

# 1 Peter

## Introduction

First Peter was written to Christians who were experiencing various forms of persecution. His stated purpose for writing was: *“I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!”* (5:12).

## Author

First Peter 1:1 clearly identifies the author as *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.”* His given name was Simon, but Jesus said he would be called Cephas (John 1:42). The Greek translation of the Aramaic word *Cephas* is “petros,” and the word in both languages means “stone” or “rock.” He is the only man in the New Testament called Peter.

According to the four gospels, Peter was the leader and spokesman for the early disciples. He was one of the first disciples called into the service of Jesus (Mark 1:16-18). He was a fisherman from Bethsaida, in Galilee (John 1:44), and he had a home in Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29). He was married (Matt 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38) and took his wife on journeys to visit other believers (1 Cor 9:5). He was influenced by the preaching of John the Baptist, and his brother Andrew was one of the Baptist’s disciples (John 1:35-42). It was Andrew who introduced Peter to Jesus. Of the twelve disciples, Peter was one of the inner three (along with James and John) closest to Jesus (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). The risen Lord appeared especially to him (1 Cor 15:5) and gave him a special commission (John 21:15-19). His is the first sermon of the church age, shortly after the arrival and indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Peter brought the gospel to the Gentiles. He said, *“...in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the Word of the gospel and believe”* (Acts 15:7). Peter was primarily the apostle to the Jewish believers, as Paul was an apostle to the Gentile believers (Gal 2:7). Tradition says that he was crucified upside down in Rome, prior to Nero’s death in A.D. 68.

Peter’s public ministry spanned more than 30 years, from Jerusalem to Rome, ministering in a multilingual world. He apparently used Silas as his scribe (5:12). There is no evidence anywhere of controversy over the authorship of 1 Peter or its authority.

## Date Written

Most likely written from Rome shortly before Nero’s great persecution, i.e., in A.D. 62-64.

## Commentary

### I. Salutation (1:1-2)

#### A. Identification of the author (1:1a)

—*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ*—Peter was also one of the 12 disciples (“a follower”) of Jesus. In the church age, “the twelve” were called apostles (“sent ones”). Others such as Paul and Barnabas were also called apostles (Acts 4:14). The church was *“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ...in*

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whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2:20, 22). The teaching and writing of the apostles is the foundation for the church age.

### **B. Identification of those addressed (1.1b-2)**

**1:1b—To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**—the northern regions of Asia Minor. It was not a region



Paul ever evangelized as far as we know. They were mainly Gentiles, but also some Jews.

—“aliens” is the Greek word *parepidemoi*, i.e., “persons who belong to some other land and people, who are temporarily residing with a people to whom they do not belong.” Estimates of that time are that about one million Jews lived in Israel and two to four million lived outside, with the largest concentration living in Asia Minor.

—**who are chosen**—believers [in a non-Christian society (i.e., resident aliens)]. Christians are God’s elect not by chance or by works or by human desire, but by God’s sovereign choice (Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13-15).

**AN APPLICATION**—Election is always presented in Scripture as the source of comfort and security. Our names are written in the Book of Life, from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8; 20:15). You did nothing to get your name put in there, and therefore, you cannot do anything to erase your name (Rev 3:5). You are eternally secure.

**1:2—according to**—notice all three members of the Trinity are involved in our salvation

—**the foreknowledge of God the Father**—Peter did not mean that God chose the elect because He knew beforehand they would believe. It’s clear from Scripture that God determined beforehand [*chose*] that they would believe the gospel (Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:3-6; 1 Thess 1:4; 1 Pet 5:13). He had foreknowledge of those He already chose.

—**by the sanctifying work of the Spirit**—i.e., set them aside, to make holy, the conviction of the Spirit to become a believer and the spiritual Christian life of the believer.

—**to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood**—to align with the One who died—sprinkling in the OT resulted in cleansing (Num 19:9).

—**May grace and peace be yours in the [fullest measure**—one word]—that it would repeatedly increase to their advantage because of their being chosen, being sprinkled with Christ’s blood, and being sanctified by the Spirit.

**AN APPLICATION**—Positionally, we have God’s grace and peace in our salvation, but for believers in persecution, they would experience that grace and peace more and more.

## **II. Chosen for New Birth (1:3–2:10)**

### **A. The new birth's living hope (1:3-12)**

#### **1. The future inheritance (1:3-5)**

**1:3**—*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us*—He chose us, then He caused us to be born again. Election does not save us. Being born again saves us. Jesus said, “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...*” (John 6:44).

**AN APPLICATION**—Mercy (non-condemnation—Rom 8:1) is not a characteristic of God. It is a work of God. “*...He has mercy on whom He desires...*” (Rom 9:18). A characteristic is something God always is, such as truth and holiness.

—*to be born again*—spiritual regeneration (John 3:3). The spiritual change that takes place at conversion, the moment we believe. “*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come*” (2 Cor 5:17).

**AN APPLICATION**—One writer wrote, “The Christian...is as incapable of starting himself on the new life as he or she was of conceiving oneself for his or her first life.” God chose and God caused...

—*to a living hope*—the content of what we anticipate. Peter used the word “living” six times (1:3, 23; 2:4-5; 4:5-6). Christianity is not simply faith in Jesus, it is being born again to a living hope. Our focus is changed to eternity with the living Jesus.

—*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*—Jesus Himself is living. Paul wrote, “*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins*” (1 Cor 15:17). Jesus is alive, He is not dead.

**1:4**—*to obtain an inheritance*—the legacy one receives as a member of a family. The same concept was used in the Old Testament of Israel who received the inheritance of the Promised Land. Whereas Israel’s inheritance was physically on this earth, for the believer of the church age, the inheritance is in heaven, it is spiritual.

—Interesting is Peter’s play with words: each Greek word begins with the same letter and ends with the same syllable: the inheritance is in substance “imperishable” (*aphtharton*), in purity “undefiled” (*amianton*), and in beauty unfading (“not fading away,” *amaranton*).

—*which is imperishable*—untouched by death or destruction

—*and undefiled*—unstained by the evil of sin

—*and will not fade away*—unimpaired by time, never loses its magnificence

—*reserved [by God] in heaven for you*—it’s you, the individual, not corporate. Jesus said, “*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Matt 6:19–21). Heaven is the securest place in the universe (Rev 21:27; 22:14-15).

**AN APPLICATION**—All Christians will receive an inheritance, but not all Christians will obtain the same amount of inheritance. All believers will get to heaven, but rewards will vary (1 Cor 3:14-15; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 John 8). The Christian who serves Jesus Christ faithfully

now, the Lord may entrust with significant service opportunities in His coming kingdom (Matt 25:14-30; Luke 16:1-13; 19:11-27; Rom 8:16-18).

**1:5—*who are protected by the power of God***—The inheritance is reserved, but here Peter uses the word “who,” meaning those who are chosen and caused to believe, are guarded, watched over by the power of God. Persecution and trials do not separate you from God.

—***through faith for a salvation***—God chose us and drew us to Himself to become born again, but being born again is through faith for salvation (Eph 2:8), which will be eternal life.

—***ready to be revealed***, i.e., our glorification. When God glorifies us, He will save us from the presence of sin forever, and from then on, we will be with our Savior (1 Thess 4:17).

—***in the last time***—the return of Christ, the rapture for the believers, and finally the New Jerusalem and the New Earth (Rev 21–22).

**AN APPLICATION**—Peter is not saying our faith keeps us saved. It is God’s power that keeps us saved. If it was our faith, then God’s power would not be necessary. Also, neither does it mean that the elect will continue to have faith (as the Reformed teach). Rather, God’s power keeps believers saved in spite of their sins because they placed saving faith in Christ in the past. Backsliding exists (1 Tim 1:19; Heb 2:1).

Joseph Dillow has the most helpful and biblically consistent discussion of perseverance: “Scripture does not teach that Christians will inevitably continue to persevere in the faith, that is, continue believing the truth, walking with the Lord, or doing good works. It does teach that God will persevere in His commitment to bring every person who has trusted in Christ to heaven (eternal security).” [Constable, “1 Peter,” p. 15]

## **2. The present joy (1:6-9)**

**1:6—*In this you greatly rejoice***—“*this*” could be referring to the previous truths, but more likely referring to “*in the last time*,” rejoicing in future glorification, compared to current trials —***even though now for a little while***— today is temporary and brief compared to eternity (Matt 5:4-5; 2 Cor 4:17-18).

—***if necessary*** [Gk. “needed”]—God has chosen trials as opportunities to trust Him

—***you have been distressed*** [sad or sorrowful] ***by various trials***—that Peter uses “trials” instead of “persecutions” or “tribulations” is significant. “Trials” are the same Greek word as “testing.” James wrote, “*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith...so that you may be mature and complete*” (James 1:2-4).

**AN APPLICATION**—A Christian should not be sad about their trials. Rather, realize that these trials to test your faith, to show your growth and maturity as a believer, and the trials are not the final end—eternity with Jesus is.

**1:7—*so that the proof*** [Gk. to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing, often through actual use]. For example, when Abraham took Isaac to offer him, Abraham was proving, or showing, his faith in God.

—***of your faith***—Faith turns sound doctrine into sound practice. God’s omnipotent sovereignty needs to be coupled with human responsibility. Christians are responsible to respond in faith, trusting God.

—**being more precious** [of greater worth] **than gold, which is perishable**—gold will pass away with the things of this earth (2 Pet 3:10), but our faith in God is eternal, and therefore more valuable.

—**even though tested by fire**—Trials do to faith what fire does to gold—it purifies, reveals its true value and genuineness.

—**may be found to result in praise and glory and honor**—not only does God use trials to mature us in our faith, but they are opportunities to give “praise,” “glory,” and “honor” to Jesus

—**at the revelation** [Gk. *apokalypsis*] **of Jesus Christ**—for believers, it would be at the Rapture, and to the world, it will happen at the Second Coming. Peter’s emphasis was not on *when* this would happen relative to other future events but on the fact that it would happen *in the future*.

**1:8—*and though you have not seen Him, you love Him***—significant to Peter, who did see and walk with Jesus for three years. Jesus said, “*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*” (John 20:29).

—***and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him***—even though we do not see Jesus, we have “joy,” “love,” “faith” and “hope.”

—***you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory***—Our joy in belief in Jesus will be no different on that day—only greater!

**AN APPLICATION**—Once we see something, the human tendency is to make images of it and bow before them. The RC have statues of Mary and Jesus. The Orthodox have icons. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment is, “*You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship or serve them...*” (Ex 20:4-5). Paul wrote that the pagans “*exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image...*” (Rom 1:23). God was furious with Israel for worshipping idols, especially the golden calf (Ex 32:8), when God appeared to them as a cloud and fire (try making an image of that!) when they escaped Egypt (Ex 13:21). So it is good to not see Him (while we have our sin natures) because we would make an image that cannot even begin to reflect God in all His glory. It was Jesus Himself who was “*the exact representation of His [God’s] nature*” (Heb 1:3).

**1:9—*obtaining as the outcome*** [payments customarily due a government, i.e., taxes] ***of your faith the salvation of your souls***—what is due to your faith now is the salvation of your souls [who you are, your identity] in eternity. Paul wrote, “*...the God of peace Himself [will] sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thess 5:23).

### **3. The past revelation (1:10-12)**

**1:10—*As to this salvation***—suffering and glory (v.11)

—***the prophets who prophesied***—the writers of the Old Testament, who told of the future

—***of the grace*** [favor of God] ***that would come to you***—God did give His grace in the Old Testament (Noah, Abraham, Ruth, David, Jonah, et. al.) but He did not offer His grace, as He does in our age [“*we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God*” (2 Cor 5:20)]. Specifically, this grace of God was the arrival of His Son.

—***made careful searches and inquiries***—just because a prophet spoke and wrote messages from God does not mean they comprehended what they were communicating. They were simply accurate in speaking and/or writing what God told them.

**AN APPLICATION**—Habakkuk was waiting for the invasion of the fierce and unmerciful Babylonians, and he wrote: “*Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord GOD is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds’ feet, And makes me walk on my high places*” (Hab 3:17-19). He didn’t know how or when, but he trusted God.

**1:11—seeking to know what person or time**—they did not know about the first coming of Jesus, or when He would come.

—**the Spirit of Christ within them**—Peter also wrote, “*no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God*” (2 Pet 2:21). Paul wrote, “*All Scripture is inspired by God...*” (2 Tim 3:16).

**AN APPLICATION**—Yes, the Holy Spirit is speaking today, and what He wants us to know is what He wrote down in the pages of Scripture!!

—**was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow**—when we study the prophets, we can notice some verses on the suffering of the Messiah (such as Isaiah 53), but mostly it is about the glories to follow in the kingdom restoration.

**1:12—It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you**—i.e., it was not always for the prophets’ time but sometimes for a future time

—**in these things which now have been announced to you**—the person (Jesus) has now come—it is that future time the prophets tried to find out

—**through those who preached the gospel to you**—the apostles

—**by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**—the author of Scriptures, the One who convicts of sins for salvation, the One who sanctifies believers in the spiritual life. Jesus said, “*It is to your advantage that I go away...if I go, I will send Him (the Holy Spirit) to you*” (John 16: 7).

—**things into which angels long to look**—the grace and mercy of God is His work due to the sin of mankind. The angels do not have sin and therefore do not experience the grace and mercy of God. So they are interested in what goes on with us. They are “angel watchers” (Dan 4:13, 17; Heb 1:5–2:18).

**AN APPLICATION**—The prophets wanted to know, the angels want to know. We do know. The Scriptures are complete. No one is writing new Scripture. No one is getting new revelation.

## **B. The new birth’s holiness (1:13–2:10)**

### **1. The preparation (1:13-16)**

**1:13—Therefore**—the previous verses are the basis of the commands in these verses. Since the prophets and the angels take great interest in this salvation, so should we...

—**prepare your minds for action**—“Action” is “doing.” It is a conscious act of the will, a continuous readiness and alertness to learn and think, keep oneself awake.

**AN APPLICATION**—What should we do to “prepare” our minds for action? Reminds me of Prof Hendricks, no matter how “boring” a chapel message was, he was always taking notes because he was always learning!!! He obviously prepared his mind to learn. In the parable

of the soils, the seed of the Word of God fell on different soils—some on hard soil, some rocky soil, some with thorns, but the seed that produced a crop fell on good soil, *these are the ones who have heard the Word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance* (Luke 8:5-15).

**AN APPLICATION**—Paul wrote, “...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2). Is your mind “conforming” or “transforming”? What are your morals? Your values? Are they different today than last year?

—**keep sober in spirit**—be alert, rather than being controlled by outside circumstances or the sin nature, believers should be directed from within, from our new nature in Christ, to have sound, sober judgment in all areas of life.

—**fix your hope completely on the grace** [favor of God] **to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ**—present trials should not deflect us from obeying God faithfully now. God’s reward, at the coming of Christ, is for our faithful commitment to Him. Four times now (vv. 5, 7, 9, 13) Peter has spoken of Christ’s return.

**1:14—As obedient children**—to carry out someone’s orders (a parent or teacher, et.al.)  
—**do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance**—the fact that Peter said his readers had lived in “ignorance” indicates these were most likely Gentile Christians. The Jews were not ignorant, as their written Scriptures informed them of not following their lusts (v. 16).

