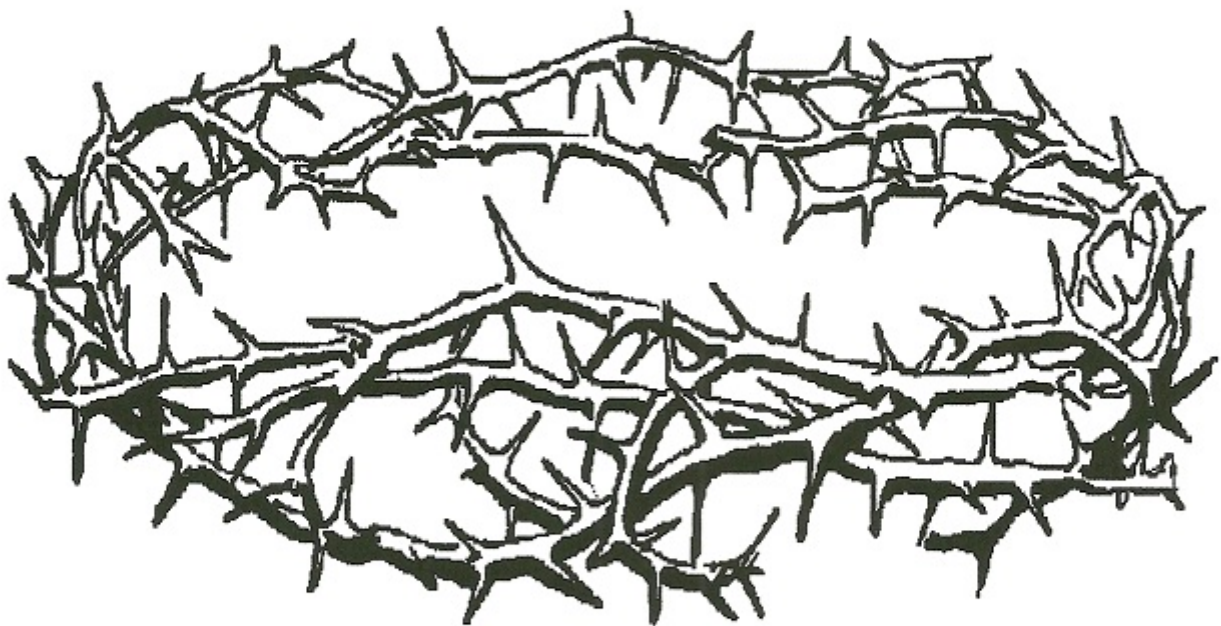


1 Peter

Chapters 1 - 3



The Forum Terrace Church of Christ

Adult Bible Class Sunday Moring

Winter Quarter 2022

A Workbook By Daniel R. Vess

Table of Contents

Lesson 1: Introduction/Beneficiaries of Salvation	5
<i>Sunday, January 2, 2022</i>	
Lesson 2: Salvation Through Trials & God’s Servants	12
<i>Sunday, January 9, 2022</i>	
Lesson 3: Called to Be Holy	17
<i>Sunday, January 16, 2022</i>	
Lesson 4: Purified by the Word	24
<i>Sunday, January 23, 2022</i>	
Lesson 5: Preciousness of the Precious Stone	31
<i>Sunday, January 30, 2022</i>	
Lesson 6: The Citizenship of Pilgrims	37
<i>Sunday, February 6, 2022</i>	
Lesson 7: Servants Suffering Submissively	44
<i>Sunday, February 13, 2022</i>	
Lesson 8: Submissive Suffering Savior	49
<i>Sunday, February 29, 2022</i>	
Lesson 9: Submissive Duties of Christian Wives	52
<i>Sunday, February 27, 2022</i>	
Lesson 10: Submissive Duties of Christian Husbands	56
<i>Sunday, March 6, 2022</i>	
Lesson 11: Duties of Christians to All With Reward	60
<i>Sunday, March 13, 2022</i>	
Lesson 12: Victorious Suffering in Christ	64
<i>Sunday, March 20, 2022</i>	
Lesson 13: Salvation: “Baptism Now Saves Us”	70
<i>Sunday, March 27, 2022</i>	

Introduction/Beneficiaries of Salvation

1 Peter 1:1 - *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,”*

Author - Peter

- **Peter, the Man**

The author calls himself by the name given to him by the Lord instead of calling himself Simon. It should be noted that in his second epistle he refers to himself as “Simon Peter.” Jesus gave him the name “Peter” after his great confession in Matthew 16:16: *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* The name Peter means “rock” as in solid rock. However, many times Peter appeared to be more like shifting sand. Later in verse 23 of Matthew 16 he protested against one of Jesus’ predictions. Some of the most pointed reprimands in the New Testament are leveled at Peter. During his abortive undertaking to walk to Jesus on the water, the Savior asked him: *“You of little faith, why did you doubt?”*

- **Peter, the Apostle**

According to Thayer an apostle is “a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders”(68). Therefore to spurn an apostle would be to spurn the one who sent him. Conversely, to accept an apostle is to receive Christ and God (Jn. 13:20; cf. Mt. 10:40; Mk. 9:37; Lk. 10:16).

