand against your government.
6. There are three reasons why we are to submit to human governments. The incorrect reason is:
 - A. They were set up by God.
 - B. It's the will of God.
 - C. It will silence the ignorance of foolish men.
 - D. We will be more able to be at peace with all men.
7. In verse 16, what did Peter mean when he said: *Act as free men*?
 - A. We are free to obey or disobey our government.
 - B. We freely choose to obey our government, even if we are forced to.
 - C. We freely choose to obey our government, when we agree with it.

Answers: (1) False (It's Buddhism that says all desires are bad. It's fleshly lusts that wage war on our souls. For example, lusting after the pure milk of the Word is good.) (2) E (It seems to be a general reference to the coming of Christ, without distinguishing between the Rapture and Second Coming, because Peter spoke of Gentiles who may or may not become believers.) (3) 1. The submission of Christ to God the Father, 2. The submission of the church to Christ, 3. The submission of the church to its civil government, 4. The submission of wives to husbands, 5. The submission of children to parents, 6. The submission of servants to masters. Peter dealt with numbers 3, 4, and 6. (4) D (*sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right*). (5) A (The only time we disobey our government is when it tells us to disobey God. If the war is actually immoral, then it is a disobedience of God. Therefore, B and C would not be appropriate. D is incorrect because it protests the government itself, which God has set up on His own authority. (6) D (The others are listed in 2:13-17.) (7) B (A and C are not submission.)

2. Submission To Masters – 2: 18-25

Verses 18-25—*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, Who committed not sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*



Four observations can be made about servants submitting to masters:

1. We need to make the overall observation that Peter has nothing against slavery. But the word for *servants* here is not *δουλοι* (*douloi*), the common term for slaves or bondservants (see v. 16), but *οικετοι* (*oiketai*), the word for household or domestic servants (Luke 16:13; Romans 14:4). Today, this can probably best be applied to an employer/employee relationship. There are also some differences. An employee has agreed to a job description beforehand, an employee can quit at any time, and an employee is making money for services. [The pictures are of Roman household servants.]
2. In verse 18, Peter clarified that submission is not just when masters are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. The reason is, masters we consider to be good and gentle are those who are establishing working conditions we agree with. Therefore, obedience does not require submission.

**Agreement is not submission.
Submission begins with disagreement.**

3. Next, Peter gave three reasons for submission to masters:
 - *This finds favor with God* (verse 20).
 - *You have been called for this purpose* (verse 21).
 - *Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example* (verse 21). [The word *ὑπογραμμόν* (*hupo-grammon*) for *example* is only used here in the New Testament. It literally means *underwriting*].
4. The rest of the paragraph (verses 21-25) elaborates on the last reason for submission: the example of Christ. It contains three significant statements:
 - The specifics of how Christ responded to persecution: *He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously*. [Peter here quoted Isaiah 53:9.]
 - An excellent precise statement of the Gospel: *He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed*. [The last phrase is a reference to Isaiah 53:5.]
 - A statement of our condition before salvation: *For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls*. [The word *ἐπίσκοπον* (*episkopon*) for *Guardian* is the word for *bishop* or *overseer*.]

3. Submission To Husbands – 3:1-7

Verses 1-2—*In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*

The first word ὁμοίως (*homoios*) *likewise* or *in the same way*, clearly ties this with the previous discussion on submission. The word ὑποτασσόμεναι (*hupotassomenai*), *submission* is the same word used for citizens being in submission to their government (2:17) and slaves submitting to their masters (2:18). The word has the idea of *being under authority*. The criteria would be the same for all three: they are true in all things which do not violate the Word of God. And remember, submission is not needed in areas where there is no conflict. That's simply agreement. So we can summarize by saying, with respect to governments, masters, and husbands:

**Submission is obedience in areas of disagreement
which do not violate the character of God**

The husband who is *disobedient to the Word* may be an unbeliever or a disobedient believer. The idea that he may be won by the behavior of his wife is not meant to be a formula for producing obedient husbands. The point is, this is the way for a wife to deal with a disobedient husband.

Verses 3-4—*Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.*



The first phrase is a bit strange. It is literally: *So do not be outside*. It is legitimate to translate ἔξωθεν (*exothen*) as *external* instead of *outside*, but there is no word for *merely*. The word *adornment* comes from the last word in the sentence. It's the word κόσμος (*kosmos*), which means something like *worldly decoration*. Then Peter gave three examples:

- *braiding the hair*
- *wearing gold jewelry* (there is no word here for *jewelry*)
- *putting on dresses* (literally clothing)

Clearly, this is dealing with extreme worldly outward adornment, as in the old adage: “She’s dressed fit to kill.” For example, it could not mean: to avoid hair care or to avoid jewelry, otherwise it would also mean to avoid wearing clothes.

In verse 4, Peter followed this with the command for a wife to be a *hidden person of the heart*, which he defined as a spirit which is:

- ἀφθάρτω (*aphtharto*), incorruptible
- πραέως (*praeos*), gentle
- ἡσυχίου (*hesuchiou*), quiet

These commands for wives are not unique to Peter. Paul also has a lot to say on the matter. For example, he instructed Titus with this:

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their hus-

bands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored (Titus 2:3-5).

Verses 5-6—*For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*

First, Peter made the comment that the Old Testament women, *who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive*. In other words, submissiveness is an indication that our hope is not in the one we submit to but in God who tells us to submit. If a woman's hope were in her husband, or our hope was in our government, then we would have to change him/it rather than submit. Submission for a believer is done because God commands it, not because the one we submit to is worthy of it.

We'll take Peter's word for it about Sarah and Abraham. Obviously, he had revelation we don't have. Actually, we know very little about Sarah from the Old Testament. She called Abraham *lord* when she laughed at God's promise of a baby (Genesis 2:18), she went along with Abraham's half lie about her being his sister, and she insisted Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael off into the wilderness. But Hebrews 11:11 says: *By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised*. So Sarah was clearly a woman of faith and submission. Peter ended this paragraph saying *we become her children*, a metaphor for following her faith and submission, if we do not fear, that is, if we fear no one but God. [The picture is caricature of Sarah and Abraham.]



In verse 7, Peter gave the husband two commands with some supportive comments. The verse could be outlined as follows:

- [#1] *You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman;*
- [#2] *and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life,*
[and the reason for both of these commands is] *so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

By *in the same way*, Peter was not suggesting mutual submission. Mutual submission is impossible and a contradiction in terms. Peter meant in the same *holy way*, hoping in God, adorning themselves with inward character, not outward appearance, *with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God*.

The **first** command is to live with your wife according to $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\tau\upsilon$, *knowledge*. The point is: a husband is to be a student of his wife. In particular, he is to know his wife's:

- $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega$ (*asthenestero*) *weakness*
- $\gamma\upsilon\nu\alpha\iota\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\iota\omega$ (*gunaikeio*) [something like] *woman-ness* or femininity

The **second** command is to show her honor as an eternal person. There is absolutely no spiritual difference between men and women in heaven. Submission only has to do with the wife's role on earth. Husbands need to keep that in mind. If they don't, Peter says their prayers will be hindered.

Questions for Discussion

1. In 2:18, Peter said: *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.* Servants should submit to *unreasonable* masters because:
 - A. It isn't submission when we consider them to be reasonable.
 - B. It is good for our conscience.
 - C. It finds favor with God.
 - D. All of the above.
2. According to 2:18-25, what is the purpose of our calling?
 - A. To suffer
 - B. To serve God
 - C. To submit to our masters
 - D. To represent the kingdom of God
3. True or False? According to 2:18-25, patience is a virtue.
4. The command in 3:1-2, *wives, be submissive to your own husbands:*
 - A. Is an individual command tied to the relationship between a wife and her husband
 - B. Is part of the mutual submission of wives and husbands
 - C. Is like a slave's submission to a master
5. True or False? In 3:1-2, Peter said one way to deal with a disobedient husband is to remain sexually faithful to him.
6. True or False? In 3:3, Peter said of wives: *Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry.* That means wives should not wear gold jewelry.
7. According to 3:3-4, a wife should be:
 - A. Kind
 - B. Wise
 - C. Hardworking
 - D. Quiet
 - E. Generous
8. In 3:7, Peter said: *You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way.* That means:
 - A. Husbands are to be in submission to wives as wives are to be in submission to husbands.
 - B. Husbands are to behave in the same holy way, hoping in God, adorning themselves with inward character, not outward appearance.
 - C. Husbands are to have the same attitude toward their wives that Sarah had toward Abraham when she called him Lord.

Answers: (1) D (A is the definition of submission, B and C are mentioned in the passage. (2) A (In verses 20-21, it says: *But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose*). (3) False (Peter rhetorically asked: *For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience?* Therefore, patience itself can be good or worthless, so it is not, in and of itself, a virtue). (4) C [The word ὑποτασσόμενοι (*hupotassomenai*), *submission* is the same word used for citizens being in submission to their government (2:17) and slaves submitting to their masters (2:18). Peter said nothing about A, and B (mutual submission) is a contradiction in terms.] (5) True (*They may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior*). (6) False (If it meant they should not wear any gold jewelry, then the next statement of *putting on dresses* [literally, *garments*] would mean they should not wear any clothes). (7) D (*with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God*). (8) B (A is mutual submission, which is a contradiction in terms, C is a role reversal nowhere suggested in Scripture.)