—Peter was exhorting the believers to control their sinful desires rather than to be controlled by them. Their lifestyle was to not reflect their former ignorance but the holy nature of God who called them to be His own children.

**AN APPLICATION**—The more you know and understand of the Bible, the less you can claim ignorance for your actions. Once you know, you are responsible to obey.

**1:15—but like the Holy One who called you**—who chose you and caused you to be born again (2 Thess 2:13-14; 1 Pet 1:3). His character is the model for our character. Be like Him.

—**be holy yourselves**—be set apart from sin to God. Holiness should distinguish us  
—**also in all your behavior**—in everything you do, every day

**1:16—because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY”**—quote from Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7. [In 1 Peter, Peter lists 9 quotes of the OT, and 20 allusions to OT passages.] Israel was to be holy, to have fellowship with God. Without holiness, it is impossible to have fellowship with God.

**AN APPLICATION**—The Word of God reveals God’s mind, so we should learn it; God’s heart, so we should love it; and God’s will, so we should live it. Our whole being—mind, will, and heart—should be controlled by the Word of God. We do not study the Bible just to get to know the Bible. We study the Bible that we might get to know God better.

## **2. The price (1:17-21)**

**1:17—If you address as Father**—“if” is first class condition in Greek, means “since” we call God “our Father...” “as obedient children” (v. 14)

—**the One who impartially judges**—Christians are not exempt from judgment just because they address God as Father. In 4:17, Peter wrote, “*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?*”

—**according to each one’s work**—the choices each person makes. Judgment is according to conduct. In a trial, the judge is to be impartial and judge the accused based on their conduct—did they steal? Did they murder? Etc.

—**conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth**—it’s common for Christian teaching to define “fear” as “reverence” when it comes to God. But “reverence” means I control what I will give reverence to and what the reverence looks like. “Fear” means the object controls the definition. For example, you may give reverence to a teacher whom you like and respect, but you will be afraid of a bear. Jesus said, “*Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Matt 10:28).

**AN APPLICATION**—First, Peter said, “*do not be conformed to your former lusts,*” (v. 14), then “*be holy...in all your behavior*” (v. 15), then “*conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth*” (v. 17). Judgment must be connected to these.

—Also, he calls them “*as obedient children*” and God “*as Father.*” Again, these must be connected. Because He is our Father does not negate that He is the judge.

—Notice “according to each one” and “conduct yourselves”—that means judgment is based on your choices. You will not be judged for what I do and I will not be judged for what you do. “*Each one of us will give an account of himself to God*” (Rom 14:12). The more you know, the more accountable you will be (1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10).

—We do not have “condemnation” judgment for sin because Jesus paid that condemnation (Rom 8:1). But does that mean we are not to fear God? Jesus said, “*Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Matt 10:28). Nowhere in Scripture is He called our “friend.” He is the Creator God and future Judge!!!

**1:18—knowing**—we have “prepared our minds...” (v. 13)

—**that you were not redeemed** [ransomed, to pay the price] **with perishable things** [Peter also wrote, “*...the earth and its works will be burned up*” (2 Pet 3:10)] **like silver or gold**—name the most expensive thing in the world, that cost the most silver and gold—yet it cannot buy your redemption from sin and it will be worthless, burned up.

—**from your futile** [empty, useless] **way of life inherited from your forefathers** [ancestors]—for the Jews, the Law did not redeem them. “*By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight...*” (Rom 3:20). For “*Gentiles, who do not know God*” (1 Thess 4:5).

**1:19—but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ**—it’s not just any blood—it is “unblemished” [without defect], “spotless,” “blood of God’s Son.” Therefore, it is precious. This word is used to describe precious gems like diamonds (priceless) compared to costume jewelry of cut glass (of no value).

**AN APPLICATION**—Peter uses the word “precious” [of greater value] several times:

- *the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable...result[s] in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ* (1:7)
- *redeemed...with the precious blood...the blood of Christ* (1:19)



- coming to Him as a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and **precious** in the sight of God (2:4)
- a choice stone, a **precious** corner stone (2:6)
- this **precious** value, then, is for you who believe (2:7)
- the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is **precious** in the sight of God (3:4)
- He has granted to us His **precious** and magnificent promises (2 Pet 1:4)

**1:20—For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world**—obviously, God would know this before the world, so “foreknown” has more the meaning “chosen beforehand.” In other words, this plan of Jesus redeeming us with His precious blood was made and known before the world was ever created.

—**but has appeared**—it was not just the plan of God in eternity past, but it was a hidden plan until the moment of revelation, when Jesus appeared.

—**in these last times**—we are now in the last dispensation before the Second Coming of Jesus and the Millennial Kingdom. Five dispensations were before us.

—**for the sake of you**—i.e., the redeemed

**AN APPLICATION**—By observation, we recognize:

- (1) the time of innocence before the Fall (Gen 1–2)
- (2) the time of conscience between the Fall and the Flood (Gen 2–6)
- (3) the time of government after the Flood (Gen 9:6)
- (4) the time of the patriarchs (Gen 12f), beginning with Abraham
- (5) the time of the Mosaic Law (Exodus—the gospel of John), ending with the crucifixion
- (6) the time of the church, the body of Christ (Acts–Rev 3), ending with the Rapture
- (7) the time of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20), beginning with the 2nd Coming of Christ

**1:21—who through Him**—Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).

—**are believers in God**—Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent” (John 17:3).

—**who raised Him from the dead**—“He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:4).

—**and gave Him glory**—Jesus said, “Glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John 17:5).

—**so that your faith**—“God has chosen you...for...faith in the truth” (2 Thess 2:13).

—**and hope are in God**—“looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus” (Titus 2:13).

**AN APPLICATION**— “The Lord shall be the stability of your time, a wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is His treasure” (Isaiah 33:6). Our faith and hope are in God, not in circumstances, experiences, feelings, relationships, .....

### **3. The purification (1:22–2:3)**

**1:22—Since** [same as “if” in verse 17] **you have in obedience to the truth**—2 Thess 1:8

—**purified your souls**—How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your Word (Psalm 119:9).

—**for a sincere** [without hypocrisy] **love** [Gk. *philadelphia*—affection] **of the brethren**—fellow believers

—**fervently** [eagerly or earnestly] **love** [Gk. *agape*—giving] **one another from the heart** [the inner self, mind]

**1:23—*for you have been born again***—a supernatural event, a change in their lives. “*Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...*” (1 John 5:1). We can do nothing to make that happen. We believe the truth about Christ, and His Spirit makes us born again.

—**not of seed which is perishable but imperishable** [not subject to decay or death]—everything that comes to life (is born) starts with a seed—plants, animals, and humans. But the physical is perishable. The physical will end. The eternal is not perishable.

—**that is, through the living and enduring word of God**—the seed of the word of God is living. “*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart*” (Heb 4:12). And it is “enduring,” “endures forever,” i.e., it continues to exist, it does not end (v. 25).

**1:24—*For***, [quoting Isaiah 40:6-8]

**“ALL FLESH [i.e., the physical] IS LIKE GRASS,  
AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.**

**THE GRASS WITHERS**—and it is short-lived (Matt 6:30)

**AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF**—the physical is perishable, it ends

**1:25—*BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.*”**

—**And this is the word which was preached to you**—God’s Word is living, it is eternal, it is the message of hope and life. It’s the very words of God Himself.

**AN APPLICATION**—Paul wrote, “...*you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe*” (1 Thess 2:13). The Word of God is not like any other book. Other books are written and perish. But the Word of God never perishes and it performs a supernatural work in those who believe.

**2:1—*Therefore***—as a result of this new birth and the living and eternal Word of God —**putting aside**—these attitudes and words drive wedges between believers. The closest thing is “*therefore get rid of all defilement*” (James 1:21). It means to stop doing what one is accustomed to doing, remove, to put away

—**all malice**—what is harmful and damaging, hostile, hateful feelings

—**and all deceit**—to trick into, using trickery to make one believe what is false

—**and hypocrisy**—to give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality having quite different ones

—**and envy**—a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person

—**and all slander**—to speak evil of another person

**2:2—*like newborn babies***—(1) a newborn is hungry, (2) a newborn longs for its mother’s milk, not water or steak

—**long for**—develop an appetite for, cultivate a taste for it (not for religious entertainment)

—**the pure milk of the word**—not for feelings or experiences. The emphasis here is on what a newborn baby does and how spiritually the Word satisfies that spiritual longing. A believer should not seek spiritual nourishment from anything except the Word. [Peter is using “milk” differently than the writer of Hebrews who says that a believer who still wants milk and not solid food of the word is an infant (Heb 5:13-14), and we should mature and learn the solid food of the Word, a different concept than here, where Peter says we grow by the Word and not by other things.]

—**so that by it you may grow in respect to** [to change, to become] **salvation**—growth as a believer only comes through the Word. You will not grow through experiences or feelings. They reveal your growth (James 1:2-4). Using reason to understand the author’s intended meaning will perform its work in you (1 Thess 2:13). The Spirit uses God’s Words to cause growth.

**AN APPLICATION**—To say one grows through books, movies, experiences, feelings, is to put them on the same level as God’s revealed Word. If you could spiritually grow through those things, why have God’s written Word?

**2:3—if** [“since”] **you have tasted the kindness of the Lord**—believers have already tasted God’s grace in their new birth (Psalm 34:8).

#### **4. The practice (2:4-10)**

**2:4—And coming to Him**—Gk. “to move toward a reference point,” used by the sailors as, in the middle of the night, they sensed they were approaching some land (Acts 27:27).

—**as to a living stone**—Peter will go on in his description of the “stone,” but here, he says it is a “living stone.” It is a building stone—but the building is alive, a spiritual house, and Jesus is alive. This stone is not only living but it is also life-giving. Jesus said, “*Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock*” (Matt 7:24-25). God is called a “rock” in Deuteronomy 32:3-4, 31.

**AN APPLICATION**—So far Peter referred to Jesus as “living hope” (1:3), “living Word” (1:23), and “living stone” (2:4). In the Old Testament, God often called Himself the “living God,” compared to idols that could not see, talk, walk... (Jer 10:1-10).

—**which has been rejected by men**—all human judgment of Jesus rejects Jesus. Paul wrote of the unbelievers in the tribulation, “*they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved*” (2 Thess 2:10).

—**but is choice** [Gk. “chosen”] [**and**] **as precious** [most valuable] **in the sight of God**—Mankind’s choice is to reject Christ, God’s choice is Christ who is precious, His “only begotten Son” (John 3:16).

**2:5—you also, as living stones**—the localized presence of God on the earth today is His indwelling all believers (1 Cor 3:17; 6:19).

**AN APPLICATION**—Here is also a statement of eternal security. One cannot take one stone out of a building wall. No stones are absent from this spiritual house of Jesus Christ.

—**are being built up**—this is not an imperative (command) but an indication, as you come to Him, you are being built up

—**as a spiritual house**—not mystical, but of the spiritual nature of humans, that separates us from animals.

**AN APPLICATION**—In this spiritual house, each member is irreplaceable. The Bible never calls the Church a community. In a community nobody is crucial and anybody can be replaced by somebody else.

—**for a holy priesthood**—who can have immediate access to God that unbelievers do not have. Think of the O.T. priests who had access to the Temple that the average Jew did not have.

—**to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**—Paul wrote, “Therefore I urge you, brethren...to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom 12:1).

**2:6—For this is contained in Scripture**—Peter quotes Scripture to support his teaching.

—**“BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION [Christ’s death in Jerusalem?] A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone** (Isaiah 28:16)—The key stone in a building. It is very costly and carefully chosen for perfect precision. It is the visible support on which the whole rest of the building relies for strength and stability.

—**AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED**—The Greek has a double negative, emphatic. Those who believe in Jesus will never ever be disappointed, that He somehow does not live up to all He said He would do. “...just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (1 Cor 2:9). “for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’” (Heb 12:5).

**2:7—This precious value, then, is for you who believe**—the value of Christ is our union with Christ (1:21), our eternity with Him.

—**but for those who disbelieve**—to believe that something is not true

**“THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED** (Psalm 118:22)—a builder looks at a stone and declares it cannot be used, it is rejected.

**THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone**—But God said that stone is perfect for the cornerstone.

**AN APPLICATION**—It’s like a magnet has two poles: the one is repulsive and the other is attractive. So the Gospel has different effects of unbelievers and believers. Mercy rejected becomes condemnation.

**2:8—and,**

**“A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE”** (Isaiah 8:14);

—**for they stumble because they are (1) disobedient to the word**—They do not accept Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). “...the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess 2:10).

—**and (2) to this doom** [consequence] **they were also appointed**—when they are disobedient to the word, they are appointed to doom as the consequence OR what is sometimes called “double predestination,” that God chooses for them to not believe.

Romans 9:13 clearly says, “*Jacob I loved [chose], but Esau I hated [did not choose].*” God “*has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires*” (v. 18). In the tribulation, “*God will send upon them [unbelievers] a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness*” (2 Thess 2:11).

**AN APPLICATION**—Remember! Both things are true: God is sovereign and man has free will. Do not trump one with the other. God must be sovereign to be God. Man must have free will to be judged for his/her actions. We do not have enough information to know how both things can be true, but the Bible says they are both 100% true.

**2:9—But you are A CHOSEN RACE**—Israel was a chosen physical race, descendants of Abraham. Believers are a chosen spiritual race, those who have faith in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles.

—**A royal PRIESTHOOD**—In Israel, priests were of the family of Aaron, the tribe of Levi. But in our age, all believers are priests, we all have access to God (Heb 10:19-20).

—**A HOLY NATION** [*ethnos* = “people”]—“holy” = set apart. As Israel was set apart as a physical nation from other nations in the Old Testament, today, believers in Christ (among both Jews and Gentiles) are set apart from other religions and unbelievers. We are “like” Israel. It does NOT mean the church as “replaced” Israel. Israel has covenants from God that will still be fulfilled in the future, when Israel is once again the nation of God (millennial kingdom).

—**A PEOPLE FOR God’s OWN POSSESSION** [lit. “to purchase,” “to acquire for a price”—Paul wrote, “*Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us...to purify for Himself a people for His own possession*” (Titus 2:13-14).

—**so that** [purpose] **you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**—unbelievers are trapped in spiritual darkness. They walk in darkness. They love darkness. Jesus said, “*...men loved darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil*” (John 3:19). Christ’s light is understanding the truth of Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Col. 1:13; 1 Cor 2:15-16; 2 Cor 4:4).

**2:10—for you once were NOT A PEOPLE** [unbelievers], **but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD**—We are not the only people of God in history, but we are the “people of God” in the present church age. There are only two kinds of people: those who are God’s people and those who are not God’s people.

—**you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY** [unbelievers are destined for God’s wrath], **but now you have RECEIVED MERCY**—mercy is not a characteristic of God. It is a work of God, i.e., sometimes He shows mercy and sometimes He does not. A characteristic is something that is always true (truth, love, holiness, etc.). Mercy is non-condemnation (Rom 8:1). Because we are believers, “*God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thess 5:9).

### **III. Challenged to New Behavior (2:11-3:7)**

#### **A. New behavior before the world (2:11-25)**

##### **1. Christian conduct as witnesses (2:11-12)**

**2:11—Beloved**—believers in Jesus Christ, loved by God—His family, going to His home

—**I urge you**—to encourage, to ask earnestly, to appeal

—**as aliens and strangers**—those who live in a place/earth that is not their home (for the believer, heaven is our home).