Notice that Peter does not claim any distinction other than being just one of the twelve apostles. Although in all four lists of the apostles (Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-19; Lk. 6:14-16; Ac. 1:13) Peter’s name appears first, yet he was of equal rank with them.

- **Internal Evidence**

The internal evidence of Peter’s authorship to this epistle is overwhelming. Not only for the first chapter and the first verse, but in 5:1 he claims to be a witness of Christ’s sufferings. Furthermore in 2 Peter 3:1 Peter refers to a former epistle.

- **External Evidence**

Unlike 2 Peter, there is no authentic challenge by the early Christian writers to Peter being the author of this letter. Irenaeus who lived in the second century A.D. quotes from him two times in *Against Heresies* (IV:9; IV:16,5; V:7,2). Many other writers of the second and third centuries quoted from 1 Peter as scripture penned from this beloved apostle: Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, Eusebius, Clement of Rome, and Polycarp.

- **Objections to Peter’s Authorship**

Until the nineteenth century the authorship of 1 Peter was unquestioned and universally accepted. The attack comes from the Greek used in 1 Peter. Some scholars believe that it is too good for a Galilean fisherman who was called *“uneducated”* (Acts 4:13). Let the population of first century Palestine was probably bi-lingual.

Date - 62-68 A.D.

An exact date for this letter cannot be attained. There is some who argue for a later date pointing a period of persecution. Yet there are no mentions of emperor worship or murder. The main argument for a late date for 1 Peter is drawn from its references to persecution. Others call for an earlier date. This is determined on the basis of John Mark being with Peter in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13) compared to Mark being with Paul in Rome (Col. 4:10). However, none of this is substantive enough to draw an accurate conclusion. For the purpose of our studies Peter’s epistles were probably written between 62 to 68 AD.

Place of Writing - Babylon

From 1 Peter 5:13 one concludes that the epistle was written in Babylon. Yet, what is meant by Babylon. Four possibilities have been given.

First, some believe that Peter meant Babylon in Egypt. However, this town was small, insignificant with a meager Jewish population.

One of the most popular explanations is that “Babylon” really stands for Rome. After all, Rome is called “Babylon” in Revelation 17:5 and 18:10. Revelation is a book filled with symbols. Using Babylon to mean Rome is by no means out of place. However, Peter does not use figurative language or symbols. Unless the context of 1 Peter demands an allegorical meaning it must be assumed that the writer meant what he wrote: Babylon. Furthermore, the choice of Rome as the place of writing is promoted by those who have the belief in the rumors that Peter was in Rome serving as the first pope. Consider the fact that Paul wrote five epistles from Rome (Ephesians, 2 Timothy, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) in none of them does he mention the presence of Peter.

Perhaps the most logical explanation for the place of writing is: Babylon on the Euphrates. Josephus stated that there was a large Jewish population there in the first century (Ant. 15:2,2).

Still another possibility exists. Peter uses several metaphors in his letter. “Babylon” may be a metaphor for the wicked world in which the Christian pilgrim must suffer as he journeys toward his heavenly home. As the faithful remnant waited to return from Babylonian captivity.

Recipients of the Letter - Christians of Asia Minor

Where Peter wrote this letter may be a mystery. To whom he wrote it is not. *“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia”* (1 Peter 1:1). These are five Roman provinces in Asia Minor in what is now modern Turkey. Peter may have visited these churches at some point. 1 Cor. 9:5 implies that he may have traveled with his wife.

Peter refers to these Christians as *“pilgrims of the Dispersion”* or “scattered strangers.” The word translated “scattered” diaspora was a technical term for the Jews who lived outside of Palestine. Peter may be using the term to refer to God’s citizens on earth who are dispersed among the wicked in this world.

It is more likely that the bulk of Peter’s audience were made up of gentiles instead of Jews. Some statements in his letter suggest that some of his readers were converted out of gentile paganism (1:14; 18; 2:9-10; 4:1-4). Peter did not restrict his ministry to the Jews, after all he converted the first Gentiles (Acts 10,11).

The Theme

If Job is the book in the Old Testament on suffering than 1 Peter is the book about suffering in the New. At least fifteen times in this letter, Peter referred to suffering using eight different Greek words. Perhaps Peter wrote this to prepare the saints for Nero’s persecution in Rome in the year 64 AD. Although we do not suffer from persecution from the government all faithful Christians suffer to some extent today. It has been well said, “Preach to the suffering and you will never lack a congregation. There is a broken heart in every pew.”

Another aspect to the theme of 1 Peter is the use of the word *“hope.”* Paul is said to focus on faith while John is the apostle of love. Here, Peter is the purveyor of hope. Many were suffering persecution, trials, etc. Peter’s message was that it was not hopeless. Peter’s goal was not merely to write about hope, but to demonstrate that it is to yield favorable fruit in the lives of Christians. An important part of this hope is that Christ is coming again. Peter makes several references to this anticipated event (1:5; 7; 13; 2:12; 4:7; 4:13; 5:1,4).

The Greek word for *“grace”* is used in every chapter of (1 Peter: 1:2,10,13; 2:19; 2:20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5,10,12). When faced with unmerciful suffering and fiery trials Peter needed them to remember that God is and always will be the God of grace. Like Paul who suffered with the thorn in the flesh these suffering saints can know that God’s grace is sufficient for them.