Chapter 3 (actually 3:8-22) Heavenly Blessings

Let's review:

The **theme** of the book is living a holy life in a hostile world.

Chapter 1 tells us to be **holy** as Christ was holy.

Chapter 2 tells us one way to do that is to be in **submission**: to our governments, to our masters, and to our husbands.

Chapter 3 says that another key to holy living in a hostile world is to focus on our future **heavenly blessings**.



Peter told these believers of northern Turkey that their heavenly blessings come from two areas: how to relate to each other and then how to relate to the unbelieving world around them. We could outline it like this:

- | |
|---|
| <p>A. Blessings from Personal Conduct – 3:8-12</p> <p>B. Blessings from Presenting the Gospel – 3:13-22</p> |
|---|

A. Blessing From Personal Conduct 3:8-12

Verses 8-9—*To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

Peter began with the phrase Τὸ δὲ τέλος (*To de telos*) literally, the words are *which and goal* (or *end*). We could translate it *and the goal which [is]*. It is a bit awkward in English, but the point is not that this is a summary, but that this is the goal or end or point of living as aliens in a hostile world. The goal is to receive a blessing from God. So if we left out the middle of the sentence, it would read: *And the goal is ... that you might inherit a blessing.* And the blessing is clearly a heavenly blessing, since it is something they inherit while they are only promised suffering here on earth.

Then Peter gave a list of eight conduct commands, which will result in their inheriting that heavenly blessing:

- ὁμόφρονες, *be harmonious*, literally, *one-minded*
- συμπαθεῖς, *sympathetic*, literally, *together feeling*
- φιλάδελφοι, *brotherly*, actually, *brotherly love*
- εὖσπλαγχοι, *kindhearted*, better *compassion*, literally, *good inward parts*
- ταπεινόφρονες, *humble in spirit*, actually, *humble-minded*
- μὴ ἀποδιδόντες κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ, *not returning* (or *giving back*) *evil for evil*
- ἢ λοιδορίαν ἀντὶ λοιδορίας, τοῦναντίον, *or insult for insult, or curse for curse*
- δὲ εὐλογοῦντες, *but giving a blessing*, literally, *speaking good words*

The *blessing* believers are to inherit is the same word as the blessing they are to give which is εὐλογία (*eulogian*), literally, *good words*. Since it is in the context of what they inherit, we can safely assume Peter was talking about a heavenly judgment where, at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10), God will give us *good words* about our heavenly rewards. This is, however, not the word μακάριοι (*makarioi*), used for *blessed* in the Sermon on the Mount (for example, *blessed are the poor in spirit* – Matthew 5:3, that *blessed* means *happy*). Peter used the Sermon-on-the-Mount word in verse 14.

Verses 10-12—*For, “The one who desires life, to love and see good days, must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. He must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

Next, Peter went to Psalm 34:12-16 to establish his thoughts. Notice, as is often true when New Testament authors use the Old Testament,

**Peter is not saying this is that
but this is like that**

The blessing promised in Psalm 34 was earthly *life* and *good days*, whereas the blessing Peter discussed is a heavenly inheritance delivered by *good words* from God after this life.

Using Psalm 34, Peter gave three specific ways to see good days:

1. [To] *keep ...from speaking deceit*
2. [To] *turn away from evil and do good*
3. [To] *seek peace and pursue it*

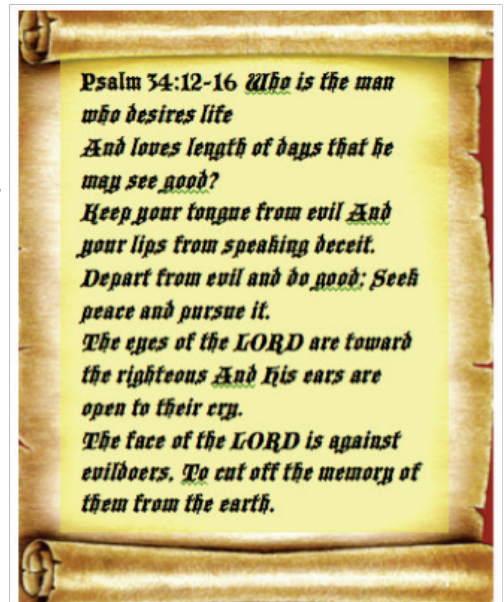
Then the psalm uses metaphors for the *eyes*, *ears*, and *face* of the Lord to express the judgment of God.

Thoughts and Applications

Peter told his readers to live peacefully in a hostile world. If someone made a movie or wrote a novel with a hero or heroine following the characteristics of 1 Peter 3:8-9, they would be considered a sissy. No movie hero would look like that. If I respond to a world that hates me and is persecuting me by being *harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit*, I will surely be considered a wimp, a weakling, maybe even effeminate or unmanly. Peter described a hero the world would never recognize, because Peter’s hero depended upon God for justice.

B. Blessings From Presenting the Gospel – 3:13-22

Verses 13-14—*Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.*



Peter introduced this next section with a rhetorical question, which assumes the answer that no one can harm them, eternally speaking. If the question was: “Who can harm them for doing good here on earth?” The answer would be: “Lots of people.” But Peter’s point was: Even if they suffer here, they will be blessed in heaven.

The word for *blessed* changes here to μακάριος (*makarios*), *blessed* or *happy*, the word used by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-11). This word for *blessed* refers to a happy outcome. Something will happen, which will make you happy. The happiness is to be experienced in this life only because of the knowledge of eternal rewards in the next life. Other than a present realization of future heavenly rewards:

The New Testament never says God will bless anyone here on earth

Verses 15-16—*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.*

Although this verse is in the middle of a sentence, I have dealt with it separately, because it is the most significant verse of the chapter, and one of the most significant verses in the Bible, concerning presenting the gospel message. There are six key observations we should make here. Peter said:

1. Before we present Christ to others, we should *sanctify Christ as Lord in [our] hearts*. We should first sanctify (set apart) our hearts (our personality and morality) from the world, unto the lordship of Christ.
2. Then we should always be *ready to ἀπολογία, (apologia) make a defense*. It’s almost exactly the English word “apologetics,” which is defined as: “reasoned arguments or writings in justification of something” (MacBook Pro dictionary). Peter told them to be knowledgeable and reasonable enough to make an undeniable case for their faith.
3. Also, we are to make a defense *to everyone who asks*. This assumes that we will be living and speaking out for the Gospel and the truth of the Word of God in such a way that people will ask us about our faith. Even if evangelism is not our gift or calling, we should be able to respond to questions about our faith, and be living in such a way that those questions come up.
4. Personally, we are *to give an account for the hope that is in [us.]* This seems to refer not just to an objective case for Christianity (which is #2) but a personal reason for our own faith (such as Peter gave in John 6:66-69).
5. And even though our case for Christianity should be knowledgeable, rational, and personal, it should be presented *with gentleness [towards people] and reverence [toward God]*. The last word is *fear*. Our logic, facts, and truth are to be objective, but our manner of presenting these facts is to be gentle with others and fearful of God. [This phrase is in verse 15 in most English texts and in verse 16 in the Greek text.]
6. Finally, Peter said we should *keep a good conscience*. We should always follow our conscience because it is our moral barometer. But we should also keep examining our conscience because it isn’t perfect and it can be warped. So we must keep examining it to be sure it is good. If we keep our conscience good, then *those who revile [our] good behavior in Christ will be put to shame*.

Questions for Discussion

- Let's review:
The theme of 1 Peter is (subject) _____ (complement) _____.
Chapter 1 is about _____
Chapter 2 is about _____
Chapter 3 is about _____
- According to verses 8-9, the reason we should be *harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted* is so that:
 - We will be *humble in spirit*.
 - We will get a *blessing* from God.
 - We will not be *returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead*.
 - We will be holy as God is holy.
- In chapter 3, the blessings we receive are:
 - Good words from God
 - Happiness from God
 - Both A and B
 - Neither A nor B
- Using Psalm 34 (in verses 10-12), Peter gave 3 specific ways to see good days. All these except:
 - [To] *keep ... from speaking deceit*
 - [To] *be humble in spirit*
 - [To] *turn away from evil and do good*
 - [To] *seek peace and pursue it*
- The main difference between the life ... and ... good days in Psalm 34 and 1 Peter 3:10-12 is:
 - Psalm 34 is about this life, and 1 Peter 3 is about heaven.
 - Psalm 34 is about Israel, and 1 Peter 3 is about the church.
 - Psalm 34 is about living in the land of Israel, and 1 Peter 3 is about the whole world.
 - Psalm 34 is about judgment, and 1 Peter is about rewards.
- In verse 13, the statement: *Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?* proves:
 - Our good acts will usually not lead us into a harmful situation.
 - Goodness is rewarded by God in that He protects us from what evil people can do to us.
 - Blessings are only in heaven not on earth.
 - Doing what is good means we don't have to *fear their intimidation*.
- In verses 13-16, Peter told us that we are to do evangelism by making sure of several things. Which of these is not in Peter's list.
 - Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts
 - Be ready to make a defense
 - Be harmonious and sympathetic
 - Be gentle and reverent

Answers: (1) The **theme** of the book is (subject) "living a holy life" (complement) "must be done in a hostile world." Chapter 1 = Holiness, Chapter 2 = Submission, Chapter 3 = Heavenly Blessings. (2) B (It's *for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing*). (3) C (There are two Greek words for *blessing* defined as in A and B, and both are used in this chapter.) (4) B. (5) A (B and C are correct statements but not the main difference. D is incorrect. Both passages have judgments and rewards.) (6) C (A and B and not true. People harm believers all the time. D is only true in the sense of C, heavenly blessings.) (7) C (and notice how D is part of evangelism, but C would be harmful in evangelism).