—**to abstain**—avoid doing, keep from doing, hold oneself constantly back from  
—**from fleshly lusts** [desires]—Desires are good when they *long for the pure milk of the Word* [from your new nature in Christ], but they are bad when they are “*fleshly*” [from your sin nature]. This is one of the things that separate us from 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*...**which wage war against the soul**—the spiritual battle is a demonic strategy to attack believers at their weakest points. They are at war with who you are, a child of God.

**AN APPLICATION**—Paul wrote, “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the power, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places*” (Eph 6:10-18). As believers, we are in a spiritual battle. Fleshly desires are waging war against your soul!!!

**2:12—Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles**—we abstain from fleshly lusts, not only for our own character, but as a witness to unbelievers  
—**so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers**—In Peter’s day, believers were accused of being atheists because they had no idols, they were accused of cannibalism because Communion was eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ.  
—**they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them**—unbelievers **will** slander believers. The best thing we can do as believers is have excellent behavior and practice good deeds. They **may** realize their slander is unfounded—or not.  
—**glorify God in the day of visitation**—this could mean on a day when they become a believer or it could be at the return of the Lord.

## **2. Christian conduct as citizens (2:13-17)**

**2:13—Submit yourselves**—it is your decision, not something someone forces on you.  
—**for the Lord’s sake**—not because the government is worthy of your submission but because God is worthy. It’s for His sake that we submit. “*For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God*” (Rom 13:1-7).  
—**to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority**—these are territorial governments, with kings, etc., not voluntary institutions such as churches, clubs, sports teams, etc. This submission would be to obeying the speed laws, paying taxes, various laws.

**AN APPLICATION**—Peter said in Acts 4:18-20, when the authorities told Peter and John, “*not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus,*” they answered, “*Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, ...we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.*” However, if this happens, realize you will also have to bear the consequences of disobeying: a fine, imprisonment, or even death.

**2:14—or to governors as sent by him, for the punishment of evildoers**—Governments are set up by God to punish evildoers, in an attempt to control evil. When governments themselves are evil, they don’t often last, such as the Nazi’s. Even the evil empire of the antichrist will only last 7 years.  
—**and the praise of those who do right**—as a standard of measurement to reward those who do right, the praise may simply be no punishment.

**AN APPLICATION**—God told Cain, “*sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it*” (Gen 4:7). But conscience was not a good control. “*the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (Gen 6:5). After God destroyed the evil people in the Flood, He told Noah that now “*whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed*” (Gen 9:6), i.e., capital punishment by a government. Governments would now be the instrument of punishment of evildoers.

**2:15—For such is the will of God**—It is God’s will, as stated here in His Word —**that by doing right you may** [not always] **silence the ignorance of foolish men**— Peter means in general, not persecutions.

**AN APPLICATION**—We grew up with the book “Evidence Demands a Verdict,” assuming if someone had the evidence of Christ’s resurrection, their verdict would be belief. Times have changed. Many people do not believe in absolute truth. They bring their opinions, their feelings, their experiences, to a situation and determine “their” truth. You cannot reason someone out of something they were never reasoned into. They most likely live their life by absolute truth (driving on right hand of road, airplanes landing at airports, baking in 350 degree oven for half hour, etc.), but not their morals or belief in God.

**2:16—Act as free men**—Believers, with a new nature in Christ, are free to choose to obey God. Unbelievers have only their sin nature and cannot please God. —**and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil**—We are free from the bondage to sin, but that does not mean we are therefore free to sin. For example: I may not be an alcoholic (in bondage to alcohol), but that does not mean I should use my freedom as a reason why I can drink it. (Just an example—there are other reasons to drink or not drink). —**but use it as bondslaves of God**—we should never think we are free to obey or not obey God. Bondslaves would be 100% obedient to their master, as should we.

**2:17—Honor all people**—have regard for other people’s rights, feelings, etc. —**love the brotherhood**—but love other believers, give without reciprocity —**fear God**—be afraid of God, who “*has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!*” (Luke 12:5). —**honor the king**—have regard for the laws of the king and government.

### **3. Christian conduct as slaves (2:18-25)**

**2:18—Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect** [Gk. “fear”]—here is one person told to be in submission to another person who has authority over them. This could be applied today to employees and employers or students to teachers. This relationship would be a type of government to which Peter just referred, only a more personal day-to-day relationship.

—**not only to those who are good and gentle**—it would be easy to submit to these —**but also to those who are unreasonable**—it would be a hard test in this situation

**2:19—For this finds favor** [God’s grace], **if for the sake of conscience toward God**— —**a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly**— “unjustly” means it is not a just or right or deserved suffering. The point is how a believer reacts to that treatment. That’s what God is watching.

**2:20—For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience?**—There is no credit with God. It is a deserved chastening, and they ought to 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**—when a believer patiently endures, they are demonstrating God’s grace in their life, which is pleasing to God, who shows His grace to us. Devotion to God overrides personal comfort.

**2:21—For you have been called for this purpose**—part of being called a Christian includes suffering. Jesus said, “*In the world, you will have tribulation...*” (John 16:33).

—**since Christ also suffered for you**—Jesus is the prime example of someone who did what was right, He was perfect without any sin, yet He patiently endured suffering

—**leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps**—our suffering parallels His suffering, follows His example. Believers will never suffer for others’ salvation, including their own. But they will suffer because they belong to Him. They will follow in His footsteps.

**2:22—WHO COMMITTED NO SIN**—either before or during His suffering

—**NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH**—He was completely innocent in both deed and word

**2:23—and while being reviled** [to speak in highly insulting manner], **He did not revile in return**—

—**while suffering, He uttered no threats**—Isaiah 53:9. When He suffered, He did not say He would make them suffer.

—**but kept entrusting** [continuous activity] **Himself to Him who judges righteously**—Paul wrote, “*Never pay back evil for evil to anyone... Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord*” (Rom 12:17-19).

**2:24—and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross**—so we are free from both the penalty and the power of sin and free to live for Him

—**so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness**—because now we are a new creation in Christ, who can live to righteousness.

—**for by His wounds you were healed**—not for general sickness but for salvation. Our wound of sin would result in our spiritual death. But His wounds healed our wound (Isaiah 53:5).

**2:25—For you were continually straying like sheep**—Isaiah 53:6. Without a shepherd, sheep would wander into all sorts of pitfalls and dangers and death.

—**but now you have returned** [to turn around] **to the Shepherd** [one who is responsible for and who guides] **and Guardian** [one who cares for] **of your souls** [in 2:11, Peter said our lusts “wage war against the soul”]—as believers, we are now sheep with a Shepherd to lead us and a Guardian to protect us. So these commands He has just given us are for our protection as believers. To live to righteousness. One who cares for our souls.

**AN APPLICATION**—We should be so thankful we now have a Shepherd and Guardian of our souls. Without Jesus, how can the unbeliever guide or protect their soul? They can’t. They don’t know the right thing to do, the way God created them to be. They are blinded by Satan and lured by false ideas to their own destruction. They are sheep who will perish.



## **B. New behavior in the family (3:1-7)**

### **1. Christian conduct as wives (3:1-6)**

**3:1—In the same way**—i.e., “for the Lord’s sake” (2:13).

—**you wives**—this is a marriage situation, not women to men in general

—**be submissive**—to submit to the directives of their own husband when there is a disagreement

—**to your own husbands**—not to anyone else’s husband!!!

(1) This submission does not mean she is in some way a sub-Christian. In verse 7, Peter wrote, “*show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life.*” Paul wrote, “*...neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal 3:28).

(2) This submission has to do with roles. The Godhead is our example. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have different roles. The Holy Spirit gives glory to Christ (John 15:26), and God the Father is the head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3). They are submissive roles, but all equally God. The Father initiates. Jesus became human and died and saves. The Holy Spirit wrote the Bible and sanctifies believers.

(3) God has so ordered the human race that we must all observe His structure of authority, so that peace and order may prevail. There are presidents/citizens, employers/employees, teachers/ students, parents/children, parade bands/drum majors. Functional equality is chaos.

(4) Submission is not needed in areas where there is no conflict. That’s simply agreement. Submission is obedience in areas of disagreement which do not violate the character of God.

(5) Here, Peter does not give a reason for submission, but Paul wrote, “*It was Adam who was first created, and then Eve*” (1 Tim 2:13), “*For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake*” (1 Cor 11:8-9). At creation, God said His purpose for creating woman was “*It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him*” (Gen 2:18). We could say that man initiates and woman completes (helps to make it happen).

—**so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word**—this could be an unbeliever or a disobedient believer.

**AN APPLICATION**—This is not the #1 commandment, overpowering other commandments!!! This is one area of many that Peter is here describing, in which the Christian life can be lived out. As with the government, a wife is not to submit if the husband is asking her to disobey the Bible. For example, if the phone rings, and he is right there and asks her to answer the phone and lie by telling the person he is not there, she is obligated to first obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

**AN APPLICATION**—Actually, this is beneficial for the believing wife, who is already familiar with the role of submission, thereby making it perhaps easier to be in submission to God. The husband, however, does not have that benefit, therefore, making submission to God harder for him.

—**they may** [but not always] **be won without a word by the behavior of their wives**—this is not a formula for producing husbands obedient to the Word. The point is that this is the way for a wife to deal with a disobedient husband. When words do nothing, then the wife’s behavior is her next step.

**3:2—as they** (your husband) **observe your chaste** [pure, without moral defect] **and respectful behavior**—giving consideration to the other person

**3:3—Your adornment** [Gk. *kosmos*, “cosmetics”] **must not be** [*merely*—not in text] **external**—on the outside, that is, a Christian wife should not think of outer attire as the source of genuine beauty.

—**braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses**—it cannot mean to avoid hair care or avoid jewelry because they it would also mean avoid wearing dresses!! Rather, it is a verse of contrast to verse 4.

**3:4—but let it be the hidden person** [character] **of the heart**—what is inside, not what is outside

—**with the imperishable quality**—make-up can be washed off, but a godly character is an imperishable quality, not subject to decay

—**of a gentle** [not harsh or severe] **and quiet** [peaceful] **spirit**—not that she is quiet, but her spirit loves God first and foremost, so she does not have to get affirmation from what she says or what she does or her circumstances. She’s tranquil on the inside.

—**which is precious** [of great value or worth] **in the sight of God**—it pleases God.

**3:5—For in this way in former times the holy** [set apart to God, their hope was in God] **women also**—the Bible does not tell us much about “holy women” in the O.T., but there must have been some, such as Ruth.

—**who hoped in God**—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. Submission for a believer is done because God commands it, not because the one we submit to is worthy of it.

—**used to adorn themselves**—God does want women/wives to adorn themselves, but to do it with their character rather than only their make-up.

—**being submissive to their own husbands**—part of the wife’s character is her willingness to be in submission to her husband. Disagreements may be a trial by which God is testing her to see if she will obey God or not (James 1:1-4).

**3:6—just as Sarah obeyed** [“to do what one says”] **Abraham, calling him lord** [one who commands], i.e., she recognized him as the leader and head of their household (Gen 18:12).

—**and you have become her children**—offspring, i.e., someone of the same characteristics

—**if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear**—it seems that the fear is of being in submission, yet Peter says we do not have to be afraid of doing what is right in God’s eyes.

**AN APPLICATION**—By referring to Sarah, who lived about 2,000 years before Peter, he shows the timelessness of this attitude in wives. Eve did not submit to the headship of Adam, instead, she persuaded Adam to sin (Gen 3). With the Fall, this relationship got worse. God told Eve, “*your desire shall be for your husband; and he shall rule over you*” (3:16). This word “*desire*” is used in Gen 4:7, where God told Cain that “*sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.*” So now instead of headship and helper, because of the curse of the Fall, wives want to rule over husbands, yet husbands will rule over wives—it’s perverted. So conflict ensues—who will rule? In Christ, with our

new nature, we can ignore the “ruling” our sin nature wants to do in exchange for the headship/helper God designed us to be.

## **2. Christian conduct as husbands (3:7)**

**3:7—You husbands in the same way**, i.e., “for the Lord’s sake” (2:13).

—**live with your wives**—Paul wrote, “*So ought men to love their own wives as their own bodies. He that loves his own wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church*” (Eph 5:28-29).

—**in an understanding way**—to possess information about, to have knowledge of one’s wife’s spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. [Putting it bluntly—husbands may not realize it. Wives, don’t be shy about making it known to them. Don’t think: “He should know that...” Maybe he won’t unless you tell him.]

—**as with someone weaker**—state of limited capacity—it could be spiritual [for example, if she were an unbeliever], or physically, or emotionally [for example, she may be emotionally distraught at the physical condition of her parents]. The point is—this is not something for a husband to criticize but to live with the wife in an understanding way. Give her strength and headship.

—**since she is a woman**—A man functions best with a helper who is a woman [for example, a woman is usually more detailed-oriented] and a woman functions best with a husband who is the head [he can give direction and purpose]. God created man and woman to be like a hand in a glove. Both are needed and need to work together.

—**and show her honor** [lit. “value”] **as a fellow heir of the grace of life**—“weaker” does not in some way mean a sub-Christian. Paul wrote, “*...neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Gal 3:28). The husband sets the spiritual tone for the marriage (and therefore the household).

—**so that your prayers will not be hindered**—James 5:16 says, “*The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*” Here, Peter seems to be saying the opposite is also true. If a husband does not live with his wife in an understanding way and does not honor her as a fellow believer, his prayers will be hindered, a strong Greek word even translated “prevented.”

**AN APPLICATION**—It’s interesting that submission is seen as an adornment characteristic of the wife, positive consequences. But if the husband does not live with his wife in an understanding way and show her honor, his own prayers will be prevented, negative consequences.

## **IV. Cautioned for New Persecution (3:8-4:19)**

### **A. Overcoming injustice (3:8-22)**

#### **1. A compassionate conduct (3:8-12)**

**3:8—To sum up**—respect for others (2:13-3:12)—for interpersonal relationships, especially in marriage

—**all of you be harmonious**—we may not all be singing the same tune, but our tune should harmonize with other believers, be like-minded (Rom 12:16; Phil 1:27; 2:2). For example, one believer may have the gift of hospitality, and another teaching—yet they both have a commitment to a literal Bible, salvation, sanctification, etc.

—**sympathetic**—understanding and support (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26)

—**brotherly**—*phileo* love (affection) for one another, as brothers in a family of believers

—**kindhearted**—being affected by the pain of others, to feel it deeply

—**and humble in spirit**—do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, putting the needs of others before his or her own.

**3:9**—**not returning evil for evil or insult for insult**—no retaliation for ill treatment (Rom 12:17).

—**but giving a blessing** [*eulogountes*—eulogy, speak good words] **instead**—  
—**for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing**—same Greek word *eulogountes*, i.e. God will speak well of you.

**3:10-12**—**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”**—taken from Psalm 34:12-16. God is watching His people, be careful what you do and what you say.

## **2. A clear conscience (3:13-22)**

**3:13**—**Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?**—This is an incredible contribution a Christian makes by breaking the cycle of people returning evil for evil.

**3:14**—**But even if you should suffer** [to experience something bad or painful] **for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed**—this is a different word than *eulogountes* of verse 9. This is *makarioi*, is not the effect but the motive—to be privileged or an honor. It's more important to be godly (righteous) than to get the approval of men (Matt 5:10-12; Rev. 14:13).