The suffering of a faithful Christian will one day be transformed into glory (1:6,7; 4:11,13,14; 5:10). Those who are suffering as Christians have hope through the grace of God to be glorified in the Second Coming of Christ.

Beneficiaries of Salvation

1 Peter 1:1b,2 - *To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and*

Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

To whom is Peter writing this epistle? The detailed description he gives of his readers informs us that he writes to those who have reaped the benefits of salvation. Just who are the beneficiaries of salvation?

■ **Those who are Pilgrims of the Dispersion**

The ones who are beneficiaries of salvation are the *"pilgrims of the dispersion."* A pilgrim is one "who stays in a place as a stranger or visitor; to describe Christians whose final citizenship is in heaven and who are regarded as temporary dwellers on earth" (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia Of The Bible). The term "dispersion" comes from the Greek work "diaspora." It means that which is scattered like a farmer would disperse or scatter seed. In John 7:35 it refers to the Jews who were dispersed among the Greeks as a consequence of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Peter does not refer to the Jewish Diaspora, but to Christians who as sojourners live in a world not their own. They have no territory or cities of their own, instead they are dispersed and spread out among those of this world.

The Epistle to Diognetus from the early Christian era explains how the saved were considered scattered sojourners.

"Christians are not marked out from the rest of mankind by their country or their speech or their customs...they dwell in cities both Greek and barbarian, each as his lot is cast, following the customs of the region in clothing and in food and in the outward things of life generally; yet they manifest the wonderful and openly paradoxical character of their own state. They inhabit the lands of their birth, but as temporary residents thereof; they take their share of all responsibilities as citizens, and endure all disabilities as aliens. Every foreign land is their native land, and every native land a foreign land...They pass their days upon the earth, but their citizenship is in heaven."

A pilgrim is not a naturalized citizen. Instead of becoming like the world, he remains separated from them and remains distinct in speech, dress and conduct. A pilgrim does not love the world or the things in the world (1 John. 2:15-17). As Lot was not conformed to the life-style of his fellow Sodomites, he does not live after the fashion of this world, but rather is transformed into the image of Christ (Rom. 12:1,2). The pilgrim's home is not this world. Like the song we sing: "This World Is Not My Home", instead "Here we are but staying pilgrims".

The pilgrim's home is heaven. His citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). Life is the journey that ends at his true destination. Each day he live takes his closer home in heaven. With this mind-set a Christian's entire perspective on life changes. He sees his money, time, home, job and even death in a different light. Death is not the end of the pilgrim's life, instead it is the end of his journey on earth.

■ **Those Elect of God**

The next three definitions of the beneficiaries of salvation have to do with those saved by all three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Only those who are elect of God can be saved. The term *"elect"* simply means "chosen" and is so translated in (2:9,10). "Elect," in the Greek order, comes before "strangers." They are the elect, in relation to heaven, strangers in relation to the earth. Israel alone bore this title (Dt. 7:6; 14:2. Is. 45:4; Ps. 105:6,43). Now it belongs to those who have responded to the Gospel call.

This election is through the foreknowledge of God. Before the world began God pre-arranged salvation for those who are in Christ (2 Th. 2:13,14). Note, that foreknowledge is not the same as predestination. Many denominations teach otherwise. W. A. Criswell wrote, *"He wrote our names in the Book of life before the foundation of the earth"*. This belief is not the result of the Bible's teaching on election, but Calvinism. It limits God's election to just those who have been predestined by God to be saved. This is a cruel and ungodly doctrine.

According to the Scripture those who are chosen are called by the Gospel. Those who believe and obey the Gospel are saved. Yet, it is said that God is the one doing the choosing or electing. How can

this be? God only elects to salvation those who obey the Gospel. Consider an election where God votes for you to be saved through the Gospel Plan of Salvation. The Devil votes against your salvation. You have the choice to brake the tie and be saved by choosing to obey the Gospel. God has cast His vote for your salvation from the beginning. As an individual a Christian must be *"diligent to make your calling and election sure"* (2 Peter 1:10) by casting his vote in obedience to the terms of salvation.

■ **Those Sanctified by the Spirit**

Beneficiaries of salvation include those who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is the process of *"setting apart"* to God the soul of man. God's part in salvation was to elect us. The Holy Spirit's role involves sanctification (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13). The instrumentality of sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit. How? Paul wrote, *"salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."* (2 Thess. 2:13). Note that a working, active faith in the truth is involved in the process. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). The Word of God is revealed by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when one reads, believes the truth, obeys the Gospel he is set apart from the filth of sin and is saved.

■ **Those Obedient Sprinkled with the Blood of Christ**

God has chosen before world began that man be saved in Christ. *"By means of the instruction of the gospel given by the Holy Spirit, one is led to or toward obedience which brings to the individual the purification of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ"* (Hamilton 7). Thus, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work in harmony to bring salvation to man. Man's response to their efforts results in either eternal life or everlasting destruction.

The sprinkling of the blood of bulls, sheep or goats was common in the Old Testament. It was used as a symbol of cleansing from sin and leprosy (Lev. 14:1-7). Setting apart priests to God (Ex. 29:20-21). The sprinkling of the blood was used in the consecration of the Law. Yet, the blood of bull and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4).