Verse 17—*For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

Let's look at the actual words of this verse. It says: κρείττον γὰρ ἀγαθοποιούντας, εἰ θέλοι τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, πάσχειν ἢ κακοποιούντας. Literally: *For better to be doing good if the will of God wishes [or desires] suffering rather (than) doing evil.*

The main point of the verse is that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Suffering for doing evil would be suffering the consequences of sin. It would include things like: getting caught and punished by the authorities, having a child out of marriage you must support but cannot raise, being sick or dying from too much alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or food, being divorced because of a sexual affair, losing your job because of cheating, lying, or extortion.

But suffering for doing good is when the world persecutes us for doing what God says is good. This is the result of the world disagreeing with God about what is good. But it does say that there are times when God desires for His people to suffer.

Peter does not say the suffering of the saints is good. If suffering were good, then heaven would be a place of suffering. He says that suffering for good is better than suffering for evil, and sometimes it is in the will of God. Why? The answer is in the next verse.

Verse 18—*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit*

The reason suffering for good is sometimes the desire of a good God is that it results in a greater good, a good which is not possible without suffering. (Peter discusses this further in 4:19.) The example is the suffering of Christ. He died for sins. That's suffering for doing good. And it pleased a good God. The reason it pleased God is that the result was the salvation of the faithful and the glorification of Christ. It was better for Christ to come to earth and suffer, rather than just remain in heaven, because of the tremendous good of saving the race God created. But it also resulted in the glorification of Christ Himself (Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 5:11-14).

Verses 19-20—*in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.* [The picture depicts Noah preaching before the flood.]

Here Peter gave another example of Christ's suffering. But most commentators wish he hadn't. Here are the three most common views of this passage:

1. This means that Christ, between His death and resurrection, descended into Hades (of Luke 16:19-31) and offered to those who lived before Noah a second chance for salvation.
2. This means that Christ made a proclamation to those people who lived before Noah, who are now in Hades, without offering a second chance for salvation.



3. This means Christ made a proclamation to demons (the spirits now in prison) who had sexual relations with women before the Flood.
4. This is a reference to the preincarnate Christ's preaching through Noah to those who, because they rejected that message, are now spirits in prison in Hades.

Most evangelicals like #4, and that's probably the best choice. The biggest problem with #4 is the word "now" is not in the text and has to be added to make that conclusion. #1 is the least likely because there is never any hope given for lost dead people to be saved. #3 is not reasonable because there is no contextual evidence that the pre-flood sexual relations (of Genesis 6:2) ever included demons, and these spirits now in prison seem to be real people. But #2 is possible. There is no reason to assume that just because Christ made a proclamation to those in Hades that it was an afterlife opportunity for them to be saved.

Verses 21-22—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, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.



The first phrase of verse 21 is ὁ καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀντίτυπον, literally, *which now you antitype*. The idea is that the Flood was a *type* or example of water saving 8 people from drowning, and baptism is a *antitype*, or corresponding example, where water saves people from their sins.



Then Peter made it clear that, although they were saved by being baptized in water, the water is not what saved them. They were saved because of their *appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. So baptism was the method of expressing salvation but not the means of salvation. What saved them was an appeal to God (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24). The appeal was for a good conscience. This is a unique way to state the motive for salvation. I assume Peter's point is that salvation is an appeal to have our sins washed away by the cross of Christ, resulting in a perverted conscience becoming a good conscience. And, of course, all that is only possible *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

Peter ended the chapter with three things about Christ:

1. [He] *is at the right hand of God* (see also Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).
2. [He has] *gone into heaven*.
3. *Angels and authorities and powers [are] subjected to Him*.

Thoughts and Applications

1. Peter expected us to be able to make a reasonable rational case for our faith in Christ as our God and Savior. Answers like: "This is what I believe," "This is what I have been taught," "Jesus is in my heart," "God answers my prayers," won't do. It is not that a rational case for the truth of biblical Christianity will convince people to become believers. Only the Holy Spirit can do that (John 16:8). We are to *make a defense to everyone who asks and to give an account for the hope that is in us* because it is pleasing to God. Christianity is a rational religion (the only rational religion), and it must be presented with a rational defense, based on the historical fact of the resurrection of Christ and the accuracy of the Scripture which records those facts.

2. Peter said: *For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right.* The point is: suffering for being good is better than suffering for being bad. But the verse also tells us there are times when the desires of God include our suffering. Of course, our suffering is in the plan of God, but verse 17 tells us that it is also in the *will* of God. Christians have suffered tremendously over the years – burned alive, eaten by lions, beheaded, families killed, houses burned, on and on. The reality is, we cannot be at peace during suffering unless we know: (1) it is the will of God and (2) that God is good.

So how do I know God is good? For example, if I say the God of the Bible is good, then the Allah of the Quran is bad. But how do I know that?

“Because I grew up as a Christian?” Hopefully that’s not the only reason.

“Because I have faith in the Bible?” It depends on why I have faith in the Bible.

“Because I believe God is good?” It depends upon what that faith is based on.

Our decision that God is good is not, or should not be, purely arbitrary. If it is purely arbitrary, then the Allah of the Quran could be good and the God of the Bible could be bad. I suggest there are two ways that we know God is good:

- **One** is by the work of God in our lives (Romans 8:14-16). The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). Therefore, as a believer, I have the knowledge that God is good because the Holy Spirit convicts my spirit about what is good and bad, so I can recognize that God is good.
- **Second** is by the moral nature built into me which tells me something about good and evil (Genesis 3:22; Romans 2:14-16). Most reasonable people all over the world will agree generally about good and evil – even if they don’t live that way. Take, for example, the Golden Rule. Most people understand it is good to do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Luke 6:31).

When I study the Bible and observe the works of God over the years, I see, based on my inward moral notions, that the God of the Bible is good. So based upon my knowledge of God, I know what I know about God is good. So it is reasonable to take it by faith that what I don’t now about God is also good. Therefore, I can conclude that the suffering He wills is good.

3. When Peter said: *Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you*, he made it clear that it is not the water doing the saving. For example, I could say: “Praying a sinner’s prayer for salvation saves you, not the praying of a prayer, but an the appeal you make to God with the prayer” or “Going forward in a church meeting saves you, not walking forward, but the appeal you are expressing to God by going forward.”

For Peter, baptism was the means of salvation (Acts 2:38). For Paul, baptism followed salvation (Acts 16:13-33; 1 Corinthians 1:14-17). For Jesus, baptism had nothing to do with salvation (Matthew 3:14). The apostles baptized, but Jesus didn’t (John 4:1-3). The New Testament is full of salvation passages which never mention baptism (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; Ephesians 2:8-9). But since Jesus was baptized and the apostles baptized their converts, it seems all believers should seek water baptism.

4. Peter said we are saved *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. We would expect him to say we are saved through the death of Christ. Of course, it is the death of Christ that saves us because it is the blood sacrifice which is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2), reconciling us to God (2 Corinthians 5:19-21). But how do we know that the death of Christ paid for our sins? Anyone could claim that their death paid for sins. The way we know it is that the resurrection of Christ proved that His claims were true.

Questions for Discussion

1. Verse 17 says: *For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.* The main point of the verse is:
 - A. Sometimes God will cause us to suffer for doing what is right.
 - B. Sometimes God will allow us to suffer for doing what is right.
 - C. Suffering for what is right is better than suffering for what is wrong.
 - D. Suffering for what is right will obtain a heavenly reward.
2. Give four examples of suffering for doing what is wrong;
 - A. _____ C. _____
 - B. _____ D. _____
3. Give four different common interpretations of verses 19-20. Then defend the one you hold, or give and defend some other interpretation.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
4. In verse 21, when Peter said: *Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you,* he meant:
 - A. Baptism is like Noah's ark.
 - B. Baptism is necessary for salvation.
 - C. Baptism is a good thing to do but not necessary for salvation.
 - D. Baptism is an identification with Christ.
5. Consider verse 21 and Acts 2:38, and describe Peter's view on baptism.
 - A. Baptism is for salvation.
 - B. Baptism follows salvation
 - C. Baptism is about identification.
 - D. Baptism makes you part of the church.
6. According to verses 21 and 22, what did Peter say does not save you?
 - A. Being dipped in water
 - B. Making an appeal to God
 - C. Having a good conscience
 - D. The resurrection of Jesus Christ
7. In verse 22, Peter ended the chapter saying three things about Christ. Which of these did he not say?
 - A. He rose from the dead.
 - B. He is at the right hand of God.
 - C. He has gone into heaven.
 - D. Angels and authorities and powers are subjected to Him.