—**AND DO NOT FEAR** [*phobos*, phobia] **THEIR INTIMIDATION** [impending pain, danger, evil], **AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED** [to cause to move, or stir up]—see Isaiah 8:12b-13.

**3:15**—**but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts**—set apart or consecrate, giving the primary place of adoration to worship of Christ in your heart

—**always being ready to make a defense** [*apologia*=apologetics] **to everyone who asks you**—the primary point of making a defense is not to persuade someone else of your case, but for you to give an account of your case. Can you explain salvation? Can you explain what Christ did on the cross?

—**to give an account for the hope that is in you**—“*hope*” doesn't mean a desire but rather an expectation, a confidence of what lies ahead for the believer (Acts 25:16; 26:2).

—**yet with gentleness and reverence**—not offensively but with a deep regard for God's truth. Paul wrote, “*Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person*” (Col 4:5-6).

**3:16**—**and keep a good conscience**—moral sensitivity, knowing right from wrong

—**so that in the thing in which you are slandered**—spoken evil of

—**those who revile your good behavior in Christ**—good behavior is the best defense against unjust accusations

—**will be put to shame**—distress at realizing they were wrong or foolish

**AN APPLICATION**—As our country has moved away from the morals presented in God’s Word, they often will not perceive our actions as “good behavior,” but will call it “hate.” For example, speaking of believers in Jesus going to heaven, and everyone else going to hell, is called racist and hate speech.

**3:17—*For it is better***—strongest, most excellent, because our conscience is clear before God

—***if God should will it so***—it may be God’s will for us to suffer for doing good

—***that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong***—suffering for doing what is wrong is deserved, a just payment. Christ is our example:

**3:18—*For Christ also died for sins once for all***—under the Law in the O.T., there was the day of atonement, during which a high priest offering “...*both gifts and sacrifices which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience.*” So these had to be offered over and over, but Jesus, “*through His own blood, ...entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption...*” (Heb 9–10).

—***the just for the unjust***—Jesus suffered for doing what was right. He did no wrong. But it was God’s will that He suffer for us, the “unjust.” He did not fear men, who killed His body, but entrusted Himself to God, whom He knew would make Him alive.

—***so that He might bring us to God***—God’s purpose in Christ’s suffering was so that we could come to God as believers.

—***having been put to death in [the—not in Gk text] flesh***—physical death. The Roman executioners pierced His side, out of which came blood and water, confirming His death (John 19:33-37). Physically, Christ “*died for sins once for all*” (3:18).

—***but [made alive—Gk. to give life to] in [the—not in Gk text] spirit***—But alive spiritually, *that He might bring us [alive spiritually] to God.* Man cannot destroy us spiritually.

**AN APPLICATION**—Humans can be persecuted and even killed physically, but only God is able “*to destroy both soul and body in hell*” (Matt 10:28).

**3:19—*in which*** [spiritually, through the ministry of Noah] ***also He went and made proclamation*** [not the gospel, which would be “evangelize” but rather an announcement of the coming judgment of the flood] ***to the spirits*** [of physically dead people from Noah’s time who are still alive spiritually]—as the angels announce in the tribulation (Rev 14:6-8).

—***now in prison***— but in Hades awaiting the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15)

**3:20—*who once were disobedient***—When alive at the time of Noah, “*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, ...for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth*” (Gen 6:5, 13).

—***when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah during the construction of the ark***—“...*his days shall be one hundred and twenty years*” (Gen 6:3), evidently the number of years it took Noah to build the ark.

—***in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water***—Jesus said, “*for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it*” (Matt 7:13-14). In this case, everyone in the world went through the wide gate of the Flood to destruction, but 8 people went through the narrow

gate of the ark and *were brought safely through the water*. [As someone has said, “Noah went into the ark a minority but came out the majority!!]

**3:21—Corresponding to that**—in a similar way that the flood wiped away the old sinful world and Noah was brought safely through it

—**baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh**—that is, a physical baptism. In Peter’s day, we know from Acts that they preached baptism as a physical evidence of belief. Today, we may tell someone to say a prayer, or walk down the aisle of a church.

—**but an appeal** [a request] **to God for a good conscience—so that He might bring us to God** (v. 18). It’s not the baptism that saves, but the righteousness of Christ that brings us to God. Through faith we receive that righteousness (Eph 2:8-9) and the payment for our sins (3:18).

— **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ**—Paul wrote, “*if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins*” (1 Cor 15:17).

**AN APPLICATION**—Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen 6:8), and believed God and built an ark to show his faith. That “saved” him. Jesus said, “*he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life*” (John 5:24).

**AN APPLICATION**—Another understanding of these few verses could be that Jesus, in His spiritual godly state, judged the unbelievers at the Flood, in the past. This same Jesus is now at the right hand of God in heaven (v. 22), from where angels, and powers, and all creation will be subjected to Him in judgment (v. 22; 4:5), in the future. It’s the same Jesus.

**3:22—who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven**—see Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. The reward for Christ’s faithfulness is the seat of supreme honor

—**after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him**—Christ will rule and reign over all creation (Col 1:15-16; 2:14-15).

## **B. Enduring suffering (chapter 4)**

### **1. Christlike attitude (4:1-6)**

**4:1—Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh**—referring back to 3:18

—**arm yourselves also with the same purpose**—to prepare, to make ready with the same understanding, to suffer in the flesh

—**because he** [the believer] **who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin**—that is, being identified with Christ demonstrates his or her break with a sinful life because we have been freed from the power of sin (Rom 6:6-7).

**4:2—so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh**—the rest of our life

—**no longer for the lusts of men**—following the desires of our sin nature

—**but for the will of God**—but following the desires of our new nature in Christ

**4:3—For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles**—what the unbelievers do, doing what we did before we were believers

—**having pursued** [to engage in the same activity] **a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable** [bad] **idolatries**.

**4:4—In all this, they** [unbelievers] **are surprised** [unexpected wonder] **that you do not run with them** [to be closely associated with others in a particular type of behavior or conduct] **into the same excesses** [extreme] **of dissipation** [behavior with no thought for the consequences of an action]—

—**and they malign you**—your former “friends” are genuinely surprised by your changed life. So they speak against you in such a way as to harm or injure your reputation.

**4:5—but they** [unbelievers] **will give account to Him**—“*Every knee shall bow to Me*” (Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10-11). “*For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son*” (John 5:22).

—**who is ready to judge the living and the dead**—at the Great White Throne, they “*were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds...And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*” (Rev 20:11-15), whether in their spirits because their bodies were dead, or if they were alive at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, they both will come to judgment.

**4:6—For the gospel has for this purpose been preached**—because everybody must give an account to God

—**even to those who are dead**—this has been used to promote a “second chance” to hear the gospel after death. But this interpretation has no scriptural support. Rather, put together with verse 5, he’s referring to those believers in the gospel of Christ who have already died.

—**that though they are judged in the flesh as men**—i.e., they physically die

—**they may live in the spirit according to the will of God**—they have eternal life with God.

## **2. Christlike service (4:7-11)**

**4:7—The end of all things is near**—like the other apostles, Peter believed the return of Jesus was imminent (James 5:8; Rom 13:11; Heb 9:28; 1 John 2:18). This fact should make a practical difference in the way we live. Peter also wrote, “*Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way [by fire], what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness*” (2 Pet 3:11).

—**therefore, be of sound judgment**—sound mind

—**and sober spirit**—self-controlled

—**for the purpose of prayer**—a high priority. Perhaps Peter is remembering his time in the Garden of Gethsemane the night Jesus was betrayed, and he fell asleep instead of being alert in prayer (Matt 26:41). Jesus said, “*the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*”—It was true for Peter and true for us. It takes discipline to stay alert in prayer.

**4:8—Above all, keep fervent**—being eager to persevere in some state or activity, such as a runner straining for the tape at the finish line of a race

—**in your love for one another**—*agape*, giving without reciprocity, it is not primarily an emotion but a decision of the will leading to the action of giving.

—**because love covers** [hides, conceals, keep secret] **a multitude of sins**—he’s not saying that it covers YOUR sin, but rather, it does not broadcast the sin of others, especially if that sin is against you.

**4:9—Be hospitable to one another without complaint**—usually to give food and lodging.

**4:10—As each one has received a special gift**—including spiritual gifts (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12–14; Eph 4), but also other gifts, such as talents, abilities, knowledge, etc. They have all been generously given to you by God and are unique to each person. What did you do to get that gift? Nothing. It was given to you by God.

**—employ it in serving one another**—helping others. It's not for yourself.

**—as good stewards of the manifold** [of various kinds] **grace of God**—because each person has received their own special gift from God, His grace is then practiced in many different ways as we help one another.

**4:11—Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God**—what you say

**—whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies**—what you do

**—so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen**—God should get the glory, not us. Pride is when we get the glory or give glory to someone else.

### **3. Christlike faith (4:12-19)**

**4:12—Beloved**—i.e., believers

**—do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal** [suffering] **among you**—in the sense of God purifying them, not consuming them. Like the fire to test the purity of gems. *“fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work...remains, he shall receive a reward”* (1 Cor 3:10-15). This will also happen at the Bema seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10).

**—which comes upon you for your testing**—James wrote, *“the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”* (James 1:3-4).

**—as though some strange thing were happening to you**—i.e., as though it is unusual to happen to believers. Jesus suffered and said we would suffer (Matt 10:24-25; Luke 6:40; John 13:16; 15:18-21; 16:1-4; 1 John 3:13).

**AN APPLICATION**—Fire tests the “quality” not the quantity. God told the Israelites that He left the Canaanites in the land *“to test Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the Lord...or not”* (Judges 2:22). God uses “suffering” in our lives to do the same thing with us. It shows whether a person is even a believer or not (do they hope in circumstances or hope in God?). Then God uses it to see if we are going to be obedient to Him or even as an opportunity to give Him glory.

**4:13—but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ**—the Christian’s eternal reward is proportionate to their earthly suffering. Jesus said, *“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets”* (Luke 6:22–23).

**—keep on rejoicing**—It's not all who suffer but those who show themselves faithful in the midst of suffering who can rejoice

**—so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation**—in the future of Christ’s glory, those who suffer rejoice even more because of the glory that they suffered as Christ suffered.



**4:14—If you are reviled for the name of Christ**—to insult you, not in general but because you are a believer in Jesus Christ

—**you are blessed**—not a physical blessing, but spiritually favorable

—**because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you**—a believer is already indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but when a believer is insulted because of being a believer, the Holy Spirit “continues to give a beneficial result” [**rests**]

**4:15—Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler**—when suffering is the consequence of evil behavior. Don’t even meddle in other people’s affairs.

**4:16—but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name**—“Christian” is only used here and in Acts 11:26 and 26:28. They were known as “brethren” (Acts 1:15-16), “saints” (Acts 9:13), those of “the Way” (Acts 9:2). “Christians” was not a name they gave themselves, but was originally an insult given by the world and associated with hatred and persecution. But it has since become the dominant and best-loved name by which believers are known.

**4:17—For it is time [now] for judgment to begin with the household of God**—our suffering is now, in this time

—**and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?**—this is comparing believers’ suffering now, to eternal future suffering for those who do not obey the gospel

**4:18—AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS** [the condition of their saved life, i.e., suffering, not a criteria to become saved] **SAVED**—it is difficult because salvation results in suffering from the world (in the context of v. 19).

—**WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?**—the suffering of unbelievers in eternity will be much more severe

**4:19—Therefore**—conclusion

—**those also who suffer according to the will of God** [undeserved, suffering as a believer] **shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator**—believers should respond to suffering by entrusting ourselves to our faithful Creator, the all-powerful and loving God. Our Creator is also the One who will judge the unbelievers.

—**in doing what is right**—rather than doing what is evil, even though, as a believer, it will result in suffering—but that’s just for this life. Paul wrote, “*Never pay back evil for evil to anyone...Never take your own revenge, beloved...*” (Rom 12:17-19).

**AN APPLICATION**—The point of this section is that the believer will suffer in this life, for being a follower of Jesus, for doing the right thing, to test our faith, to give glory to God. But whatever the suffering, it will be mild compared to the eternal suffering of unbelievers.

## **V. Charged with New Responsibility (5:1-11)**

### **A. Elders are to shepherd (5:1-4)**

**5:1—Therefore, I exhort the elders among you**—older, mature men among you (not an office of a man-made institution). Peter was an apostle, but here he identifies with the male leadership of believers, *as your fellow elder...*

—**as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ**—Peter’s walk with Christ while He was on the earth

—**and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed**—just as these believers were (4:13). Even as an elder, they are not more Christian than the rest of us. We are all fellow “partakers of the glory.”

**5:2-3—shepherd** [“to tend,” lead, guide, take care of] **the flock of God** [other believers who are where you are—such as your family, Bible study, Sunday school class, local assembly, etc.] **among you**—

—**exercising oversight**—to guard against, to consider carefully, protect

—**not under compulsion** [as an obligation], **but voluntarily** [willingness to help]

—**according to the will of God**—what things seem to be what God desires one to do

—**and not for [sordid gain]**—one word, greedy for money

—**but with eagerness**—wanting very much to do it

—**nor yet as lording** [ruling] **it over those [allotted to your charge** = one word, chosen by lot]—you don’t choose your children or those who want to learn from you about God. He is the One who puts them in your life. You cannot create or “rule” desire in anyone!!

—Jesus said, “*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant*” (Matt 20:26-27). Jesus said, “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*” (Matt 28:18). Overseers are to guide, protect, be examples, but do not have authority. Jesus and His Word are our only authority (can command us to obey).

—**but proving to be examples to the flock**—one with a character who illustrates what a Christian is to be like. They are a model.

**5:4—And when the Chief Shepherd appears**—Jesus coming at the Rapture

—**you will receive the unfading crown of glory**—Jesus said, “*Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done*” (Rev 22:12). “*...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven*” (Matt 6:20-21).

### **B. Young men are to submit (5:5-7)**

**5:5—You younger [men, lit. “ones”], likewise, be subject to your elders**—as the elders guide, and instruct and are examples—the young are to watch and imitate them and submit to their wisdom and spiritual maturity

**AN APPLICATION**—Young people should want to be like you (1 Cor 10:6, 11; Phil 3:18; 1 Thess 1:7; 2 Thess 3:7, 9; 1 Tim 1:16; Titus 2:7; James 5:10). “*...show yourself an example of those who believe*” (1 Tim 4:12).

—**and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another**—whether you are an older mature believer or a young new believer, be humble, without arrogance, toward each other. [Don’t be proud of your humility!!!]

—**for GOD IS OPPOSED** [sets Himself against] **TO THE PROUD**—Pride is saying you have value apart from God—it was you who accomplished whatever.

**AN APPLICATION**—As we’ve mentioned in other studies—two “P” words that should not come from the lips of a believer: “Proud” and “Promise” (Matt 5:34; James 5:12). “*God is opposed to the proud*” and Jesus said, “*make no oath at all.*”

—**BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**—“grace” is the favor of God, His gift. James 1:17 says, “*Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.*” We should be thankful, not proud. To be humble is to be dependent on God, knowing it was not your ability, your skill, etc. that succeeded.

**5:6—Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God**—lit. “allow yourselves to be humbled,” especially in suffering  
—**that He may exalt you at the proper time**—if you are to be held in high regard, God will cause it to happen when He wants and where He wants. It’s not your decision.