John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to his disciples and said, *"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* Only the perfect Son of God could be the Passover lamb for the world. His blood alone has the redemptive power (1:18,19). Christ's role in the Plan of Salvation was to be a sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 10:22). Only the blood of Christ can cleanse us (1 John 1:7).

■ **Those Who Have Grace and Peace**

The greetings of grace and peace in the New Testament (Rom. 1:7. 2 Pet. 1:2; Jude 2) can be devaluated. They do not serve as merely formal greetings, but are salutations that have special meaning to those who have been saved.

Grace is the unmerited favor God as bestowed upon man. This is done by His election, the Holy Spirit's sanctification and the blood of Christ. Peace refers to "the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatever sort that is" (Thayer 182). This peace is the fruit of grace. Because of the Grace of God we have been saved. Because we have been saved we have peace.

Are you a beneficiary of salvation? It is not possible if you are not a pilgrim of the Dispersion having begun your spiritual sojourn to Heaven by obeying the Gospel. Without properly responding to God's election, the Holy Spirit's sanctification and Christ's blood you cannot be blessed with salvation. Without salvation you cannot experience the grace of God and the resulting peace.

Salvation is Through...

1 Peter 1:3-5 - *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

After informing us the he is writing to the beneficiaries of salvation, Peter details for us that their salvation has come through...

- **God's Abundant Mercy**

A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son. (Luis Palau, "Experiencing God's Forgiveness", Multnomah Press, 1984).

Because of sin all are guilty of a capital offence against God. Nothing but the mercy of God could save us. God sent his Son to serve out the death sentence sinners deserved. Mercy was bestowed while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:6,8). The Greek word translated "mercy" means "kindness or goodwill towards the miserable and afflicted; joined with the desire to relieve them..." (Thayer 203). God's mercy was meet for our misery.

- **The New Birth**

Sophocles wrote: "Not to be born at all - that is by far the best fortune; the second best is as soon as one is born with all speed to return thither whence one has come." Yet, the sinner's life is not hopeless through Christ. In Him we can start all over again. The word "begotten" is defined as "thoroughly to change the mind of one, so that he lives a new life and one conformed to the will of God" (Thayer 86). This new life begins when one is born again (John. 3:3-5). Note, Jesus told Nicodemus that he "must" be born again in order to enter into the kingdom. Being regenerated we are a new creation in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10; Gal. 6:15).

- **A Living Hope**

The concept of hope was not popular among the pagans. A Greek tombstone in the catacombs had the epitaph, "No Hope." To many of the Greek philosophers "hope" was the absence of desire. Today, hope is considered nothing more than wishful thinking. H.L. Mencken defined hope as, "a pathological belief in the occurrence of the impossible."

True hope is desire plus expectation. The thing desired is also expected. The nature of this hope is that it is living. It is living because we have a living Lord. Christians "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. 1:2). It is a living hope grounded on the living Word of God (1:23).

The mighty Niagara River plummets some 180 feet at the American and Horseshoe Falls. Before the falls, there are violent, turbulent rapids. Farther upstream, however, where the river's current flows more gently, boats are able to navigate. Just before the Welland River empties into the Niagara, a pedestrian walkway spans the river. Posted on this bridge's pylons is a warning sign for all boaters: DO YOU HAVE AN ANCHOR? followed by: DO YOU KNOW HOW TO USE IT?

Christians have an anchor. Our hope serves as a sure anchor for our souls (Heb. 6:18). In contrast, the unsaved sinner is "without hope" (Eph. 2:12).

- **The Resurrection of Christ**

The Christian's hope for the future is rooted in a past event - the resurrection. Because Jesus Christ lives we have a living hope. All that we hope for and all that is involved in our salvation is predicated on the resurrection of Christ. If Christ is not risen, then the apostles were liars, and our faith is vain, we are still in our sins, those who have died in Christ are lost, and we are pitiful creatures (1 Cor. 15:14-19). Because He arose those in Christ all the saints can have hope in their own resurrection in the last day (John. 5:28,29).

- **A Certain Inheritance**

An inheritance is the result of a relationship. It is granted on the basis of sonship. Being joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17) we have hope in a resurrection to eternal life. This inheritance is sure and incontrovertible. We will receive it. Nothing can happen to it.

Why is this inheritance so sure? Because of its attributes. These are by three negatives and one positive. First, it is incorruptible. Unlike the material possessions we inherit from men, our inheritance from God is not liable to the corruption or deterioration. Even this world will one day be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10-13), but not our heritage. Next, this inheritance is undefiled, free from deformity or impurities. Many heirs have lost their inheritance due to the unjust methods of frauds. Even Israel lost its inheritance due

to the sins of the people. Third, it is not an inheritance which will fade away. The Greek word is from the name of a mythical flower called “amaranth” which was said to bloom forever and never lose its beauty. Eternal life holds its beauty over the years. As a matter of fact as the years go by eternal life seems brighter and nearer and dearer. Finally, it is an inheritance which is reserved in heaven. Unlike some denominations which hold that our inheritance is life upon this earth God has it reserved for us in heaven. The word for “reserved” means “to guard, keep, preserve” (Vine). No one can possibly break into the heavenly Fort Knox and rob us of our inheritance (Matt. 6:19,20). Satan cannot even get to it. As long as your name is written in the book of life God has reserved an inheritance for you in heaven. Your salvation is completely preserved, pure, permanent, and protected. It is death proof, sin proof, time proof and eternal.