Answers: (1) C (A and B are a parenthetical comment. D is true but not in this verse.) (2) Five were given in the study pages: getting caught and punished by the authorities, having a child out of marriage you must support but cannot raise, being sick or dying from too much alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or food, being divorced because of a sexual affair, losing your job because of cheating, lying, or extortion. (3) These are listed in the study pages under 3:19-20. (4) A (*Corresponding to that* refers to the last verse where people were saved by Noah's ark. (5) A (B is more Paul's view. C is Christ's view. D is only true of Spirit baptism, and the subject here is water baptism.) (6) A (This is what Peter meant by *not the removal of dirt from the flesh.*) (7) A (A is also true, but it's in verse 21 – Sorry about that. It was way too tricky.)

Chapter 4

Suffering Is the Context for the Christian Life

Let's review.

The **theme** of the book is: Holiness in a hostile world.

Chapter 1 tells us to be **holy** as Christ was holy.

Chapter 2 tells us to be in **submission**: to our governments, or to our masters or to our husbands.

Chapter 3 tells us to focus on our future **heavenly blessings**.

Chapter 4 tells us the holy life will be lived in a context of **suffering**.



A picture of Jesus and the Pharisees

Chapter 4 continues the discussion on suffering begun in 3:13. Here Peter made the point that suffering is not just some strange thing that they will go through, but it is the normal Christian life here on earth. Their situation is not unusual, odd, or exceptional. It's the context of holiness on earth.

The chapter outlines as follows:

- A. Suffering and Sin — 4:1-6
- B. Suffering and Service — 4:7-11
- C. Suffering and Rewards — 4:12-19

A. Suffering and Sin — 4:1-6

Verse 1—Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin

The meaning of the first phrase describing Christ's suffering in the flesh is debated. The question is whether it refers to Christ's entire life and His death, or just His death. Those believing it refers only to His death see this passage as an encouragement to endure martyrdom, if necessary. But the context seems to be an encouragement to live in suffering, not just, or even primarily, to die in suffering.

The command of the verse, to *arm yourselves* is ὁπλίσασθε (*hoplisasthe*), a military term used only here in the New Testament. It is written as an aorist middle, *to take it upon yourselves to arm yourselves*. The qualifying phrase is τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν (*ten auten ennoian*), [*with*] *the same purpose* (as Christ in His suffering). This word, ἔννοιαν, for *purpose* is a combination of the word *in* [ἐν] and *mind* [νοίαν]. It can mean *thinking, understanding, intention, or purpose*. This word is used only one other place in the New Testament, in Hebrews 4:12, where the Word of God is said to *judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*. So they were to intentionally arm themselves with the same mind or understanding of Christ as He lived, and died, in the flesh.

The most difficult question of the verse is: What does it mean: *he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin*? Ryrie has a good perspective on this. He writes: "The thought is this: Christ suffered in the flesh. He is your example. So, arm yourselves by taking the same view of suffering as Christ took, which is to accept it in the will of God. Thereby the dominion of sin is broken in practical experience" ("Ryrie Study Bible," p. 1981).

When we suffer because we refuse to live as the sinful culture around us is living, then we will cease from having the sinful temptations of that culture. Of course, everyone who suffers as a believer still has a sin nature and will continue to sin. The point is: the dominion of sin is broken when we live as Christ did.

When I suffer as Christ did:

I am suffering because I am trying not to be like the world.

Therefore, I am not trying to be like the world.

But sin is trying to be like the world.

Therefore, when I am not trying to be like the world, I have ceased from sin.

Therefore, when I suffer as Christ did, I have ceased from sin.

Verse 2—so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

This is what Peter meant by suffering causing us to cease from sin. If we suffer the loss of the *lusts of men* and live in a moral environment defined by *the will of God*, then we will have ceased from sin. So it's all about what we lust for. The secret to ceasing from sin is to lust after the will of God, rather than the lusts of men.

Verse 3—For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

Peter said you have had enough sin in your past. You need to abandon your past. He called *this the desire of the Gentiles* and described it with an impressive list:

- *Sensuality*
- *Lusts*
- *Drunkenness*
- *Carousing*
- *Drinking parties*
- *Abominable idolatries*



Sounds like life at any public university campus. But there is a difference. Today, we could add cohabitation, homosexuality, drugs, and oral sex. Also, our society is actually worse today than ever before in history. The proof is three-fold: (1) the percentage of people committing sinful acts is greater, (2) the opportunity is greater, and (3) the tolerance of sin is greater.

Anyway, Peter said to abandon all that, and to do so, will cause suffering from the culture around you, but it will separate you from that sin.

Verses 4-5—In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

This sentence is written like a proverb, with two contrasting statements: *they malign you; but they will give account to God*. The first statement says the worldly culture they came out of will be ξενίζονται (*xenidzontai*), *surprised*. It's also surprising that Peter used this word. He used it again in 4:12, where he said: *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you*. The word is used for a guest who shows up unexpectedly and requires housing. Paul used it for *lodging* in Philemon

22 and *hospitality* in Romans 12:13. The point is: their former unbelieving friends are as surprised as when a guest shows up unexpectedly. It actually affects their lives, like making unexpected preparations to accommodate an unexpected guest.

Thoughts and Applications

By way of application, we need to understand that good Christians will suffer because they will be living contrary to the culture of the society around them. Christianity was born a counter-cultural movement. From the get-go, it was separated from the state and all political governing bodies. That assured persecution. Most religions are not counter-cultural but part of the general culture. Take Islam, for example. It was born creating a government. It spread by military conquest so that, by the time of Mohammed's death, there was no separation whatsoever between the religion and the state. As Islam spreads, it must create its own government. A good Muslim (quite the opposite of a good Christian) is one who does not suffer socially, because he or she is living consistently with the government and the culture dictated by that government. "Islam" means "to submit." A Muslim is one who submits.

The same is true of Hinduism in India, and Buddhism in Tibet. The same was true of Old Testament Judaism, until they were exiled to Babylon. Then we see people like Ezekiel and Daniel suffering countercultural living. Modern rabbinic Judaism suffered culturally until the Jews returned to the land and established their own government. Christianity is the only world religion designed in such a way that a good follower is not usually considered good by the governing culture or the state in which he or she lives. Many Christian groups are trying to make the government and governing culture "Christian," so they don't have to suffer. But Peter says it's counter-cultural suffering that keeps us from sin.

When you become a Christian, your social group is now changed, and your behavior has no explanation your former worldly culture can understand. Why would anyone stop doing enjoyable activity that is not illegal and does not hurt anyone else? It is like most people's answer to the homosexual question: "If it doesn't effect me or hurt anyone, what do I care?" The Christian answer is: God cares.

If you look at Peter's list of worldly activities, and even add some of our own, they can be practiced in such a way that they are enjoyable, legal, and don't hurt anyone else. So what's the problem? Peter said, here's what's wrong with it: *they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

Questions for Discussion

- The first phrase of chapter 4 is *Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose*. An application of that would be:
 - Since Christ was martyred, we must prepare for martyrdom.
 - Since Christ lived a life of rejection and ridicule, we must prepare for such a life.
 - To receive Christ, we must commit to a life of suffering in this world.
 - To mature in Christ, we must commit to a life of suffering in this world.
- Verse 1 also said: *he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin*. That means:
 - The more they suffer, the less they will sin.
 - While they are suffering in the flesh, at that moment, they are ceasing from sin.
 - When they have the same understanding of Christ, they will cease from sin.
 - When we accept Christ, we have a new nature, which ceases from sin.
- Verse 2 told them *to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God*. So as an application we should:
 - Stop lusting and start living for the will of God.
 - Start lusting for the will of God.
 - Stop focusing on living in the flesh.
 - Start focusing on how we are going to live the rest of our time in the flesh.
- In verse 3, Peter told his readers that before they were believers they *pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries*. Most people believe our society is the same morally (not better or worse). In the commentary, I suggested there are three things that prove our global society is actually getting worse morally. List those three and say if you agree. We know society is getting worse because:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____Do you agree? _____!
- In verse 4, Peter told his readers that their unbelieving friends *are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses*. How should this be interpreted?
 - Their unbelieving friends did not expect them to change their lifestyle.
 - We are to surprise our unbelieving friends with our changed lives.
 - We should not *run with our unbelieving friend into the same excesses of dissipation*, and we should expect them to be surprised about that.
 - We should focus on being like Christ and not think about what our former friends will think.
- True or False? When, in verse 6, Peter said the Gospel was *preached even to those who are dead*, he meant the Gospel was preached to those who have already been martyred.