**5:7—casting all your anxiety on Him**—“casting” is an act of the will. Jesus said, “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest...and you shall find rest for your souls*” (Matt 11:28-30). Paul wrote, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*” (Phil 4:6-7). [See also 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.]  
—**because He cares for you**—you are an object of concern or attention to God

### **C. All are to stand firm (5:8-11)**

**5:8—Be of sober spirit**—control one’s thoughts, what you think about  
—**be on the alert**—stay spiritually watchful of danger  
—**Your adversary**—one who is actively and continuously hostile toward someone. We are in a spiritual warfare. Paul wrote, “*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For 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*” (Eph 6:11-12).  
—**the devil**—*diabolos*, the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Satan.” He is “*the prince of this world*” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), the *ruler of the kingdom of the air*” (Eph 2:2), but limited by God’s boundaries. For example, he could injure Job and all he had, but not kill him (Job 1:12; 2:6).  
—**prows around like a roaring lion**—to walk in the tracks, he is following us and what we do with the purpose of devouring us, he has schemes, plans—he may know you better than you know yourself, he studies you, he has experiences of previous people like you...  
—**seeking someone to devour**—not to wound but to destroy, to swallow, to gulp down

**AN APPLICATION**—Satan can devour in various ways: (1) directly attacking the believer (like Job), or attacking through the attractive world system (1 John 2:15-17). (2) He attacks the marriage and the family (1 Cor 7:3-5). (3) He attacks through persuasive false teachers (Acts 20:29-31; 2 Cor 11:13-15). “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth...*” (2 Tim 4:3-4).

**5:9—But resist him**—Paul wrote, “*take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm*” (Eph 6:13).  
—**firm in your faith**—be strong, solid—know your Bible!! Peter already said, “*long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation*” (1 Pet 2:2). The more we know and understand the Bible, the more we are firm in our faith and able to resist

**—knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world—** “That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecc 1:9).

**AN APPLICATION—**Jesus (Matt 8:31) and His disciples (Luke 9:1) [and evidently some others (Mark 9:38) and the Pharisees] cast out demons, but this is not our command for our age. Our commands are to “resist” and “be firm in your faith.”

**5:10—After you have suffered for a little while—**as he already said, suffering on this earth is for only a little while compared to eternity

**—the God of all grace—**grace is the favor or gift of God

**—who called you to His eternal glory in Christ—**God saved us in Christ. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8).

**—will Himself perfect—**cause to happen

**—confirm—**to cause someone to become more firm in unchanging attitude or belief

**—strengthen—**more able, in contrast to weakness

**—and establish you—**provide a firm foundation

**AN APPLICATION—**Many will agree with God’s calling and providing for our salvation, but the same is true for our sanctification. It’s His grace that will cause a believer to mature, to be a strong believer who is able to suffer and able to resist the devil.

**5:11—To Him be dominion** [“power to rule”] **forever and ever. Amen—**

## **VI. Conclusion (5:12-14)**

**5:12—Through Silvanus—**This letter was evidently delivered by Silus, probably the same Silus who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:40).

**—our faithful brother (for so I regard him)—**a model of the elder, older believer

**—I have written to you briefly, exhorting** [urging] **and testifying** [bearing witness]—

**—that this is the true grace of God—** “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit, spoke from God” (2 Pet 1:20-21).

**—Stand firm in it!**—we don’t stand firm in other religions or other doctrines, but stand firm in the true Word of God. “you have been established in the truth...” (2 Pet 1:12).

**5:13—She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you—**the believers in another city. Many think “Babylon” is Peter’s code word for Rome, as it is where Peter was. Don’t know.

**—sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark—**John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, was in Rome at the time 1 Peter was written (Col 4:10). Mark was the author of the gospel of Mark, most likely based on information from Peter.

**5:14—Greet one another with a kiss of love—**a Christian greeting. Today, it may be a handshake or an embrace, unique for those in Christ, a family of believers.

**—Peace be to you all who are in Christ—**Jesus is the Prince of Peace. First Peter begins and ends with peace. The Hebrew blessing of “Shalom.”

# 2 Peter

## I. Introduction (1:1-2)

**1:1—Simon Peter**—One of the disciples who walked with Jesus (Matt 4:18-22)  
—**a bond-servant**—*doulos* = “a slave.” The *doulos* was one who chose to be owned by his master. He was totally under the authority and power of his master and dependent on him for everything—responsibilities, daily food, housing, supplies, and purposes in life.  
—**and apostle of Jesus Christ**—The followers of Jesus during His earthly ministry were called ‘disciples.’ After Jesus’ resurrection, they were called *apostles*, i.e., sent-out ones. “The Twelve” were the former disciples (minus Judas, plus Matthias—Acts 1:15-26) who were teachers in the first years of the church (Acts 2:14f). Defining the Gospel was one of the missions of the apostles (Gal 1:6-10; Eph 2:20), under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20-21).  
—**To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ**—to believers—our faith and the apostles’ faith are the same value or the same kind. Theirs was not better or more than ours and vice versa.

**1:2—Grace** [undeserved favor of God] **and peace** [free from anxiety—Phil 4:6-7] **be multiplied to you**—be increasing experientially in our life (positionally, they are already ours)  
—**in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord**—grace and peace are not ends in themselves. They need to be anchored in the knowledge of God and Jesus. As 1 Peter 2:2 says, “*long for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow...*” This knowledge is reason and logic applied to the author’s intended meaning of the Scriptures.

**AN APPLICATION**—You do not grow in grace and peace through experiences. Experiences (trials) test your grace, and peace, but growth comes only through knowledge of the Word of God (James 1:2-3). Peter would not say “multiplied” unless it was possible.

## II. The Christian’s Nature: the Work of God (1:3-11)

### A. The fact of the divine nature (1:3-4)

#### 1. Divine power (1:3)

**1:3—seeing that**—since, for the reason that, because  
—**His divine power**—*dunamis*, from which we get the word “dynamite”  
—**has granted to us everything**—there is no more to give—it **has** all been given to us already. It’s a past action with continuing effects. We won’t get more revelation (Scripture). We won’t get more of the Holy Spirit. We won’t get more saved. We won’t get more promises. We won’t get more prophecy. We won’t get more redemption.  
—**pertaining** [relevant to, connected with] **to life** [physical living] **and godliness** [spiritual living]—  
—**through** [by means of] **the true knowledge of Him**—That is, God has determined that grace, peace, life, and godliness come only through the true knowledge of Him, which we get in the Scriptures (2:2). And it’s His divine power that makes that possible. You will not get these through any of the things the false teachers promote.

**AN APPLICATION**—Peter stresses the “true knowledge of Him.” The false teachers were telling them a “false” or “untrue” message of God. They can use the Bible, and even say they are promoting God, but is it the truth? It is like what God told Jeremiah about the false

prophets: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets...they are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord” (Jer 23:16).

—**who called us by His own glory and [moral] excellence**—“calling” in the New Testament is for salvation, not for positions or service (see 1 Corinthians 1:2, “*saints by calling*”). It was because of His own Name and character that He chose us, not because of anything we were or did. In fact, He chose us before He even made the world (Rom 9:11; Eph 1:4; 2:8-9).

## **2. Divine promises (1:4a)**

**1:4—For by these**—God’s divine power, the true knowledge of Him, and His own glory and moral excellence

—**He has granted to us**—God has given to believers. Same as verse 3, past action with continuing effects

—**His precious**—of great value, very costly, not to be wasted or treated carelessly

—**and magnificent**—extremely important

—**promises**—an assurance or guarantee that one will do a particular thing

**AN APPLICATION**—Generally speaking, Israel in the Old Testament lived according to covenants God made with the nation (which included believers and unbelievers): the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12; 15); the Mosaic Covenant (Deut 27–30); the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7); and the New Covenant (Jer 31). Believers, the individual members of the body of Christ, in the New Testament, live according to the promises God made with those individuals. There is no corporate promise or covenant in our age. [Actually, the institutional “church” is made up of believers and unbelievers—but unbelievers do not have these promises!] The Millennial Kingdom will be the fulfillment of those covenants God made to Israel. The desert blossoming like a rose will happen for both believers and unbelievers, etc.

## **3. Divine participation (1:4b)**

—**so that**—for the purpose of

—**by them**—God’s power and His magnificent promises, not thru experiences or false teaching

—**you may become partakers [sharers, partners] of the divine nature**—that is, be characterized by the nature (godliness) of God. We are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). Again, you do not become that partaker thru experiences or feelings, but through the righteousness of Christ (v. 1), through the knowledge of Christ (v. 2), through the power and calling of God (v. 3), and through His precious and magnificent promises (v. 4).

—[since] **having escaped the corruption [making someone morally rotten] that is in the world by lust** [strong appetites, impulses, or desires—see 1 John 2:16]

## **B. The function of the divine nature (1:5-9)**

### **1. Characteristics of the function (1:5-7)**

**1:5—Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence**—Peter is **not** writing to the unsaved about their salvation. He is writing to those who are already saved about their spiritual life, their walk with God.

1. Peter says this walk with God will take **diligence** (v. 5a). It requires discipline and self-denial. It is a challenge to every Christian every day of their life. You will never get through this list and move on to something else!!!

2. The efforts we make are based on the sovereignty of God and the sufficiency of His provisions (vv. 1-4). God has already provided all that is necessary for *life and godliness* (v. 3).
3. The list in verses 5-7 is not a list of duties or activities, it is a list of character qualities, the kind of person a Christian is striving to become.
4. The character qualities we are to pursue are also the character traits of God, what God has provided so we *might become partakers of the divine nature* (v. 4).
5. In the New Testament, there are other lists for Christians (such as Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Timothy 6:11). But this list seems to be qualities chosen because of the false teachers who seek to distort the truth of the Scriptures and seek to lure people to follow them. The character qualities here (which are of the divine nature) are in contrast to the character of the false teachers and their followers (chapter 2).
6. There is a purposeful order and relationship in this list. Each quality builds upon the qualities before it. It begins with faith and ends with love. All the qualities are needed, but they should be added in proper order.

—**in your faith**—Faith is not something for which we strive. Peter already said believers are those *who have received a faith of the same kind as ours* (v. 1), i.e., it's a gift from God (Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:3-6). Jesus said “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...*” (John 6:44). Faith begins as saving faith, without which it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). ...*whatever is not from faith is sin* (Rom 14:23). Trials do not create faith. Our faith is **tested** by the trials and adversity God allows to come into our life (1 Pet 1:6-7). Faith is not only the basis for our belief but it is also the basis for our behavior (Heb 11). Jesus Christ is both the object and source of our faith. He is also the model for our faith (1 Pet 2:23). It is the foundation character quality upon which we build. In the morning, acknowledge your faith. Thank God for your salvation and your sanctification.

—**supply moral excellence**—This is one Greek word, meaning “virtue.” It is the same word Peter used in 1:3, ...*Him who called us by His own glory and excellence* [virtue]. Peter also used the word in 1 Peter 2:9, ...*that you may proclaim the excellences of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*. His excellences are God’s divine nature, His glory for which men should praise Him. Unbelievers have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). They have refused to give God glory and worship created things instead (Rom 1:18-28). As a result of our salvation, we are now able to recognize the excellencies or virtues of God and consider them worthy of praise (Phil 4:8). So the excellence or virtue of God is God’s divine nature [holiness, truth, love, etc.]. The character of God becomes the standard and goal for our own character. When we desire God’s virtue, it produces a mindset receptive to the knowledge of God revealed through the Scriptures. Decide and/or remind yourself each morning that you want to be godly today.

—**and in your moral excellence, knowledge**—As unbelievers, we were not knowledgeable. We were ignorant, conforming ourselves to the lusts of the world (1 Pet 1:14). But now as believers in Jesus, we are being *transformed by the renewing of your mind...* This knowledge comes from the Scriptures and is communicated through the Holy Spirit (Rom 12:1-2; see also John 17:17; Eph 4:17-24; Col 1:9-11). Peter wrote, *grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord* (2 Pet 1:2) and *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Pet 3:18). Paul wrote, ... *we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a*

*manner worthy of the Lord, to please [Him] in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col 1:9-12). We need to grow in our knowledge, chew on the solid food of the Word of God. Solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Heb 5:12-14). This knowledge of God must be understood as contrasting and contradicting the false knowledge of the false teachers who want to weaken and cut away at the truth of God and the faith of believers (2 Pet 2:1-3, 17-19). The knowledge of God is essential to our growth in Christian character and our ability to recognize and avoid those who teach what is false. Pray, as you study God's Word, that He will give you the knowledge of what it means to be holy.*

**1:6—and in your knowledge, self-control**—Self-control means literally “to take a grip of oneself.” It is the opposite of self-indulgence. As unbelievers, we are enslaved to our physical appetites (Eph 2:1-3; 1 Pet 1:14). But when we became believers, *having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Rom 6:15-18; 8:12-13)*. Living a godly life requires that we make the flesh our servant rather than our master (1 Cor 9:24-27). False teachers appeal to fleshly lusts (2 Pet 2:1-3, 9-14, 18-19). Today we hear preached a gospel of self-indulgence and prosperity. They promise that those with enough faith can escape suffering and adversity and be guaranteed peace and prosperity. This is not what the Bible teaches (Gal 5:19-23). It teaches *...righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come (Acts 24:24-25)*. Now practice saying “no” to your fleshly desires. These desires are things you should not do.

—**and in your self-control, perseverance**—Perseverance enables us to persist in our pursuit of godly character even when we suffer for doing so. It has to do with pain. Our natural tendency is to pursue pleasure and flee from pain. But perseverance is doing what is right even though doing so may produce difficulties, suffering, and sorrow. It is a commitment to suffer in the short-term of this life in order to experience glory for eternity (see 1 Pet 2:21-25; Col 1:24-27). It is what Jesus Himself did (Heb 12:1-3). It includes patience. The false teachers use the fact that Jesus has not returned as “proof” that He will not. Therefore, they want us to live for the moment and to pursue fleshly pleasures, doubting the reality of the day of judgment and Christ's return (2 Pet 3:1ff). But we must patiently persevere in doing what is right, looking for our eternal rewards when He returns. Saying “no” to your fleshly desires is painful. But it is a short-term earthly pain for long-term eternal benefits.

—**and in your perseverance, godliness**—This is a word meaning “piety” or practical religion. It is what we practice every day. It is bringing the holy presence of God into all the experiences of life. It distinguishes the believer in Jesus from the unbeliever. See Matthew 23:14, 23; James 1:27; 2 Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:8-10. *...do not be conformed to the former lusts [which were yours] in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior (1 Pet 1:14-16)*. Self-control was about not doing a fleshly desire. Godliness is about doing the right thing—for example, being kind, having a heart of compassion, being patient, *we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ (Eph 4:15)*.

**1:7—and in your godliness, brotherly kindness**—Greek: *Philadelphia*. This is the love saints should have for one another as fellow believers. This is not automatic. If it was, Peter would not have commanded us to pursue it with diligence, both here in 2 Peter 1:7 and in 1 Peter 1:22. Sin not only alienates us from God, it also alienates us from one another. With



His death, God removed the barrier that separates us (Eph 2:11-16). This is something for which we must strive with diligence to practice. *Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you* (Col 3:13).