- **God’s Power**

Now that we are a Christians we are kept by the power of God. “Kept” is a military word meaning “guarded or shielded or garrisoned.” God has a band of soldiers continuously guarding us with His almighty power. Wuest explained it this way, “While our inheritance is being kept guarded in heaven under the watchful eye of God, we are being garrisoned about by God’s protecting care for it.” Knowing we are under the watchful eye and care of God, Christians feel completely secure.

- **Our Faith**

Being “kept” involves two things , the power of God and our faith! Faith is essential to salvation. If you have no faith, you cannot brag about being guarded by the power of God. Peter walked upon the water by the power of God, but when he began to doubt, he began to sink. Jesus asked him, “You of little faith. Why did you doubt?” Our salvation and inheritance is secure. Only our unfaithfulness will result in its loss.

- **Christ’s Return**

Salvation in its completed form does not become the believer’s till “the last time.” All that remains to receive our inheritance of eternal salvation is the apocalypse or revelation of Christ at the Last Day. “On Jordan’s stormy Banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye to Canaan’s fair and happy land, where my possessions lie.”

A London bookmaker, has lowered the odds against a visit from outer space to 33 to 1 - they had been 100 to 1. The firm said it now stands to lose nearly \$500,000 if somebody does drop in. One day Christ will return to the earth. The odds are that the saints will win an eternal inheritance. All others will lose everything.

Peter reminds the first century pilgrims that their salvation is through God’s abundant mercy, the new birth, a living hope, the resurrection of Christ, a certain inheritance, God’s power, our faith, and Christ’s Return.

Questions:

1. What evidence is there that Peter wrote this epistle?
2. To whom did he write this letter?
3. From where did Peter write this letter? Explain your choice.
4. What are the various themes covered by Peter in his first epistle?

5. Explain how a Christian is a pilgrim.
6. List the role of each member of the Godhead in a sinners salvation?
7. Define "grace" and "peace" as used in this context.
8. Define "hope" as used in the Bible in contrast to the modern concept of hope.
9. What is the basis for a Christians "living hope"?
10. What three attributes of a Christian's inheritance makes it so certain?
11. By what two things is the Christians salvation "*kept*"?
12. What does the Second Coming of Christ have to do with our salvation?

Salvation Through Trials & God's Servants

Salvation Through Fiery Trials

1 Peter 1:6-9 - *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith-- the salvation of your souls.*

Peter knew what it was to suffer trials. When he preached on the Day of Pentecost he was accused of being drunk. Once when he was going to the temple to pray he healed a lame man and then preached to the crowd that gathered because of the excitement that resulted over that and was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. Peter was arrested a second time, together with some of the other apostles, because the authorities were jealous of how the church had grown. Peter was again arrested by Herod Agrippa, who had just killed James, the brother of John. At this time God sent an angel to save his neck.

Since Peter knew something of suffering and trials, he can speak to the needs of these Christians who are about to suffer "*fiery trials*." Peter now explains the nature of these trials to help them put them in proper perspective.

▶ **Trials Are Temporary**

When about to take blood from a child's arm a nurse will let the child know that the discomfort will only last a moment. Peter reassures the early Christians with the brevity of their suffering. It is for a short time. As Paul wrote, "*our light affliction which is but for a moment*" (2 Cor. 4:17). Trials are controlled by God. We must remember that even though God may place us in the furnace, He keeps his "eye on the clock, and his hand on the thermostat!!" (1 Cor 10:13). He will not permit us to suffer one minute too long.

▶ **Trials Are Necessary**

Trials are needed even if they are for a brief time. Their need is seen in their certainty. Paul promised, "*all who desire to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*" (2 Tim. 3:12). These trials meet the needs of the individual Christian. God does not entice men to sin and is not enticed by evil (Js. 1:13). However, God allows trials for our good.

After years of traveling into space NASA has discovered that prolonged habitation in a zero gravity environment weakens the heart muscles. The heart needs the pull of the earth's gravity to remain healthy. So, a healthy spiritual heart can only exist with trials. The easier our life, the weaker our hearts.

▶ **Trials Are Grievous**

Peter does not sugar coat the truth. Make no mistake about it trials are not meant to be easy. Paul's thorn in the flesh was hard enough that he prayed three times for its removal. Job lost everything. The boils that cover his body were painful. So our "*fiery trials*" can be painful.

▶ **Trials Are Various**

The word for "*various*" is interesting it comes from the Greek *poikolos* from which we derived the phrase "polka dot." "*It is used to describe the skin of a leopard, the different-colored veinings of marble.*" (Vincent). Trials come in various sorts, such as, tragic accidents, lingering sicknesses, physical handicaps, business failures, etc. They come from various sources: government, neighbors, co-workers, and even those sent by God. Trials come in a variety pack. No matter what color, shape or size trials

come we need to be prepared to deal with them.