Answers: (1) B (A is not the focus of the chapter. C is lordship salvation. D may be true, but the verse is about preparation [*arm yourselves*], not about commitment.) (2) C (A and B are not necessarily true. D is an application, not an interpretation.) (3) B (Remember, *lust* and *desire* are the same Greek word. Peter contrasted the lust of the flesh with a lust for the will of God. A is not true because to stop desiring is Buddhism, not Christianity. C is like saying, "Stop thinking about pink elephants." D is true but doesn't say what that focus should be, as B does.) (4) A (The percentage of people committing sinful acts is greater. B. The opportunity is greater. And C. the tolerance of sin is greater. And "YES!", you agree (just kidding).) (5) A (*Surprised* means "unexpected." B, C, and D are applications, not interpretations.) (6) True.

B. Suffering and Service — 4:1-6

Verses 7-11 can be outlined as follows:

*The end of all things is near;
therefore,*

1. *be of sound judgment and*
2. *sober spirit*
for the purpose of prayer.

Above all,



1. *keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*
2. *Be hospitable to one another without complaint.*
3. *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*
4. *Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God;*
5. *whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies;*
6. *so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Verse 7 begins with Peter saying: *The end of all things is near*. Notice he was referring to the destruction of the whole earth at the end of time, not any one event approaching that time. Later in 2 Peter 3:12-13 he will write:

... the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

therefore,

1. *be of sound judgment*, σωφρονήσατε (*sophronesate*). The “Louw and Nida Lexicon: says this word means: “to be able to reason and think properly and in a sane manner” — “to be in one’s right mind, to be sane, to think straight, to reason correctly.” Another thing Peter commanded in light of the end of all things is to have a
2. *sober spirit*, νήψατε (*nepsate*). The word means “to be self-controlled or sober,” as in not drunk with wine.

for [the purpose of] prayer. The phrase for “the purpose of” is not in the text but it can be assumed.

Notice that the response to a nearness of the end of all things is not emotional, mystical, or religious, but sound reasonable thinking and self control.

Verses 8-11 give five commands for serving fellow believers.

Above all, probably does not mean these are the five most significant commands but that they are essential for Christian service.

1. **(Verse 8) *Keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*** Here Peter used ἀγάπη (*agape*) to describe what we would expect to be φιλεω (*phileo*), brotherly love. Then he quoted the popular phrase from Proverbs 10:12, used also in James 5:20. In this context, *love covers a multitude of sins*, not for salvation or a relationship with God but for ministering to one another. This does not mean we should avoid calling one another into account for our sins. But once there has been repentance of sin, then those sins are past and love should cover any reference to them.

2. **(Verse 9) *Be hospitable to one another without complaint.*** Now Peter used φιλόξενοι (*philoxenoi*), a form of brotherly love, to describe hospitality without γογγυσμοῦ (*gongusmou*), *murmuring, grumbling, or complaining*.

3. **(Verse 10) *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*** This is the only New Testament usage of the word χάρισμα (*charisma*) for *gift*, outside the writings of Paul. The emphasis in this verse is on the individual serving the individual *as each one has received* – *each one serves*.



4. **(Verse 11) *Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God.*** Literally: *if anyone speaks [do so] as the words of God*. This refers to the content of the message. Not that every one speaking has a prophecy from God but that his content would be something consistent with the Word of God.

5. **(Verse 11) *whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies.*** This is not meant to divide up people into speakers and servers but to say that all forms of service are to depend on the strength of God.

so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. This purpose statement tells us that God the Father is glorified through Jesus Christ, as Christ receives glory and dominion forever. The word πᾶσιν (*pasin*), *all, every, or the whole*, modifying δοξάζεται (*doxadzetai*), the *glory* of God, seems to indicate that there is no other way to glorify God except through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Thoughts and Applications

One of the more difficult things to understand in the New Testament are the apostles' declarations about the nearness of the end of the age. So we shall stop and look at that a bit.

The teaching of Jesus on this subject is much easier to follow. Although we cannot identify all the details, His statements about future prophetic events are straightforward and understandable. For example, after He predicted wars and famines and earthquakes, Jesus said:

For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short... But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory (Matthew 24:21-22, 29-30, emphasis mine).

So there will be signs, a great tribulation, then His Second Coming. The sequence is clear.

But the statements of Peter are difficult. The first statement of verse 7 is a case in point. He said: Πάντων δὲ τὸ τέλος ἤγγικεν (*panton de to telos engiken*), *But of all [things] the end is near*. Jesus never said anything like that. He told them to be ready, be alert, be waiting, but He also told them not to predict dates for His coming and that all the signs of the tribulation period must come first (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Acts 1:6-8). But the apostles spoke regularly of the end being near (Romans 13:11; Hebrews 9:26; James 5:8; 1 John 2:18).

What's in Peter's mind on this subject? Here he said: *The end of all things is near*. But he did not mean that he can figure out God's time of ending the world. For example, in 2 Peter 3:3-4, he said:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."

From these verses, we can conclude that, for Peter, *near* does not mean "soon." Actually, he predicted a day far away from his day when people will be mocking the coming of Christ, saying *ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning*. Peter went on to explain *that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day* (2 Peter 3:8). So, for Peter, *near* could be tomorrow or thousands of years away. Also, it is the end of all things Peter is talking about, not just the coming of Christ. He described that in 2 Peter 3:12 as *the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!* So Peter looks all the way past the Tribulation, past the Second Coming, and past the Millennial Kingdom, to the final destruction of the world and said it is *near*.



As to the nearness of the end times, I suggest the New Testament authors had three things in mind:

1. The end of the world, that is, the time when God will bring about His prophetic events, was **next**. It was *near* in the sense that nothing predicted in the Old Testament needed to take place before these events happened. This church age we live in is the last age before God begins His time of judgment (often called *the day of the Lord* – 1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10).
2. We who live in this church age are to **be ready** as if this event is soon, because we don't know when those events will start taking place (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50ff), but we know that we are in the last age before they start taking place. The apostles are not playing games with us saying it is *near*. They are saying it is next, and the timing of next is unknown (*with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day* – 2 Peter 3:8), so next is also near. 2000 years = 2 days with God, and that's near.
3. When Paul clarified the Rapture of the church in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (which Christ first mentioned in John 14:1-3, and his half-brother James refers to in James 5:7-8), the idea of *near* included the idea of **sudden**. The end time events included a Second Coming of Christ, preceded by certain tribulation events, but also an appearing of Christ for His church, which was not preceded by any signs. That event was sudden, imminent, of an unknown time, and, therefore, must always be seen as *near*.

Questions for Discussion

1. In verse 7, Peter said: *The end of all things is near*. What he did **not** mean is that the end was:
 - A. Next
 - B. Soon
 - C. Sudden
 - D. Surprising
2. According to Peter, in this passage, our response to a focus on *the end of all things* should be which ones in the following list?
 - A. Devotional
 - B. Spiritual
 - C. Reasonable
 - D. Personal
 - E. Self controlled
3. In verse 8, Peter said: *love covers a multitude of sins*. He meant:
 - A. Concerning our salvation
 - B. Concerning our relationship with God
 - C. Concerning our ministering to one another
 - D. Concerning our discipline of one another
4. In verses 8 and 9, Peter used two very common Greek words for love: ἀγάπη (*agape*) and φιλεω (*phileo*). The point was:
 - A. ἀγάπη (*agape*) is giving love, and φιλεω (*phileo*) is brotherly love.
 - B. ἀγάπη (*agape*) is brotherly love, and φιλεω (*phileo*) is giving love.
 - C. ἀγάπη (*agape*) and φιλεω (*phileo*) are both essential for fellowship.
 - D. ἀγάπη (*agape*) and φιλεω (*phileo*) are used interchangeably.
5. Verse 10 is about spiritual gifts. The verse says:
 - A. We all have spiritual gifts.
 - B. We are to use our gifts for serving the church.
 - C. Our gifts will be consistent with our abilities to serve one another.
 - D. We do not all have the same spiritual gifts.
6. Verse 11 says: *Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God*. That means:
 - A. When we speak, our message should be consistent with the Word of God.
 - B. Do not hinder the gifts of tongues.
 - C. Listen to those who speak prophecy from God.
 - D. Listen to the apostles, because they are *speaking the utterances of God*.

Answers: (1) B (because, as discussed in the “Thoughts and Application” section, many things had to take place first). (2) C and E (The others are not mentioned in the passage.) (3) C (The context is *keep fervent in your love for one another*). (4) D (A is, in fact, the main distinction between the two words, but it is not the context here. B is incorrect, and C is not the point of the passage.) (5) B (because the church is *one another*. A and C are true statements but not stated in the passage. C is not necessarily true.) (6) A (The others are not mentioned in the passage.)

C. Suffering and Rewards — 4:12-19

Verse 12—*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you*

After having told them not to be surprised (which he said before), Peter used a phrase which can be understood in two different ways. Literally, it reads: τῆ ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει, *the among you burning*. The two different interpretations are:

1. This is a metaphorical use of burning for general persecution as in 1:7.
2. This is a prediction of their martyrdom, as Christians were burned in Rome by Nero.