—**and in your brotherly kindness, love**—Greek: *agape*. Michael Green wrote: God’s *agape* is evoked not by what we are, but by what He is. It has its origin in the agent, not in the object...” This *agape* might be defined as a deliberate desire for the highest good of the one loved, which shows itself in sacrificial action for that person’s good. That is what God did for us (John 3:16). That is what He wants us to do (1 John 3:16). *Agape* love is not prompted by what the other person is or does but by a love rooted in what God is. It is the love of God which flows through us to others (1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thess 3:12; 1 John 4:19). Peter says love is the end product of the Christian’s striving and not the source of it. Many today want to “feel” love and then act on it. Peter tells the Christian they have already received faith, and they are to act on it, and the outcome will be love. Love is a result not a cause. It is the fruit, not the root.

**AN APPLICATION**—In this section, we see that Peter here is not emphasizing the work of the Spirit, as is emphasized in other portions of Scripture, such as Galatians 5. Peter also tells us that Christian growth is neither automatic nor is maturity merely a function of time. Christian growth does take time, but growth occurs as believers diligently and obediently seek to grow, in the power of the Holy Spirit and through the study of the Scriptures. However, failing to grow does not mean that we simply become stagnant, never moving beyond where we are in our spiritual life. Failure to grow means we move backwards—it sets us up for a fall (2 Pet 1:8; 3:17; Phil 3:10-16; Heb 2:1). If you do not use it, you lose it, not losing salvation but drifting away from growth and maturing in Christ.

## **2. Consequences of the function of the divine nature (1:8)**

**1:8—For if these qualities are yours**—they describe what a Christian is and does

—**and are increasing**—God expects us to grow. Too many Christians know salvation in the Lord, but do not grow spiritually. They remain infants in Christ (1 Cor 3:1), still in need of “milk” instead of solid food (Heb 5:12-14; see also 2 Tim 4:3-4).

—**they render you neither useless**—a person may seem hard-working, busy, or even a workaholic but be unproductive in what is demanded of them, what’s supposed to be done

—**nor unfruitful**—almost a synonym for “useless.” If you have an apple tree in your yard, yet it produces no apples, it is useless for the purpose for which you planted it. Do you see the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Is your mind being transformed (Rom 12:1-2)?

—**in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ**—Satan himself uses the Bible to deceive people. Many unbelievers have knowledge of Jesus, but not “true knowledge.” It is so easy for our prejudices to control us, thinking they are of the knowledge of Christ. Today, there is the Word-Faith teaching, the prosperity gospel teaching—not the true knowledge of Christ. Pray that God will help you understand the author’s intended meaning of Scripture—that’s the true knowledge. Don’t allegorize, don’t spiritualize, don’t read our church age back into the Old Testament, don’t apply until you understand the meaning in the context.

## **3. Contrasts of the function of the divine nature (1:9)**

**1:9—For he who lacks these qualities**—if a believer is not growing, not maturing—

—(1) **is blind**—When you were an unbeliever, you were blind to spiritual truth (2 Cor 4:3-4). But as a believer, your eyes have been opened to spiritual truth. But if they are not maturing, they are living as if they are spiritually blind.

—(2) **or short-sighted**—not taking eternity into account, living for today, with no thought for tomorrow.

—(3) **having forgotten his purification from his former sins**—if a believer is not growing, they will “receive forgetfulness” of their purification from their sins, that is, the very reason they became a believer in the first place, for purification from their sins.

### **C. The finality of the divine nature (1:10-11)**

#### **1. Experiential finality (1:10)**

**1:10—Therefore, brethren**—in light of the previous 9 verses

—**be all the more diligent**—he already said in verse 5, *applying diligence* to your walk with God—now he says to be even more diligent

—**to make certain about His calling and choosing you**—in this context, Peter is saying to take action to show you are elected, basically, an intensified repetition of verses 5-7.

—**for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble**—NOT with respect to salvation. Pursuing holiness will give you a stability which keeps you from stumbling from false teaching. But if a believer ceases to grow in Christian character and conduct, they are setting themselves up to stumble—to become useless, unfruitful, worldly-minded, unstable, and susceptible to the false teaching Peter will cover in the rest of the book.

#### **2. Eternal finality (1:11)**

**1:11—for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you**—Some believers will get to heaven but will not arrive abundantly (1 Cor 3:12-15; 5:5; 11:28-30). But for the believer who pursues holiness, there is an abundant entrance into heaven (2 Cor 5:6-10; Phil 1:19-23). Some believers are sad to leave this life. For mature believers, there is a joy of anticipation for being with our Savior—seeing Him face-to-face.

### **III. The Christian’s Nurture: the Word of God (1:12-15)**

#### **A. Memory of God’s Word (1:12-15)**

**1:12—Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things**—God never forgets!! But we do forget. Peter is reminding us, and we can remind others.

—**though you already know them**—you cannot remind someone of something they never knew.

—**and have been established in the truth**—these believers have already embraced, made a decision about, made up one’s mind about, the truth of Jesus Christ

—**which is present with you**—the truth doesn’t leave us, but we need to be reminded it is there.

**AN APPLICATION**—Once you use reason and logic to understand something is true, you cannot be persuaded it is false. The truth will always be with you, in your mind and thinking. For example, if someone believes in things evolving from other things, it is because they did not understand God as the Creator to be true in the first place. *“By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible”* (Heb 11:3).

**1:13**—*I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling* [i.e., alive], **to stir you up by way of reminder**—Peter’s opportunity to write to them is now—as long as he still breathes.

**1:14**—*knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me*—it is getting close to the time of Peter’s death.

**AN APPLICATION**—God revealed that to Peter, but He has not specifically revealed it to us. In contrast to animals, who do not know they are going to die, humans do know they are going to die (Gen 3:19). And we have a general time—“*As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years*” (Psalm 90:10). But individually, we do not know if we will actually live that long, or longer, or die much earlier. But it is a gift of God’s grace to warn us so we can be prepared for the day after “death’s day.”

**1:15**—*And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind*—the truths that are eternally important come from the Scriptures.

**AN APPLICATION**—Therefore, we must constantly be in the Word because that’s where God’s reminders are found. It is the written Word, the author’s intended meaning, we need to be reminded of. And that is available “*at any time.*” That’s one thing that is really valuable about writing. It outlasts us. Peter’s words have lasted over 2,000 years!!!

### **B. Majesty of God’s Word (1:16-18)**

**1:16**—*For we did not follow [cleverly devised (one word)]*—specialized knowledge or skill that is easy to understand but thought to be complicated or admired, but meant to mislead, to deceive others (2 Cor 11:13; 2 Tim 4:3-4; Jude 4, 12).

—*tales*—stories, normally about supernatural beings or events, such as pagan mythology, in the NT always referred to as an unfavorable acceptance as being true. Peter will give more details of the deceptive teaching of the false teachers in chapter 2.

—*when we made known to you*—to impart true knowledge, new revelation from God

—*the power* [title for supernatural power] **and coming** [*Parousia*—the Second Coming] **of our Lord Jesus Christ**—in power and great glory (Matt 24:30; 25:31; Rev 19:11-16).

—*but we* [Peter, James, and John] **were eyewitnesses** [personally saw an event] **of His majesty**—glory of God seen at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1-8). It was not a myth they made up.

**1:17**—*For when He received honor* [how much something is valued] **and glory** [*doxa*] **from God the Father**—Jesus had prayed, “*Glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was*” (John 17:5). At the transfiguration, Jesus’ face “*shone like the sun*” and His clothes “*became as white as the light*” (Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9:28-36). This was an pre-view of that glory Jesus will have when He will come as King of Kings (Matt 24:29-30; Rev 1:12-16; 19:11-16).

—*such an utterance* [speech, actual words] **as this was made to Him** [Jesus]

—**by the Majestic Glory**—splendor, grandeur, magnificence of God the Father in heaven

—**“This is My beloved Son**—publicly, to the 3 disciples, God acknowledged His Sonship, affirming that the Son is both identical in nature and essence with the heavenly Father. It also declares the Father’s love for His Son.

—*with whom I am well-pleased*” —one of two different occasions—here and at the Lord’s baptism (Matt 3:17; 17:5), God the Father declared His complete satisfaction with everything Jesus said and did. Therefore, implying Christ’s right to come again and possess the kingdom that is rightfully His (Rev 5:9-13).

**1:18**—*and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain*—What they heard was the words and voice of God the Father from heaven [revelation], but what they saw was Jesus transfigured into His glorious form. What they wrote is inspired Scripture, describing both things. So we read about both things.

### **C. Meaning of God’s Word (1:19-21)**

#### **Illumination:**

**1:19**—*So we have the prophetic word*—what the prophets understood about the Messiah in His glory on earth, as King of His Kingdom, restoration of Israel, etc.

—*made [more sure (one word)]*—the transfiguration of Christ confirmed what the prophets had seen (Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah, etc.), i.e., Christ in His glory.

—*to which you do well to pay attention*—to be on the alert for, keep on the lookout for, be on guard against, to be in a continuous state of readiness to learn of any future danger, need, or error, and to respond appropriately

—*as to a lamp shining in a dark place*—the world we live in is a dark place, under the control of Satan (and his false teachers). But we have what is written by the prophets and the life of Christ as a bright light shining in that dark place. His light exposes the danger in and of the darkness.

—*until the day dawns and the morning star arises*—the coming of Christ in glory

—*in your hearts*—the lamp of Christ is in our hearts now, but it will be exceeded by the great day in which Christ returns. What we know now will pale in comparison.

#### **Revelation:**

**1:20**—*But know this first of all*—the primary thing to know about the prophetic written Scriptures is that they did not come about as the prophets’ own ideas.

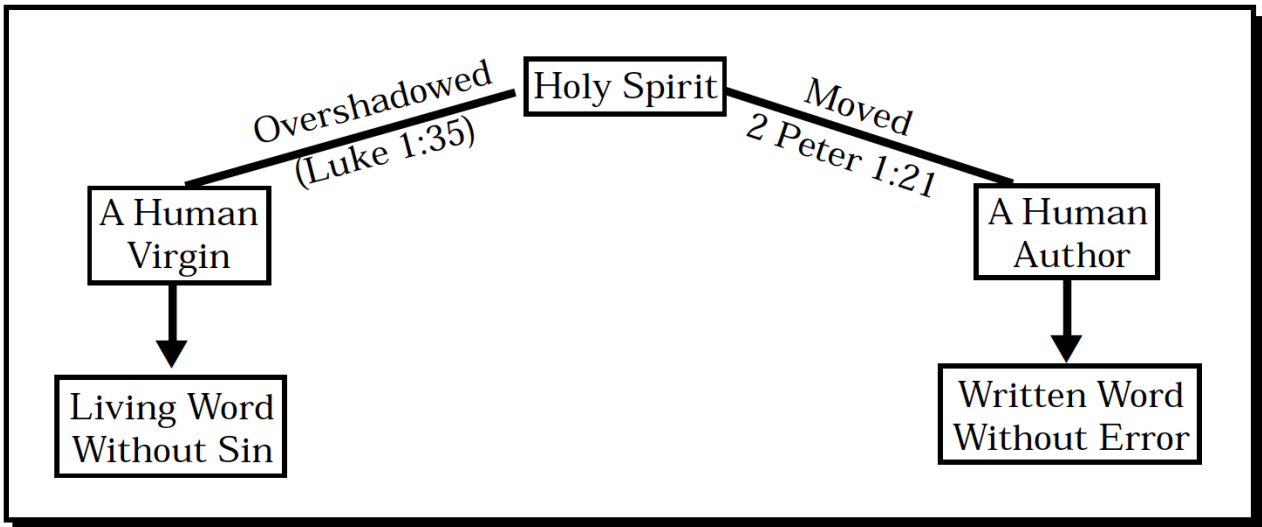
—*that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation*

[understanding]—even though Peter’s experience of the Transfiguration of Christ was true and his understanding of it was true, the prophetic word of Scripture is more sure. What was inspired by God was what Peter wrote about it in Scripture. See 2 Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:7, 9; 1 Corinthians 14:7.

**AN APPLICATION**—Biblical interpretation is not a “private” matter. Uniqueness in interpretation should be a red flag rather than an attraction. God’s revelation was given through a variety of men over a number of centuries. The revelation was not private, and the interpretation is not to be private. Peter wrote it down so anyone, anywhere, at any time could read it and know it (1:15). For sure, some things in Scripture are hard to understand and on some things Bible students may disagree (1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 3:16). But there is only one interpretation—the author’s intended meaning. Multiple interpretations cannot all be correct. [There can be, and are, multiple applications, but not interpretations.]

**1:21**—*for no prophecy was ever made* [“came about”] *by an act of human will*—No prophet or apostle could decide to write prophecy—only God knows the future, its revelation has to be from Him, no matter how much a prophet would desire it. *“As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful*

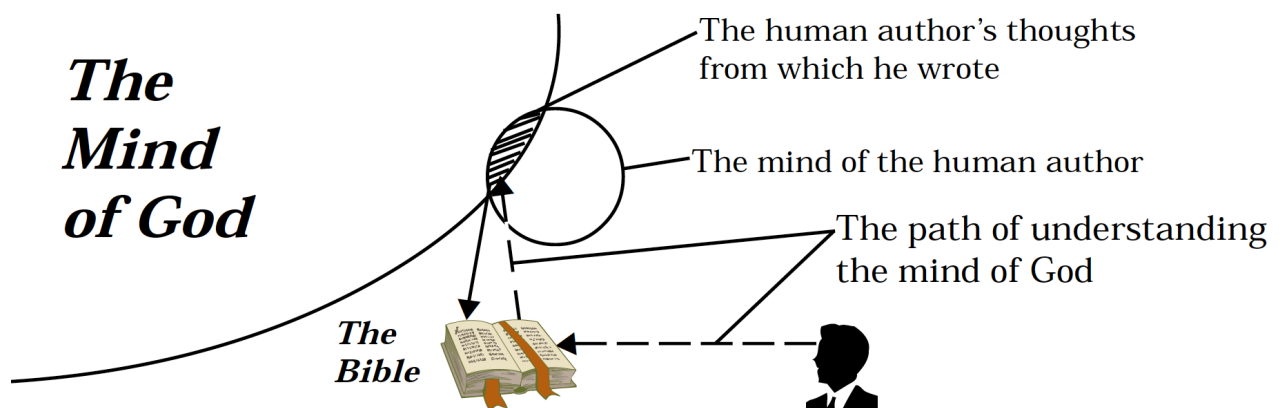
searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look” (1 Pet 1:10-12). Not only was it not their idea, they didn’t always have the interpretation (understanding) of it.



**Inspiration:**

—**but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God**—It was not the disciples’ experiences but the inspired record of Christ’s life and words, written by the Spirit-directed authors and contained in the New Testament, which validated the Old Testament. “*All Scripture is inspired by God...* (2 Tim 3:16). There is a dual authorship of the Scripture. It comes from the mind of God, but also the personality of the human author. For example, Paul’s educated writing is a much more academic Greek than the fisherman John’s is.

**AN APPLICATION—**



**IV. The Christian’s Warfare: the Attack of False Teachers (chapter 2)**

**A. Deliverance from false teachers (2:1-9)**

**1. Exposure of false teaching (2:1-3)**

2:1—*But*—in contrast to 1:21

—**false prophets also arose among the people**—Jer. 5:31; 23:9-18. These false prophets were Jews. They were not Gentiles from surrounding nations.