▶ **Trials Test Our Faith**

Every trial is, in fact a test. A test of our faith. F.B. Meyer said: "A faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted!" Faith that undergoes the fiery trials can be found to be more precious than gold. Gold is purified by fire. The fire does not destroy it, but separates the heavier gold from the lighter worthless matter mixed in the gold. The waste or dross is drawn off making the gold purer and thus more valuable. Fiery trials represent a divine refining process. "But, he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath TRIED me, I shall COME FORTH AS GOLD" (Job 23:10). The more refining in the fire the more genuine the gold. The more our faith is tested the more genuine it becomes. When you squeeze a lemon you get lemon juice. When you squeeze a Christian what comes out? Real Faith.

Every illustration breaks down at some point. Gold is perishable. It will not outlast this world. In contrast, our faith can never be destroyed.

▶ **Trials Result in Praise Honor & Glory at the Second Coming**

The Christian knows that, if he endures, he will in the end hear the master's, "Well done, good and faithful servant". Passing the trials of this life will bring the praises of the Savior in the next. The world may bestow honors on those who pass the carnal tests of life. Christians will one day be honored before the whole world.

Another result of enduring these trials is the glory which awaits us. Man's glory simply does not last, but the glory from God is eternal.

One day Christ will appear. At that time we will meet the Lord in the air and at judgment receive praise, honor and glory. With something like this to look forward to, we can endure any trial that comes our way.

▶ **Trials Show Our Faith & Love in Christ**

A man once said there were three things he wished he could have seen - Rome in her glory, Paul preaching at Athens, and Jesus in the flesh. Our faith is not based on sight. Peter did see the Lord in the flesh. Even though we are not seeing Christ, yet we can love Him.

How is it possible to love someone you have not seen? A blind child can still love the parents it has never seen. We may love a friend as strongly when he is absent, as when he is with us. We love Him because he first loved us.

Some will argue, "I would believe in God if he would appear right now in front of me." Consider the words of Jesus to Thomas, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). I have never seen Paris, France or London, yet I believe they exist. Our faith in Christ is more than just belief they existed. It involves putting our trust in Christ. "By faith Moses...endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

▶ **Trials Increase Our Joy**

Not only does our faith increase our love and faith, but our joy. This "great rejoicing" literally means "to exult, to leap for joy". This joy is hyper-active rejoicing.

It is also unconditional. The phrase "even though" shows that our joy is not dependent upon the absence of trials and troubles in life. This is why those who suffering persecution are blessed (Matt. 5:11,12). As paradoxical as it may sound, joy, even great joy, and co-exist with "fiery trials." So when the heat is on, enjoy the fire. After an athlete can joyfully experience the pains of exercise and try-outs because of his anticipate success. A house burned. A piece of paper survived. It said, "Contentment: Realizing that God has already provided everything we need for our present happiness."

This joy is so great that it cannot be expressed. An unspeakable joy that suffering can never quench.

It is a joy full of glory. Like the POW of World War II. They knew that they were still prisoners and enduring the same conditions. Yet they had joy because they learned before the Germans did that the war was won.

▶ **Trials Lead to Salvation**

The literal concept is that salvation is currently being receive from Christ. Salvation is the goal of our faith. It was being realized by them presently and not just hoped for in the future. For the Christian salvation is past, present, and future. Each day we live through the various trials of life we maintain our

salvation and look forward to the final consummation of it in the end.

As a third-century man was anticipating death, he penned these last words to a friend: "It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians--and I am one of them" (Moody Bible Institute's *Today In The Word*, June, 1988, p. 18).

Salvation Through God's Servants

1 Peter 1:10-12 - Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven -- things which angels desire to look into.

God brought salvation by use of various instruments. Three distinct groups who serve God bring us salvation. First there is the Old Testament Prophets such as: Moses, Samuel, and David Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These men (and many others) spent their lives, and in many cases even gave their lives, in service to you and me! Next, we have the Apostles and New Testament prophets and evangelists. Finally, the Angels of God fulfilled an indirect role in bringing salvation to us.

- **Salvation Searched by the Prophets**

The prophets of old searched carefully of salvation. The word for search is *ekzeteo*. According to Thayer it means "to seek out i.e. investigate, scrutinize" (195). They were pouring over it. They "searched diligently" to trace out in detail, to explore, as one carefully sifts ore to find the precious metal. They were not searching in order to obtain it, but concerning it. Though inspired they did not understand what they were writing about. After all the apostles did not understand some things about time either (Matt 24:3).

The prophets also searched the time of Christ. Find out the fixed time that the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow would come. They wanted to know more about this period of grace to which their prophecies pointed. A remarkable example of this will be seen in the instance of Daniel inquiring of the angel the meaning of the matters revealed to him (Dan. 7:16). Daniel, writing six hundred years before the birth of Christ, foretold, through the angel Gabriel of the suffering and death of the Messiah: "Then after sixty two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. . ." This was the prediction of the coming of the Roman armies and the destruction of the temple, made 600 years before.

The Old Testament prophets searched what the Spirit of Christ indicated. A prophet inspired by the Holy Spirit is a mouth for God. God spoke "by the mouth of his prophets" (Acts 3:18,21). These prophets did not speak on their own but spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). It was not something that came out of his human discernment, but men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Most of the time the prophet did not fully understand the word that was delivered to him. A prominent confirmation to verbal inspiration. The Spirit of Christ having been in the prophets, it follows that Christ existed during the times of the prophets. They spoke in reference to the pre-existence of Christ.