The second interpretation is because the burning of Rome and blaming it on the Christians was just before or just after the writing of 1 Peter. If this had already happened, it could be Peter had it in mind. But (as in chapter 1) the context is more about things which had already come upon them, and ongoing things of daily living.

The next phrase: πρὸς πειρασμὸν ὑμῖν γινομένη, *for your testing comes*, again goes to motives for interpretation. The word πειρασμὸν can mean *temptation* or *testing*. The difference is:

A **temptation** tries to get you to sin.

A **testing** tries to prove your faith.

The event or situation may be the same, but since God does not tempt anyone (James 1), this is a testing. For the believer, there is no way to know if a particular event is directly from God or something God is permitting Satan to do (as in the book of Job). But two things are clear:

1. It is according to the sovereign plan of God, who does not test us beyond what we are able to endure, while providing a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).
2. The response is to avoid sin and pursue the righteousness of Christ.

Verse 13—*but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

In verse 13, Peter ended the sentence telling them to rejoice because they have the opportunity for greater rewards. His point is that we should keep on rejoicing when we are suffering because we will then be rejoicing at His revelation.

Peter described the time of exultation as being ἀποκαλύψει τῆς δόξης (*apokalupsei tes doxes*) at the revelation of His glory. So this is not rejoicing about revelation in the sense of inspired information revealed by the apostles and New Testament prophets. That's the word προφητείας (*propheteias*), as in Revelation 22:18. This is apocalyptic revelation, as in Revelation 1:1.

Verse 14—*If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

Blessed is the word meaning *happy*, used in the Sermon on the Mount. The verse is similar to 3:14, and both seem to refer to Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:11 —

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

In which case, it is definitely a blessing in heaven as a reward for suffering for Christ here.

The Spirit of glory and of God is not two spirits but a double reference to the Holy Spirit. The point is: the Holy Spirit has led them into a situation of suffering for Jesus, which, therefore, results in heavenly rewards. It is important to notice that Peter is not saying we are rewarded by God or that we should rejoice just because *people insult you and persecute you*. You could be persecuted and insulted for things that have nothing to do with it being *because of Me*. There is nothing here to tell us that suffering builds character, or that persecution strengthens our faith. Suffering is only valuable and a cause for rejoicing *to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ*. This means we suffer for the same things He suffered for – the truth of the Word of God.

Verse 15—*Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler*

Peter's point was to emphasize the need to make sure their suffering was for doing the things of the Spirit of God. This is the same point Peter made in 3:17. Obviously, he was not limiting useless suffering to these four sins. The first two, (1) *as a murderer* or (2) *as a thief*, are very specific and probably not something believers are likely to be involved in. But the next two (3) being an *evildoer* or (4) *a troublesome meddler* are more general things that are temptations for any believer. Peter seemed to have mentioned two obvious sins, then two less obvious ones, to show believers the second two will keep them from heavenly blessings, just as the first two will.

Verse 16—*but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

The point of this verse is obvious and a continuation of the theme Peter has been developing all through the chapter (since 3:13). The interesting thing here is the word Χριστιανός (*Christianos*) we translate as *Christian*. The word occurs three times in the Bible (here; Acts 11:26; 26:28).

1. In Acts 11, we are told the word originated in Antioch.
2. In Acts 26, King Agrippa told Paul he is almost convinced to become a Χριστιανός (*Christianos*) Christian.
3. Here, it is a collective term describing those who suffer for the name of Christ.

So it seems the word was becoming an acceptable label at that time. Originally, the movement was called “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22), apparently, after Christ's statement *I am the way* ... in John 14:6.

Verse 17—*For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

This verse begins with the phrase ὅτι [ὁ] καιρὸς τοῦ ἀρξασθαι τὸ κρίμα ἀπὸ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ θεοῦ (ἡστί [ἡ] καιροσ του αρξαστηαι το κριμα απο του ουκου του τηου). *Therefore [it is] the time (or season) to begin (or rule) judgment with (or from or by) the house of God*. There are two ways to understand this phrase:

1. Most commentators understand this to mean that God will discipline His church, and if He disciplines His church, how much more will He judge outsiders. And this may very well be correct. The context that follows this phrase is certainly about the judgment of God.
2. There are some words in the verse which suggest a different interpretation. If God is doing the judging of the church, then why is this the καιρὸς (*kairos*), *time* or *season* for judgment? The word ἀπο (*apo*) usually means *from* or *by*, so it sounds like the judgment comes *from the house of God*. Also, although all judgment is based upon the same character of the same God, the judgment (condemnation) of unbelievers has a very different purpose from the discipline (correction) of believers. The preceding context is also what believers do, not just what God does. So it is reasonable to interpret this as Christians disciplining one another.

Whichever view is correct, it is clear that Peter was pointing to the κρίμα (*krima*) judgment, according to the character of God. They were to judge themselves to be sure they were not suffering for sin, and God would judge their unbelieving persecutors by the same standard – His own character.

Verse 18—“And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?”

Next, Peter was probably referring to the Septuagint rendering of Proverbs 11:31 —

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

But Peter applied the idea of the Proverb to eternal salvation. He made an interesting point. Salvation is not easy. It can simply be received by faith, but it cost God a tremendous price. If God had to put Christ through the suffering of the cross, death, and separation from Himself to pay for the salvation of the righteous and satisfy His justice, what is in store for the sinner?

Verse 19—Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

This verse is set up as a command to those who suffer according to the will of God. The command is for them to παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν (*paratithesthosan tas psuchas auton*) *keep on taking it upon themselves* (the verb is a present, middle imperative), *to set their souls before God*. God here is called *a faithful Creator*. So the spiritual life of the believer is one of continually setting his soul before his Creator, who is not like the fickle pagan gods but faithful to keep His own word and consistent with His own character. Notice also that if we believe in evolution instead of creation, there is no *faithful Creator* to whom you can entrust your soul.

Thoughts and Applications

Sin causes suffering all by itself, because it runs contrary to the way God has made us. The other day, I was mixing paint. Suppose I used my glasses to stir the paint? It would work, but then my glasses would suffer the consequences of being full of paint. Eventually, that would ruin my glasses, because that is not what they were made for.



Sin is that way. It works. It provides pleasures and solutions to problems, which are contrary to the way God made things. But those “solutions” eventually cause suffering. However, suffering for following the leading of the Holy Spirit, which is living a godly life and being a witness for Christ, will bring suffering from people of this world who have established a society where violating God’s laws is acceptable. But this suffering is only temporary, because when we are doing what is right according to the character of God, then we are living the way we were made to live, which will, by the very nature of the action, be rewarded by God.

Peter’s point is: make sure it is worldly people who are causing your suffering. Make sure it is not the violation of God’s laws that are causing your suffering.

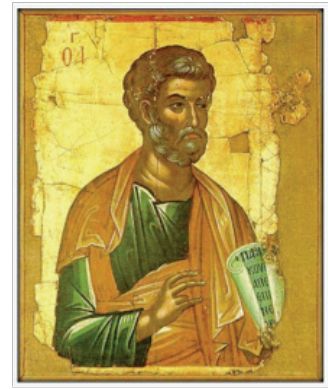
Questions for Discussion

1. In verse 12, Peter wrote: *do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you*. He meant:
 - A. The possibility of their martyrdom
 - B. The persecution from Rome
 - C. The persecution from Jews
 - D. All of the above are possible.
2. Verse 13 tells us *to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing*. The reason we should rejoice while suffering is because:
 - A. Suffering builds character.
 - B. Suffering builds faith.
 - C. Suffering prepares us for ministering to others.
 - D. Suffering will give us joy at Christ's return.
3. Verse 14 says: *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you*. *Blessed* means:
 - A. You will be happy in this life.
 - B. You will be happy in heaven.
 - C. You will be happy now, knowing you will be happy in heaven.
 - D. You will be happy now because you will know you are living for Christ.
4. When Peter used the word *Christian* in verse 16, he meant:
 - A. The church
 - B. Those who claim to be believers in Christ
 - C. Those who are participating in the sufferings of Christ
 - D. Those who outsiders see as followers of Christ
5. What did Peter mean in verse 17 when he said *it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God*?
 - A. This is the time when God is judging the church rather than Israel.
 - B. This is the time when believers should be judging themselves and one another.
 - C. The judgment of the church is nothing compared to the judgment of unbelievers.
 - D. The judgment of unbelievers will be greater than the judgment of the church.
6. In verse 18, Peter said that *it is with difficulty that the righteous ... [are] saved*. He meant:
 - A. It was difficult for God to judge Christ for believers' sins.
 - B. It is difficult for believers to leave their sin and be saved.
 - C. Salvation is difficult because, in the end, it requires the lordship of Christ.
 - D. To save people is difficult for God because He is holy and people are sinners.
7. From verse 19, we can conclude:
 - A. If you believe in evolution, you cannot entrust your soul to God.
 - B. If you believe in reincarnation, you cannot entrust your soul to God.
 - C. If you believe in pantheism, you cannot entrust your soul to God.
 - D. All of the above.