—**just as there will also be**—this is not a possibility, this is a certainty. Don't think, "Not in my group..." That kind of thinking makes you naïve and non-discerning. See Acts 20:29.

—**false teachers among you**—wherever and whenever there are believers. You can just be having dinner with "friends," and there will be something destructive to your belief in Christ.

—**who will secretly**—it is not going to be obvious. It's meant to be kept unknown or unseen by others. It's not that they themselves are unseen. It's their false message that's secret. In some cases, they are themselves deceived (2 Tim 3:13; 2 Pet 2:13).

—**introduce** [*pareisaxousin*—"to bring in alongside"] **destructive** ["to ruin, steal, or destroy"] **heresies**—any teaching that is the opposite of what the Bible says or that distorts what the Bible says (2 Pet 3:16). They are not simply a 'doctrinal disagreement.' Their purpose is to destroy what the Bible says and spiritually destroy you.

—**even denying the Master who bought them**—they are denying the sufficiency of Christ's death for our redemption. They will add works, traditions, etc. to what He did. Many want a more relational and emotional Jesus, and reject logic and reason applied to Scripture as "cold." We would rather conform Jesus to our views and values than have Him transform ours to His.

—**bringing swift destruction upon themselves**—Christ's death is "sufficient" for all (1 Tim 2:6; Heb 2:9; 1 John 2:2), but it's "efficient" only for those who believe.

**AN APPLICATION**—This is a strong argument for unlimited atonement (that Christ died for everyone) and against limited atonement (the view that Christ only died for those whom He would later save [TULIP]). [OK—Must say Christ's death is not an atonement (as described in the Bible). It's a Passover (1 Cor 5:7)—a once-for-all death for all sin. Atonement is something that has to be repeated—Heb 10:1-14.]

**2:2—Many will follow**—Jesus said, "*The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it*" (Matt 7:13). This implies that when you stand against heresy, you will be one of just a few.

—**their sensuality**—what is pleasing to the senses, lacking moral restraints. Paul wrote, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth [understood with logic and reasoning] and will turn aside to myths [stories]*" (2 Tim 4:3-4).

—**and because of them**—because they are not living a truly godly lifestyle

—**the way of the truth will be maligned**—they cause an evil reputation to fall onto Christianity.

**2:3—and in their greed**—another symptom of a false teacher. They desire money, power, more followers. Their motives are not to give but to get. They are self-centered, self-serving, and self-indulgent.

—**they will exploit you**—to take advantage of, abuse, treat unfairly, rip off, commercialize

—**with false words**—lies, not the truth

—**their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep**—Just because they survive right now does not mean they will not be judged. Their judgment was determined long ago. God "*knows how to...keep the unrighteous...for the day of judgment* (v. 9). So don't think that God doesn't know what's going on. He knows, He has determined

their judgment, and He will carry out that judgment one day. Peter now gives three examples of God doing that very thing.

**AN APPLICATION**—For example, today the heresy of the NAR is present in almost every Bible-believing church with their Hillsong and Bethel songs. Not only is the teaching of the NAR heresy compared to the Bible, but by using those songs, copyright money is sent from the Bible church to support the NAR!! Every book (except Philemon) in the New Testament warns against false teaching.

## **2. Examples of historic judgment (2:4-6)**

**2:4**—(1) *For if*—these are “if” in verses 4, 6, 7 and “then” in verse 9

—***God did not spare angels when they sinned***—angels who sinned are called demons. Some demons roam on the earth.

—***but*** [the worst demons] ***cast them into hell*** [Gk word *tartaroo*] ***and committed them to pits of darkness***—It is also called the “abyss” or “bottomless pit.” The demons were “*implored Jesus not to command them to go away into the abyss*” (Luke 8:31), and Jesus allowed them to go into the swine instead. Demons from the abyss are let loose to plague the earth for 5 months during the tribulation (Rev 9:1-11). It is where Satan and his demons will be imprisoned for the thousand years of the Millennial Kingdom. Then they will be released for one final battle before being sent to the lake of fire (Rev. 20:1-3).

—***reserved for judgment***—Jesus said, “*...the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matt 25:41).

**2:5**—(2) ***and did not spare the ancient world***—about 3,000 B.C.

—***but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others***—illustration of verse 9. Now Peter introduces the concept that the righteous are preserved and the unrighteous are destroyed. Evidently, Noah, in building the ark for 120 years (Gen 6:3), had opportunities to speak for God and righteousness. *God did not leave Himself without witness...* (Acts 14:17).

—***when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly***—Genesis 6–8. It doesn’t matter how many of them there are. God wiped out the whole entire race of humans, except for 8 people. For the “*wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*” (Gen 6:5).

**2:6**—(3) ***and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter***—Peter does not mention the cause of the judgment but the fact of the judgment.

## **3. Explanation of divine deliverance (2:7-9)**

**2:7**—***and if He rescued righteous Lot***—we are surprised by this new information not mentioned in the Old Testament (Gen 13:1-13; 19:8; 19:30-38). Three times here Peter calls Lot “righteous.”

—***oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men***—he was distressed, even offering his virgin daughters rather than allowing the homosexuals to have access to the angels (Gen 19:8).

**2:8**—***(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),***

**AN APPLICATION**—Lot chose to leave his righteous family (of Abraham) and live among the unrighteous. If we choose to do that, understand that your **righteous soul will be tormented day after day by their lawless deeds.**

**2:9—then the Lord knows how to (1) rescue the godly from temptation**—How does He rescue us from stumbling over false teaching? By being diligent to lead a moral life, to grow in your knowledge of the Scriptures, to persevere in godliness, to show brotherly kindness and agape love. This is sanctification by the Holy Spirit. The healthier and stronger you are spiritually, the less likelihood of stumbling from the false teaching.

—(2) **and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment**—For example, about the time of the tribulation—*For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth (i.e., they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved—v. 10), but took pleasure in wickedness” (2 Thess 2:10-12).* Those who take the mark of the beast during the tribulation will go to Hades when they die, awaiting the Great White Throne judgment, from which they will be sent to the Lake of Fire (Rev 20). All dead unbelievers from all time are in Hades, awaiting that judgment, and the Lake of Fire (see also Luke 16:19f).

## **B. Description of false teachers (2:10-16)**

### **1. They are rebellious (2:10-11)**

**2:10—and especially those who indulge the flesh** [sin nature]—to satisfy, feed, accommodate, yield to, cater to the sin nature and the lusts of the flesh

—**in its corrupt desires**—the desires of the sin nature are evil, amoral, polluted, wicked

—**and despise authority**—in this context, it is the authority of the Scriptures, which speak of Jesus Christ, written by the prophets and the apostles.

—**Daring**—taking risks, fearless

—**self-willed**—obstinately doing what one wants in spite of the wishes or orders of others (in this case, the authority of the Word of God)

—**they do not tremble** [to shake as a result of anxiety] **when they revile** [Gk. *blasphemeo*

—to speak lightly of, slander, or mock] **angelic majesties**—demons

**2:11—whereas angels who are greater in might and power**—God’s angels are in the spiritual world, with greater power than humans (see Daniel 10:12-13; Jude 9-10)

—**do not bring a reviling** [Gk. *blasphemeo*] **judgment against them before the Lord**—the judgment of the fallen angels is in the hands of God, not angels or humans

### **2. They are animalistic (2:12)**

**2:12—But these**—false teachers

—**like unreasoning animals**—reason is something humans do. Animals cannot reason. Reasoning is the power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgments by the process of logic. (Some animals might learn to obey your reasoning, but they did not reason to make those decisions in the first place.)

—**born as creatures of instinct**—a fixed pattern of behavior in animals in response to certain stimuli—animals = instinct. Humans = reasoning. The instinct of the false teachers is from their sin nature rather than from rational choice.

—**animals...to be captured and killed**—that is the destiny of animals. It is what they were born for.



—**reviling** [Gk. *blasphemeo*] **where they have no knowledge**—the act of reasoning is to take knowledge, think on it, understand it, and form judgments. But these false teachers don't have the knowledge, therefore, can't reason, but they still make the judgment of reviling angelic majesties.

—**will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed**—just as animals are destined when they are born to be killed, so these false teachers when they are born are destined to be destroyed. Jude 4 says, they are *those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation*. Jude 12 says, *for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever*.

### **3. They are deceitful (2:13)**

**2:13—suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong**—God will give them what they have given others—it's what they deserve (wages). They have destroyed others. God will destroy them.

—**They count it a pleasure to revel** [carouse, party, orgies] **in the daytime**—as a general rule, sinners tend to engage in carousing at night [*...those who get drunk get drunk at night*] (1 Thess 5:7). Because of its public nature, reveling in the daytime is considered inappropriate. But the false teachers were so consumed with lust, etc. they couldn't even wait until night. And they didn't care who saw them. It was their pleasure.

—**They are stains and blemishes**—like a black mark on a white shirt, like a big zit on picture day, malignant sores

—**reveling** [to feel self-satisfied, to bask in, to wallow in, to gloat over] **in their deceptions**—openly enjoying the fruit of their sin

—**as they carouse** [Gk. lit. "feast"] **with you**—perhaps Peter has in mind the love feasts or Communion meals of the believers. Jude 12 says, *"these men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear."*

**AN APPLICATION**—The larger the assembly of believers, the less we know the person sitting next to us, participating in Communion. Inside, they could be gloating over their deception—people thinking they are believers, when they are definitely not. Reminding us of Rob Bell, who was an associate minister and then the head minister of assemblies in GR, but later renounced it all—saying it was just an act.

### **4. They are chronic sinners (2:14)**

**2:14—having eyes full of adultery**—lit. *having eyes full of an adulteress*—they are thinking only of adultery when they see women

—**that never cease from sin**—24/7

—**enticing** [to lure, to bait, persuade, seduce] **unstable** [prone to chance, 'on-again, off-again'] **souls**—Peter refers to these unstable people again in 2 Peter 3:16. There Peter says that these unstable people *distort* [Paul's writings], *as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction*. So these people are persuaded by the false teachers. But they may also be persuaded by true teaching. Jude describes them as *carried along by winds...wild waves of the sea* (Jude 13). The false teachers look for these unstable people because they can be persuaded. But believers who are pursuing godliness are stable and, as Peter described in chapter 1, will not stumble over the false teachers (v. 10).

—**having a heart trained** [Gk. *gegymnasmenen*, "exercised," from which we get the English word "gymnasium"] **in greed**—these men "work out" in greed, practicing their greedy skills

—**accursed children**—referring to their destruction, ordained by God long ago (v. 12 and Jude 4). They are “children of a curse.”

### **5. They are mercenary (2:15-16)**

**2:15-16**—**forsaking** [leave, abandon, turn one’s back on] **the right way**—Paul said, “*that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them...even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God...they exchanged the truth of God for a lie*” (Romans 1:18-32). False teachers (as well as all unbelievers) are seen as turning their backs on God. God has made Himself known to everyone. Their religions, cults, etc. are abandoning what they know is true, the right way, belief in God.

—**they have gone astray**—turned away from the correct direction and into error

—**having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.**

This story is found in Numbers 22–24. The Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan, across from Jericho, in the land of Moab. Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid of them, so he sent for the false prophet Balaam to come and curse the Israelites. The Moabites offered him much money. But God appeared to him and told him not to do it because the Israelites were blessed people. But Balaam went to Moab anyway. Then *he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.* So Balaam went to Moab and blessed the Israelites instead of cursing them. However, after that, Balaam counseled the Moabites to send women to Israel, who played the harlot with them, and the Israelites joined the Moabites in worshipping Baal. As a result, God sent a plague on Israel and many people died (see Numbers 25:1-3; 31:16). Balaam is referred to in Jude 11 and Revelation 2:14 as a false prophet who, for money, got the Israelites to commit immorality and worship idols. Peter says these false teachers are doing the same thing.

### **C. Destruction by false teachers (2:17-22)**

#### **1. The targets of destruction (2:17-18)**

**2:17**—**These are springs without water**—in Israel, these are known as wadis. They are dry creek beds. It’s where you would go to get water, but there is no water there. Just dust.

—**and mists driven by a storm**—this is what Jude 12 calls *clouds [mists] without water*—i.e., you expect to get rain when you see storm clouds, but there is none. It is the very nature of hypocrisy that one does not have what he or she pretends or appears to have.

—**for whom the black darkness has been reserved**—again, referring to their eternal destruction (v. 12 and Jude 4, 13).

**2:18**—**For speaking out arrogant** [of excessive weight or size] **words of vanity** [emptiness]—It seems like an oxymoron—how can empty words be heavy? But that is the point. They use high-sounding words, which seem impressive, but they are actually worthless, spiritually empty words.

—**they entice** [attract, or tempt by offering pleasure or advantage] **by fleshly desires**—they appeal to the sin nature

—**by sensuality**—what is pleasing to the senses (what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you taste)—this is a good description of the Bethel songs. They knew what would appeal to Bible-believing churches.

—**those who barely escape from the ones who live in error** [unbelievers]—who are those **who barely escape**?

(1) Some interpret these as new Christians, those young in the faith, who have just recently escaped from pagans who live in falsehood. They are weak and vulnerable to the lure of false teaching.

(2) These are not believers but those who have heard the Gospel and are considering it (see v. 20). The wording “barely escape” is to only escape a little bit from the error. Nowhere is salvation described as **barely** escaping. Salvation is to totally escape error. The blood of Jesus on the cross does not “barely” cover your sins. It completely covers your sins.

## **2. The techniques of destruction (2:19)**

**2:19—promising them** [those who barely escape] **freedom while they themselves** [false teachers] **are slaves of corruption**—these false teachers are like a 300-pound person selling diet books. Another says you can be free from “lust” by calling it “love,” and “love wins!”

—**for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved**—slavery is not merely ownership by another person, slavery is the mastery of one’s will by any person, idea, or substance (see Rom 6:16; 1 Cor 6:12b).

## **3. The termination of destruction (2:20-22)**

**2:20—For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**—They haven’t received Jesus as their Savior. Peter does not call them “brethren” (1:10). He does not say they are “those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours” (1:1). It seems like these are people who for a time have escaped the defilements of the world as they hear the Gospel, as they acquire knowledge of Jesus as Savior. At that moment, they make a choice. To either receive Jesus into their hearts or to turn back to the defilements of the world. In the parable of the soils, Jesus said these are like “Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13).

—**they are again entangled in them and are overcome**—They understand they should accept Christ but reject Him.

—**the last state has become worse for them than the first**—it is better to be judged in ignorance than in willful rebellion.

**2:21—For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them**—Jesus said, “And that slave who knew his master’s will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more” (Luke 12:47-48). More revelation results in more accountability.

**2:22—It has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,” and, “A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire”**—from Proverbs 26:11. Unbelievers are referred to as both dogs and pigs in the Bible. You try to help an unbeliever understand about Jesus, but they often reject what you tell them and go back to wallowing in the mire of their sinful lifestyle. It’s the false teachers who lure them back into that sinful lifestyle by appealing to their senses, promising them freedom, etc. But their judgment will be more severe. As the writer of Hebrews says, “How much

severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God?" (10:29).

## **V. The Christian's Hope: the Lord's Return (3:1-16)**

### **A. Believers—remember the Lord's Return (3:1-2)**

**3:1—*This is now, beloved***—Peter uses this word 4 times in this chapter. Gk. *agapetoi* "loved ones."

—***the second letter I am writing to you***—assume the first letter is 1 Peter.