The suffering of Christ was also searched out by these prophets. They often wrote of the sufferings and the glory of Christ (Ps. 22; Is. 52:13-53; Ps. 2; 16:8-11; 110). The concept of a Messiah who would have to suffer was most curious. Peter himself had recoiled from it with horror, and had been rebuked by the Lord (Mt. 16:22,23). This was also a subject of dispute with the Jews whether the Christ was to suffer (Ac. 3:18; 26:22,23). Such would be a stumbling block for the prejudice Jew of the day. It was hard for their materialist concepts of the kingdom to accept a suffering Savior as being a reigning Monarch.

Coupled with the suffering Christ is the Glorious Christ. Isaiah prophecies of both (Isaiah, 9:6,7; 11:6-9; 53:1-6). Thayer tells us that glory means "*a most glorious condition, most exalted state*" (156). Jeremiah called the Messiah "*the Branch of Righteousness*"; Jonah called him "*the Resurrection and the Life*"; Haggai called him "*the Desired One of the nations*"; and Malachi called him the "*Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings.*" Surely, Christ's resurrection, His ascension, His coronation, and reign at God's right hand was the glories of Christ for which the prophets searched (Phil. 2:9-11).

Finally, the prophets searched curiously for the meaning of the Grace that was coming to us. They didn't understand everything they were writing, but they understood through the Spirit that somehow it was going to benefit generations down the line. The prophets plainly saw that the grace which was to come under the Messiah's kingdom was vastly superior to any thing that had ever been exhibited under the Law. God showed the prophets that they were writing not for themselves but for our benefit; these great prophecies were not for them to enjoy. As Christ said to His disciples, "*Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it'*" (Luke 10:23,24). Like Moses who led people toward the Promised Land but was not allowed to enter into it (Deut. 34:1-4) so the prophets would lead people to the kingdom, but not enter it.

Surely the prophets derived some benefit from their predictions. We are not to suppose that they derived no benefit from their own predictions. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ. They saw it by faith (Jn. 8:56). Simeon an old man in Jerusalem rejoiced to see the babe of Mary who was to be "*a light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Thy people, Israel.*" Many of these prophets gladly gave their lives for the message they preached.

- **Salvation Proclaimed by the Apostles**

Using texts from the Old Testament prophets Joel and David, Peter preached with great power and authority and announced to the people that they had crucified the Messiah, the Prince of Life Himself. The word for preach in our text is *evangelizo*. It means to make clear the good news. Although prophets of the Old Testament could only point toward the day of Christ, the apostles were able to preach the gospel of Christ.

All the prophecy of old was fulfilled. "*But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled*" (Acts 3:18). Jesus was raised to sit at the right hand of the Father as had been predicted by the prophets (Acts 2:30f). Every last one of the predictions about the Messiah have been fulfilled in Christ.

Like the prophets of old the apostles preached by the Holy Spirit. This accounts for the unity of their message. The Spirit which had predicted the events, preached their fulfillment through the apostles. The same Spirit who guided the Old Testament prophets guided the New Testament preachers (2 Pet. 1:20,21).

Before His death Jesus had promised that another comforter would come (Jn. 14:26;16:13). Paul said He did when writing to the Ephesians (Eph. 3:5).

- **Salvation Searched by the Angels**

Angels are interested in our salvation. They have longed to look into the mystery of the Scheme of Redemption planned for man from the beginning. The Greek literally means "to look into" or "to bend over so as to look deeply into and see to the bottom of a thing." The desire they have to look into God's Plan is the same intense desire that the prodigal had in satisfying his hunger with the husks which the swine ate (Lk. 15:16). Although the plan made no provision concerning the salvation of angels they were still interested in God's Scheme of grace. Angels are spectators not participants. Just as the Old Testament prophets were not omniscient, neither are the angels.

Angels did however assist in the plan of salvation (Heb. 1:14). Consider the angel Gabriel who foretold to Daniel concerning the salvation which would be in Christ (cf. Dan 8, 9). Also Gabriel's appearances to Zacharias and Mary (cf. Lk 1:11-19, 26-38)

Because of their relationship with man they were peeping into God's Plan to Redeem men from sin. They doubtless feel a great interest in the welfare of their fellow-creatures. They cannot but feel a deep interest in man who has been tempted, committed sin and is suffering, dying and in danger of eternal death. They were present at man's creation. They were present at man's fall and left to guard the garden.

They were there when Jesus left Heaven. They were there to announce His arrival. They ministered to Him after His temptation. They were at the cross; at the resurrection and they were at His ascension. Today, they rejoice because of one sinner who repents.

If angels are so interested in man's salvation which makes no provision for them, why are so many men in contrast disinterested in salvation. The prophets wrote about salvation. The apostles preached it. Angels desire to know more about it. We are reaping the benefits of their work today if we obey the gospel. Surely if God arranged the prophets, apostles, and angels to bring us the plan of Salvation, all efforts of our enemies can not rob us of it. Only we by our carelessness and neglect can we rob ourselves of a Savior.

Questions:

1. How can we have faith that trials are temporary?
2. What does it mean that trials are various?
3. How do fiery trials purify our faith?
4. How do trials show our love and faith in Christ?
5. What is the end result of trials?
6. What things did the prophets of old search for?
7. What role did the apostles play?
8. Why are angels interested in God's plan in saving man?
9. What role did angels play in revealing the gospel plan of salvation?
10. What role did the Holy Spirit play?