Answers: (1) D (Since Peter doesn't say who is causing the fiery ordeal, any of these may be right, but A seems less likely to me because the context of the letter seems to be about suffering in general.) (2) D (The text says: *so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation*.) (3) C (The context of verse 13 is *at the revelation of His glory*. A is never promised. B is true, but he is talking in the present tense. D may be true, but it's not what this verse is saying.) (4) A (The church is all true believers, and that is Peter's meaning here.) (5) B is my choice (but many say C or D. A is not in this passage.) (6) A (The passage deals with the difficulty of God saving us, so B and C are from the wrong perspective. D is true but not in the passage.) (7) D (All of these leave out the concept of God as a Creator.)

Chapter 5

Instruction for Men



Let's review.

The **theme** of the book is: Holiness in a hostile world. That is:

Subject: The Christian's life of holiness

Complement: must be lived in a hostile world.

[Icon of Peter from Mount Athos monastery 1546.]

The **purpose** of this book is simply a historical application of the theme: *to help and encourage those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen* (1:1), to live a holy life in a hostile world.

In **chapter 1**, Peter told them to be holy as Christ was holy. So in the first chapter Peter gave them the theme of his letter. They are aliens, not citizens. They are to be holy just as God is holy (not just doers of good, but separated from sin), and they are to pursue this holiness as aliens in a world hostile to anyone pursuing holiness.

In **chapter 2**, Peter told them to be in submission: to their government (even though it was persecuting them), to their masters (even if they were unreasonable), and wives to their husbands (even if they were disobedient to the Word). Submission means: obedience in areas of disagreement, which do not disobey the Word of God. Submitting to governments, masters, and husbands declares these earthly authorities to be relatively unimportant. If these were the most significant authorities, then believers would have to rebel against them when they are wrong. Submitting to them declares that they have authority delegated to them by God, but only God has dominion (5:11).

In **chapter 3**, Peter told them to focus on their future blessings. These blessings are heavenly, not earthly, rewards. They are a result of their conduct toward one another and a focus on the ministry of the Gospel. Peter told them that holy living is done in the context of looking further down the road. The further you look down the road, the straighter you are likely to drive. If you focus on heavenly rewards, then you are more likely to live in a heavenly/holy manner.

In **chapter 4**, Peter told them the holy life will be lived in a context of suffering. The one who suffers, as Christ did, is freed from sin and can live a holy life in a hostile world – as Christ did. When your focus is on holiness and the persecution of the world is your source of suffering, then you are not focused on sin. If you are focused on holiness, then sin is a problem. If, like the world, you are focused on sin, then righteousness is a problem.

In **chapter 5**, Peter ended his letter with specific instructions for men. He specified two groups: those older men who are elders and younger men who are willing to submit to those elders. [Some divide this into three categories – elders, younger men, and everyone. Those doing that make the additional break at 5:6, some at 5:8. But this seems unlikely. The second set of instructions has no contextual break in it, so it is most likely all for the younger men.]

The chapter, then, can be outlined as follows:

- A. Special Instruction for Elders — 5:1-4
 B. Special Instructions for Younger Men — 5:5-11
 C. Concluding Comments — 5:12-14

A. Special Instruction for Elders – 5:1-4

Verse 1—Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed

Peter first addressed Πρεσβυτέρους (*presbuteros*), *elders among* (or *in*) *you*. This is the most common form of leadership term in Scripture. *Elder* is used to describe community leaders in Old Testament Israel and leaders of believers in the New Testament church. It should be noted that elders were always men (*husbands* – 1 Timothy 3:2), and there were a plurality of them (here and everywhere else in the New Testament). There was never one special designated leader, such as a pastor, priest, bishop, cardinal, pope, or head elder. The idea of one person being first among them was strictly condemned (3 John 9).

Peter described himself three ways:

- *Your fellow elder*
- *[A] witness of the sufferings of Christ*
- *A partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed*

The **first description** he gave is as *fellow elder*. Peter was an apostle, one of the 12, and the one God used initially to start the church. But he did not consider himself as a pope or pastor or director. Instead, he called himself a συμπρεσβύτερος (*sumpresbuteros*), *fellow elder* (or literally *a together-with elder*).

The **second description** is significant because it shows that Christianity is based on historical observation, not mystical experience. Peter said that he was an eyewitness of the actual physical life, death, and resurrection, the *sufferings of Christ*.

The **third description** Peter gave of himself is that he was part of the ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης (*apokaluptesthai doxes*), [the] *revelation of glory*. This first word is the same word John used to begin the book of Revelation. It is not the word for prophetic revelation, as in new Scriptures or a word from God (as in Revelation 22:18-19), but of the revealing of the glory of Jesus Christ (as in Revelation 1:1).

Verses 2-3—shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

The commanding verb in this sentence is ποιμάνετε (*poimante*), an aorist plural imperative, *you* (plural, “y’all” or “you guys”) *are commanded to shepherd* (as a timeless act). The object of that shepherding is ποίμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ (*poimnion tou theou*), *the sheep of God*. So this is not a call to community leadership. It’s what Jesus asked Peter to do in John 21:17 – *shepherd My sheep*.



Raphael, Christ's Charge to Peter

Then Peter gave them eight ways to do that:

1. *Exercising oversight.* This is the participle form of the word Paul used for *overseer*.
2. *Not under compulsion.* The word means necessity – *not* because it's *necessary*.
3. *Voluntarily.* Being an elder should be some man's desire, and he should volunteer for it.
4. *According to [the will of] God.* Actually, it just says *according to God*. Elders are selected, not by some organization, but by God working in the lives of older maturing men.
5. *Not for sordid gain.* Elders might be paid, but they should not do it for the money.
6. *With eagerness.* This word προθύμως (*prothumos*) is also translated *willing* (in Mark 14:38) and *ready* (in Romans 1:15).
7. *Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge.* There are two interesting things here. Elders are not to be lords, but servants. And, they receive their people by κλήρων (*kleron*), *portion* or *lot*. The meaning is not clear. It may be those who met in their homes, but some people were the responsibility of certain elders. Notice, this is responsibility without authority.
8. *Proving to be examples to the flock.* The foundation of all leading is by an example.

1 is a bit suspect. The word ἐπισκοποῦντες for *oversight* is not in some manuscripts. The NET Bible has this note about the word for *oversight*:

“A few important MSS (â° B sa) lack ἐπισκοποῦντες (*episkopountes*, “exercising oversight”), but the participle enjoys otherwise good ms support (Π72 â2 A P Ξ 33 1739 Â lat). A decision is difficult because normally the shorter reading is preferred, especially when found in excellent witnesses. However, in this instance the omission may be due to a hesitation among some scribes to associate oversight with elders, since the later church viewed overseer/bishop as a separate office from elder.”

This is the word for *bishop* which, after the apostles died, was incorrectly introduced as a single leader over the church. It does seem a bit suspect. It seems to me more likely that someone added it later. It is true, however, that elders were to be overseers of their flock. The noun form of *overseer* is used five other times in the New Testament, one of them by Peter (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25). Anyway, if #1 is part of the original text, it is a function, not an office.



Verse 4—*And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*

Peter continued his shepherd metaphor for leadership, referring to Jesus as ἀρχιποίμενος (*archipoimenos*), the *arch-shepherd*. The shepherd metaphor is not new. The Bible refers to Christ as the *Chief Shepherd* (here), the *True Shepherd* (Ezekiel 34:11-16), the *Good Shepherd* (John 10:11, 14), and the *Great Shepherd* (Hebrews 13:20). The point is: the style of leadership Jesus demonstrated and taught is what the elders of the church are to model.

As is common, with the apostle's description of after-life judgment, it is certain but vague when it comes to particulars. The common reward metaphor was a crown of some sort (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10; 3:11).

Questions for Discussion

1. The **theme** of 1 Peter is:
Subject _____
Complement _____
2. The **purpose** of 1 Peter is _____
3. Discuss the content of each chapter of 1 Peter. First, give a key word or phrase which overviews that chapter. Then show how that develops the theme of the book.
Chapter 1 – Key word=_____ Overview= _____

Chapter 2 – Key word=_____ Overview= _____

Chapter 3 – Key word=_____ Overview= _____

Chapter 4 – Key word=_____ Overview= _____

Chapter 5 – Key word=_____ Overview= _____

4. How did Peter use the word *elder* in verse 1?
A. As an officer in a local church
B. As a mature male leader in a local church
C. As a mature male leader in the universal Church
D. As an apostle or apostolic messenger in the universal Church
5. In verses 2-3, Peter said you elders are to *shepherd the flock of God among you*. Then he defined that with eight phrases. See how many you can remember, then go back and re-read verses 2-3 and fill in all eight.
1 _____ 2 _____
3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____ 6 _____
7 _____ 8 _____
6. In verse 4, Peter said: *when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory*. What exactly is that crown?
A. Something on our heads which we will wear for all eternity.
B. Something on our heads which we will cast back at Christ's feet in heaven.
C. Some symbol of authority by which we will rule under Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.
D. Some symbol for rewards, but we cannot say what it means exactly.