—***in which I am stirring up***—same words as 1:13, "*to stir you up*"

—***your sincere mind***—free from pretense or deceit

—***by way of reminder***—in 1:12 as he already said, "*I will always be ready to remind you of these things.*" Peter doesn't have a lot of new revelation to give. Rather, he seeks to remind his readers of what has already been revealed and written down in the Scriptures. Peter views the Scriptures as sufficient, reliable, accurate, authoritative, and true. In contrast to the false teachers, who are often interested in having something "new" (Acts 17:19-21).

**3:2—*that you should remember***—see Matthew 5:18

—***the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets***—primarily from the Old Testament

—***and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles***—from the New Testament. These are linked together with the same authority of Scripture. The church, "*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone*" (Eph 2:20).

### **B. Scoffers laugh at the Lord's Return (3:3-7)**

**3:3—*Know this first of all***—foremost in important

—***that in the last days***—usually used, in both the OT and NT, to describe any and all events associated with the Second Coming of Jesus. We are living in the last age before His coming again. It is an imminent event.

—***mockers will come with their mocking***—it's a sure thing. The same as scoffing. They willfully oppose truth and wisdom. They deny the Second Coming, yet their very existence is a fulfillment of Scripture, confirming we are living in the last days! Jesus said they would come (Matt 24:3-5, 11, 23-26) and Paul said they would come (1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Tim 3:1-9).

—***following after their own lusts***—or evil desires (used in 1:4; 2:10, 18; Jude 16, 18). They are led by their lusts, not by truth or logic or reason.

**3:4—*and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?"***—The promise of His coming is repeated many times in the New Testament (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:23; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:1; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7).

—***For ever since the fathers fell asleep (died), all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation***—This argument is based on uniformitarianism. "This is the view that the cosmic processes of the present and the future can be understood solely on the basis of how the cosmos has operated in the past. ...rules out divine intervention in the universal order. In a universe governed by natural laws, miracles...simply cannot happen. Therefore, they say Jesus Christ could not come again" ("The Bible Knowledge Commentary," p. 875).

—In their "logic," no punishment has been given to them, so they become arrogant and blasphemous. They publicly sin and mockingly declare that either God does not exist or He does not care. They even use the right theological words, such as "fathers," "fell asleep,"

“creation.” Notice, however, they make no mention at all of the first coming of Jesus—His sinless life, His mighty miracles, His teaching, His death and resurrection. Whereas Peter has already mentioned that it was during this first coming of Jesus that the apostles witnessed the transfiguration and beheld the glory of Jesus’ Second Coming. It was at this time that the Father testified to the identity of the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah (2 Peter 1:16-19).

**3:5**—[Notice they mentioned “creation,” so Peter talks about this.] **For when they maintain** [Gk. “wish, desire, or will”] **this**—

—**it escapes their notice**—they are not giving attention to the following facts. The NKJ translates this as “willingly are ignorant of,” others translate it “deliberately forget.” It’s an interesting contrast to Peter’s reminders to the believers to “remember” (1:12-13, 15; 3:1-2, 8).

—**that by the word of God**—It was a command of God. “...*the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible*” (Heb 11:3).

—**the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water**—On the second day of Creation, God “*separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse...God called the expanse heaven*” (Genesis 1:6-8). Then on the third day, God gathered the waters into one place, and let the dry land appear (vv. 9-10). Creation itself was a supernatural miracle.

**3:6**—**through which** [i.e., His word] **the world** [the inhabitants] **at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.** God the Creator is also God the Judge. The same expressions of “God said” and “God saw” are used in Genesis 1 of creation and Genesis 6 of judgment. The word of God which created all life was also the word by which all life was destroyed. Creation and the Flood both involved “water.” The Flood was another miraculous event. All has not continued the same, as the mockers claimed.

**3:7**—**But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire**—The mockers point to the constancy of life on this planet as evidence of God’s lack of involvement and proof that His Word is not true. Peter points to this same continuity as proof of the sustaining power of God’s Word. He not only created this world, but He also sustains [*reserves*] it (Colossians 1:16-17). The mockers were interpreting Scripture (God’s Word) in light of history. As believers, we are to interpret history in light of God’s Word!! God’s Word trumps everything else!!

—**kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men**—God is the Creator and the Judge. These mockers have rejected God and His Word. There only remains their judgment and destruction.

### **C. God guarantees the Lord’s Return (3:8-9)**

**3:8**—**But do not let this one fact escape your notice**—Peter uses the same phrase here. The mockers did let something “*escape their notice.*” Here Peter tells believers “*do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved*”—again we see Peter’s appeal to believers to **remember**. Notice that Peter used the pronoun “they” and “their” in verses 3-7, referring to unbelieving mockers. But now Peter switches to “you” and “your,” referring to the *beloved*, i.e. believers.

—**beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.** Why has God delayed His coming? What the mockers saw as a deficiency in

God's character, His inability to keep His Word, Peter says is a display of His character of infinite wisdom, power, and grace. Peter wants us to look at the "delay" from God's perspective rather than from our limited human perspective.

—The first reason the Lord's coming may seem long in coming is that God counts time differently than man does. Don't forget the Scripture—Peter quotes Moses' Psalm 90, in which Moses meditates on the meaning of time and eternity. Peter quotes verse 4, *With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day*—People see time against time, but God sees time against eternity. Time only seems long because of man's perspective.

—Also, notice this phrase is a simile *one day is like a thousand years*. Peter does not say that one day equals a thousand years. Some use this statement to argue against premillennialism. But John uses one-thousand years in Revelation 20:1-4 as a literal time. Here Peter is using it as a figure of speech, a simile with the word "like." The point is that God is not only eternal, He is omnipotent. He can do in a very short time that which would take us forever. For example, God was able to compress an eternity of judgment into those few hours that Jesus suffered on the cross of Calvary. Yet God is able to delay the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham for thousands of years.

**3:9—The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness**—"slow" is Gk. *bradynei*, meaning "hesitate, linger, or delay." It is only used here in the NT. To some ("as some count slowness"), it is only a delay with respect to their time schedules, not God's time schedule.

—**but is patient toward you**—in fact, God's schedule is modified by patience.

—**not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance**—God's delay in judging sinners is because He is waiting for all the elect to be saved (for example, see Rev. 6:11). God's **desire** is that all would be saved. His **desire** is that no one would perish. But His **plan** includes only the elect becoming saved. His **plan** is that some will perish. For example, a school teacher desires that every student in her class pass. However, she gives tests, which some students fail. Her plan is that some fail because they must learn the material to pass. So her desire is that they all pass, but her plan is that some fail.

#### **D. Peter describes the Lord's Return (3:10-13)**

**3:10—But the day of the Lord**—the whole coming again of Jesus, which begins with the Rapture, then the Trib, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming, then the Millennial Kingdom, then the Great White Throne Judgment.

—**will come like a thief**—it will be sudden, surprising, and catastrophic. Life will be going on as "normal."

—**in which the heavens** [the earth's atmosphere and the starry sky—not God's dwelling place] **will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat**—At the Flood, some things were destroyed, but then life went on. At Sodom, the city was destroyed, but then life went on. But this will be a destruction never before witnessed in the history of mankind. All of life will be destroyed, all of the elements, and even the heavens—nothing will be spared.

—**and the earth and its works will be burned up**—this will be the earth after the Millennial Kingdom. John wrote, "...the first things have passed away" (Rev 21:4).

**3:11—Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness**—notice Peter does not say to stockpile

food, etc. because that will all be destroyed. What cannot be destroyed is what we take into eternity with us—godliness and holiness.

**3:12—looking for**—to expect with anticipation (Matt 24:42-43; 25:13; 1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pet 4:7; Rev 3:2; 16:15). It is a day when the wicked will receive justice and the punishment due them. See Psalms 6:3; 13:1-6; 35:17; 74:4-11; 94:1-7; Prov 11:10; 21:15; 29:2; Rev 19:1-2.

—**and hastening**—By living righteously and suffering for doing so (2 Thess 1:4-9; 1 Pet 2:12); by witnessing to unbelievers, so every elect person gets saved, for which God is patiently waiting (2 Pet 3:9); and praying, *Thy kingdom come* (Matt 6:9-10).

—**the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!**—the day of judgment of fire, when the things of earth will be burned up (talk about major global warming!!!). That event also begins the day of God, i.e., eternity.

**3:13—But according to His promise**—The mockers mocked Christ, saying, “Where is the promise of His coming?” But Peter said, “...*He has granted to us His precious promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature*” (2 Pet 1:4).

—**we** [believers] are not looking forward to the earth’s destruction. Rather, **we are looking for new heavens and a new earth**—John wrote, “*And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’*” (Rev 21:5).

—**in which righteousness dwells**—because the Righteous One will be there (Jer 23:5-7; 33:16; Dan 9:24; Rev 21:1, 8, 27). Because that is our destiny, we should live lives of holiness now, consistent with our destiny.

### **E. Behavior is changed by the Lord’s Return (3:14-16)**

**3:14—Therefore**—because of the verses we have already covered

—**beloved**—this is the third of four occurrences of this word in this chapter (vv. 1, 8, 14, 15). These are “*those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ*” (1:1).

—**since you look for these things**—“*we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells*” (3:13). It directs our focus to eternity.

—**be diligent**—be eager to do, be ready to expend energy—Peter already used this word in 1:5 and 1:10. The Christian life does not just happen on its own. To be godly takes effort on your part. You need to spend time in the Bible, learn what God expects from you, and be diligent to obey.

—**to be found by Him**—Jesus is the One you want to impress. He’s the eternal Judge (2 Cor 5:10).

—**in peace**—it’s not peaceful circumstances or at peace with others—especially not at peace with false teachers. This is peace with God (Rom 5:1), which comes when sin is confessed (1 John 1:9) and His Word is obeyed.

—**spotless and blameless**—Eph 1:4; 5:27; Phil 2:15; Col 1:22

**3:15—and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation**—Don’t regard God’s patience as Him not keeping His promise (like the mockers do—3:3-4). Rather, regard God’s patience as an opportunity for more people to become saved (3:9). God’s patience will end. The day of judgment will come. Then it will be too late to become saved. “*inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment*” (Heb 9:27).

—**just as also our beloved brother Paul**—believers are a family, brothers and sisters in Christ. We have received the same faith Peter and Paul did (1:1). Certainly the apostles had a unique role in starting the church and in writing the Scriptures (Eph 2:20), but they are not “more” Christian than we are. They don’t have “more” of the Holy Spirit than we do. —**according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you**—Paul was given special revelation from God regarding the mystery of Christ and His church (Eph 2 and 3; 5:32). Peter is affirming that Paul is NOT one of the false teachers. He was inspired by God to write the Scriptures.

**3:16—as also in all his letters**—At this point in time, Paul is possibly already dead. Peter is familiar with Paul’s letters. He speaks here not of one letter but “*all his letters.*” They would be Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

—**speaking in them of these things**—Paul wrote about salvation, sanctification, the Rapture, the Second Coming, the Judgment to come.

—**in which are some things hard to understand**—God’s revelation is an eternal Scripture. As we grow as believers, and study the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit teaches us, so we understand more of what the Scripture says. But there are some things we will not understand in our lifetime because we don’t have enough information. For example, God told Daniel to seal up his book until the end of time when *knowledge will increase* (Daniel 12:4). Because of our knowledge of the history of the inter-testament times, we understand much of the detail that Daniel wrote as prophecy. But there are still some details we do not understand. But if you live in the Tribulation or the Millennial Kingdom and look back at history, you will understand more of what he was talking about.

—**which the untaught**—Under the Mosaic Law, they had priests who taught and judged according to the Law. We currently live in an age that has Bible teachers. Teachers are those who are willing and able to put time into studying the Scriptures and then communicating what they learn. This is available to every Christian. In fact, the writer of Hebrews says, “*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God...*” (Heb 5:12). After a certain period of time, it’s expected that you teach what you’ve learned about the Word of God to someone else. The Holy Spirit teaches you God’s Word, and uses you to teach someone else. What you learn is never meant to be hoarded! In the Millennial Kingdom, there will no longer be the need for teachers. “*They will not teach again, each man his neighbor...saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me...*” declares the LORD (Jer 31:33).

—**and unstable distort**—Peter has already mentioned the unstable in 2:14. They are the people the false teachers go after. They are easily deceived. They are most likely to change. They are not firmly established in the Word of God. Therefore, they distort, pervert, twist, misstate the Word of God (such as the mockers in 3:3). They change it to mean what they want it to mean, rather than what the author means. The Bible becomes “inspiring” rather than being “inspired.”

—**as they do also the rest of the Scriptures**—First, notice that Peter is equating Paul’s letters with the rest of Scriptures, i.e., Peter considers Paul’s letters to be Scripture, with the same message and authority as the rest of the Bible. Second, Peter says that not only do the unstable distort Paul’s letters (perhaps using the excuse that they are hard to understand), but they also distort the rest of the Bible.



—**to their own destruction**— Paul wrote, “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God ... handling accurately the word of truth*” (2 Tim 2:15). If you don’t accurately know the Word of God, how do you know if you are doing the right thing or the wrong thing? When you know God’s Word accurately, i.e., the author’s intended meaning, then you will be steadfast and grow (2 Pet 3:17-18). But if you don’t know God’s Word accurately, then you will be spiritually destroyed. You may look spiritual, and sound spiritual, but that doesn’t mean you are spiritual (see Matt 7:21-23).

## **VI. Conclusion (3:17-18)**

**3:17—*You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand***—knowing about the false teachers and how they prey on those who are not stable

—***be on your guard***—watch for, be on the alert, keep an eye out for, police, defend, keep safe—no one can do it for you. You are responsible for yourself!!

—***so that you are not carried away***—accept the false teaching, follow the false teacher, move away from the Word of God

—***by the error of unprincipled men***—they don’t care about you! They are operating by their own greed (2:3). Their goal is to exploit you. They promise you freedom, but they enslave you (2:19). They look good—Jesus said, they “*come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves*” (Matt 7:15).

—***and fall from your own steadfastness***—to go away from faithful, committed, single-minded uncompromising dedication to God’s Word. Is God’s Word sufficient? Or do you get a “word from God” in conversational prayer, which is so popular today. Do you read books about a health and wealth gospel, also popular today. One of my favorite passages is Jeremiah 10:1-11. There Jeremiah compares God to the idols. He says the idols “*...cannot speak, they must be carried, because they cannot walk! Do not fear them, for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good. ...they are altogether stupid and foolish. But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King.*” There are Christians today who put faith in yoga for peace, karate for protection, acupuncture needles for well-being, and horoscopes for direction. These are “*altogether stupid and foolish*” religions of the world. They can do you no good! God is the living God. Worship Him.

**3:18—*but grow***—there is no stagnation in Christianity. You either grow towards God or you drift away from Him. “*We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it*” (Heb 2:1). It’s your decision.

—***in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ***—Like the other virtues, growth alone is nothing. It needs an object. You can grow in the direction of the false teachers—that would be bad growth. Be sure the direction of your growth is toward the true knowledge of Jesus.

—***To Him be the glory, both now***—The false teachers tell you to get the glory. But Jesus said, “*How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?*” (John 5:44). The Word of God says glory belongs to God, the Creator and Sustainer and Judge of the universe.

—***and to the day of eternity. Amen***—“*God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil 2:9-11).