Answers: (1), (2), and (3) are written out on the study page at the beginning of chapter 5. (4) C (Since Peter included himself, this cannot be A or B, and his readers are not defined by D.) (5) This list is on the study page under 1 Peter 5:2-3. (6) D (A does not understand crown as a symbol. B is based on Revelation 4:10, but that has to do with the 24 elders, not all the believers. C is possible but a pure guess.)

B. Special Instruction for Younger Men – 5:5-11

Altogether, Peter gave six separate instructions to believers who are younger men:

1. Be subject to your elders (verse 5)
2. Be humble (verses 5-6)
3. Cast your anxiety on Christ (verse 7)
4. Be sober of spirit (verse 8)
5. Be alert (verse 8)
6. Resist the devil (verses 8-9)

Verses 5-6—*You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time*

First, Peter told the young men to ὑποτάγητε (*hupotagete*) *be subject* to their elders. “Strong’s Concordance” gives the following definition and usage of this word:

“To place or rank under, to subject, mid. to obey: —put in subjection(5), subject(16), subjected(7), subjecting(1), subjection(4), submissive(3), submit(2).”

Notice:

- Young men were to be under the spiritual authority of older men, who were qualified and willing to be an elder in the body of Christ.
- The young men were to identify those elders by the qualifications given in 5:1-4. The author of Hebrews described *those who led you* as *those who spoke the Word of God to you*, then having identified those men, and considering *the result of their conduct, imitate their faith* (Hebrews 13:7).
- This is something the young men were to choose to do, not something a local church or the elders were to force them to do or coerce them into doing. We are not sure how these young men were lined up with an elder. Some may have been in house churches the elder hosted, some may be in their extended families. Anyway, the elders were responsible for them, and the young men were responsible for submitting to them. No elder was ever told to make sure certain young men were in submission.
- The submission was from young men to older men, not young men to women, whether those women be mothers, wives, or leaders of women.

The **second** command (from the same verses) for young men was to *clothe yourselves with humility toward one another*. This is one of the most basic commands in the Bible, and Peter made a big deal out of it here. He gave the young men three reasons to be humble:

1. *God is opposed to the proud.*
2. *[He] gives grace to the humble.*
3. *That He may exalt you at the proper time.*

All of these have to do with the judgment of God. So the motive for humility is that pride displeases God. Once again:

<p>Pride is to determine value independent from God Humility is to determine value dependent on God</p>

Verse 7—casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Peter's **third** command for the young men is to *cast* (literally, *throw on* or *add to*) on Christ all their μέριμναν (*merimnan*) *care* or *anxiety*. “Strong’s” lists the usage as: “*anxiety* (1), *concern* (1), *worries* (3), *worry* (1).” The reason Peter gave is literally: *because to Him it matters concerning you* (“Ryrie Study Bible,” p. 1983). This indicates that Christ is personally concerned for the anxiety of every believer.

Verses 8-9—Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

The **fourth** command is to be νήψατε (*nepsate*), *sober* or *self-controlled*. We have seen this word twice already in 1 Peter 1:13 and 4:7. Self-control is one of the major challenges for young men.

The **fifth** command immediately follows, γρηγορήσατε (*gregoresate*) *be alert* or *awake* or *keep watch*. It has to do with being aware of the eschatological signs of the end times.

The **sixth** command is to ἀντίστητε (*antistete*), *resist* or *oppose*, literally, *stand against* the διάβολος (*diabolos*), the *devil* or *adversary*. Three things are said about the devil:

- He is ἀντίδικος (*antidikos*), literally, *anti-righteousness*.
- He *seeks [someone] to καταπιεῖν (katapiein) devour* or *drown* – like a roaring lion.
- He does the same thing to every believer. *The same experiences of suffering these believers are having is being accomplished by your brethren who are [everywhere] in the world.*

Verses 10-11—After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The NASB English text makes it sound like it is all about the believers. But Peter began this benediction with a statement which makes it all about God. Verse 10 began by saying (literally): *But the God of all grace, who called you unto the eternal glory of Himself in Christ Jesus.*

So our ὀλίγον παθόντας (*oligon pathontas*) *suffering for a little while* on earth is all about:

- The grace of God
- The call of God
- The eternal glory of God

Then Peter told us what God will do for them when they arrive in their resurrected bodies. All these words have something to do with being strengthened.

- καταρτίσει (*katartisei*), *to mend, restore, create, or strengthen*
- στηρίξει (*sterixei*), *to support, make firm, or strengthen*
- σθενώσει (*sthenosei*), the basic word for *strengthen*
- θεμελιώσει (*themeliosei*), *to establish, be grounded, or lay a foundation*

In verse 11, Peter added another statement about Christ: to Him be κράτος, *power, might or dominion*, and it will be *forever and ever. Amen.*

C. Concluding Comments — 5:12-14

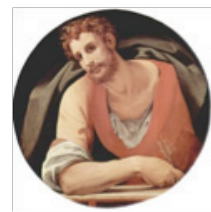
Verses 12-14—*Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.*

Depiction is of Silvanus



In this conclusion, Peter brought up four issues:

1. He told them he has written this letter with the help of Silvanus, who is apparently the same Silas who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:40). Silas may have traveled with both Peter and Paul for the same reason—to help them write and stay in touch.
2. *This*, the suffering they are going through and the strengthening and rewards to follow in heaven, *is the true grace of God*. God is allowing them to suffer so that they will receive greater rewards.
3. *She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings*. The question is: “Where is *Babylon*?” There are many suggestions. (1) Most commentators believe Babylon is a code name for Rome. The best evidence for this is that Peter was probably in Rome the last years of his life. Traditionally, he was crucified there. (2) Others believe Peter visited the ancient city of Babylon on the Euphrates River and sent greeting from the church there. The best evidence for this is it allows for a literal understanding of the name *Babylon*. We know the apostles did travel great distances (apparently, Thomas went to India). The ancient Babylon is about the same distance from Jerusalem as Corinth and only half as far as Rome. This is often used to say the *Babylon the Great* of Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, and 21 is Rome. But it could also be said that John’s and Peter’s references to Babylon are both the ancient city on the Euphrates River.
4. Peter sent greetings from *my son, Mark*. This is probably a greeting from John Mark:
 - The cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10)
 - Whose mother hosted a prayer meeting for Peter when he was in prison (Acts 12:12)
 - Who left the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 12:25ff)
 - Who was rejected by Paul for the second missionary journey (Acts 15:37-39)
 - Who Paul later called a fellow worker (Philemon 24)
 - Who was requested by Paul to be with him near the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11)



[The painting is depicting John Mark.]

Next, Peter told them to *Greet one another with a kiss of love* (see also Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26). The practice was probably for men to kiss men and women to kiss woman (1 Corinthians 7:1). We should apply this by greeting one another warmly, but most Bible scholars do not consider the specific practice a command for the church generally because a theological case was never made for it.

The final statement of the letter is: *Peace to you all to the ones [who are] in Christ*. Peace while suffering is the normal Christian life and consistent with the theme of holiness in a hostile world.

Questions for Discussion

1. In verses 5-9, Peter gave six separate instructions to believers who are younger men. See how many you can remember, then re-read the passage and fill in the others.

1 _____ 2 _____
3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____ 6 _____

2. Which of the following statements is **false**?
- A. Young men were to be under the spiritual authority of older men who were qualified and willing to be an elder in the body of Christ.
 - B. This is something the young men were to choose to do.
 - C. Elders were responsible to make sure that the young men were in submission to some elder.
 - D. The submission of young men was to men, not to women, whether those women be mothers, wives, or leaders of women.
3. In verse 5, Peter said: *God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*
Pride is _____
Humility is _____
4. When Peter told young men (in verse 8) *Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion*, he meant:
- A. *Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12).
 - B. The devil is roaring in the sense of trying to scare you into following him.
 - C. The devil is unable to harm you until you listen to his roar and fear him instead of God.
 - D. The devil is roaring in the sense that he wants to destroy you.
 - E. A and D
 - F. All of the above.
5. In verse 9, Peter said: *the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.* This means:
- A. All believers will suffer for their faith.
 - B. Believers who are living holy lives will suffer.
 - C. Those who are not suffering are probably not believers.
 - D. All of the above.
6. In verse 13, Peter said: *She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings.*
By Babylon, he means:
- A. The city of Babylon
 - B. The city of Rome
 - C. The Roman Empire
 - D. Satan's world system

Answers: (1) This is covered in the study page for B. Special Instruction for Younger Men – 5:5-11. (2) C (These are discussed in the study page under 1 Peter 5:5-6). (3) These definitions are in a box on the study page under 1 Peter 5:5-6. (4) E (A is assumed when he mentioned the devil as the problem. D is stated in the passage *seeking someone to devour*. B and C are not stated in the passage.) (5) B (Whether they are true or not. A and C are not what Peter meant by this statement.) (6) A is my preference because I see no reason for a metaphoric interpretation of the word, but most commentators say B. C and D are unlikely, since he is sending greetings from a particular people. [Thanks for doing this study, I hope it was helpful—*Dave DeWitt*.]