Called to Be Holy

Holiness of the Hopeful

1 Peter 1:13-16 - *"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

The term *"therefore"* points us to the preceding paragraph for the basis or grounds by which we are to have a living hope. It was the preparatory work done by the prophets, apostles, and angels which brought us the Gospel. By it the hopeful can live in holiness.

The words *sanctify, sanctification, saint, holy, and holiness* all derive from this same root and thus carry related meanings. Holiness means "set apart." In holy matrimony, for example, a man and a woman are set apart, abandoning all others as they yoke solely to each other. We are to be different. We live differently, speak differently. We wear different clothing. Think differently. All because we have a different hope than the rest of the world. We live holy because we recognize definite boundaries of moral thought and actions that separates us from the rest of the world.

How do the hopeful cultivate a life of holiness in a world filled with lusts?

► **Be Ready - Gird up**

"Gird up" is metaphorical and is based on the literal tucking of flowing apparel so as to give one's limbs unobstructed movement while traveling. The English equivalent of the phrase would be to roll up one's sleeves or to take off one's jacket.

Not only do we rarely use the phrase *"gird up"* today, we do not use the word *"loin"* in our day to day conversation. Unless we are eating sirloin, tenderloins, etc... The loin is the part of the human body above the hip and below the ribs. Often we refer to this as our waist. This word *"gird"* is the term from which we acquire our word "girdle." Thus, we girdle our waist. However, here we are to gird up the loins of our minds. This means to be ready to work the mind, mental readiness or preparedness.

The first step in holy living is to pull our thoughts together or have a disciplined mind. We ready the mind for the work of holy life by gathering up the loose ends of the mind. Gathering our thoughts instead of just letting them fly in improper meditation or feelings without proper direction or restraint.

Since the revelation or second coming of Christ can be at any moment the believer will have his mind ready and in control at all times. The girdled mind will be ready for any sudden temptation (1 Pet. 5:8), for mistreatment or persecution (3:9-13), for opportunities to teach (3:15), or for any unexpected crisis.

► **Be Sober - in Mind**

The word for *"sober"* means "to be calm and collected in spirit; to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect" (Thayer, 425). The command to be sober has a twofold connotation: to be unintoxicated or to be rational. Keeping from intoxication in the literal sense of the term. As Vine's puts it "To be free from the influence of intoxicants." A Christian cannot afford to have a fuzzy mind whether is be the result of drinking or a failure to consider the serious aspects of life. A holy life does not come from a mind that is either hazy or crazy or lazy.

► **Be Unwavering - Rest Your Hope**

Two men of the same age and similar backgrounds were stationed overseas with the military. In town one weekend, they were approached and propositioned by prostitutes. One accepted their

“invitation,” and the other did not. A few days later, the man who had debased himself asked the other why he had turned down his “chance for a good time.” “Back home there is a girl waiting for me,” he said, “and we are going to be married when I have finished my tour of duty. She is pure and good, and I could not have faced her again if I had gone with you.”

This wise young man had rested his hope in something far better than a mere temporary gratification of his fleshly desires. The Christian knows that he hopes for something better down the road at the end of life and will live holy in this life while he rests his hope in eternal life.

The idea of “*rest your hope*” is to hope to the end. The New American Standard Version says: “fix your hope completely on the grace...” We must never lose sight of its golden gates of Heaven.

Holding on to your hope motivates us to live holy. We are optimistic about our future. No matter how gloomy life looks, we can look up in hope of Christ’s return. We have received the grace of God and will be received by God when life is over.

▶ **Be Obedient - as Children**

We are children of God. This resulted from our obedience to God when we obeyed the Gospel. Thus we are children by our obedience. Children are to be obedient to their parents. It is only natural for God’s children to want to be like Him. God is holy and therefore we will want to be holy. Guy Wood’s definition of obedience to the will of God requires:

- Doing what God said.
- Doing what God said do in the way that God said do it.
- Doing what God said do, in the way God said do it, and for the reason that God said do it.

Hope is the motive for our obedience, holiness in living is the result. Often we have been children of disobedience because we have lived an unholy life. We became children of God by obedience and will continue to be His holy children by our continued obedience.

▶ **Be Not Conformed - to Worldly Ignorant Lusts**

Conformed comes from the Greek *schema* which means “form or shape.” Sometimes translated “fashion.” Holiness does not come from conforming to the fashions of this world. In the fashion world short skirts and tight “designer jeans” and other immodest apparel are the form of dress this world wears. Some Christians ignorantly follow the fashions of this world. Yet, rather than conforming to the world’s fashions we are to adorn ourselves in modest apparel (cf. 1 Ti 2:9-10).

The world gives into their worldly lusts. The pull on the Christian to conform to this worldly pattern of fleshly habits, mannerism, dress, and speech is strong. The pull of the world is every bit as strong and subtle as gravity. A life dominated by unbridled passions are produced by ignorance of things which are spiritual. Such a life cannot be holy.

What Peter is requiring is for Christians to be transformist instead of conformist (Rom. 12:2). A conformist is one who simply imitates the form or life of others. They just follow the crowd. Exodus 23:2 warns, “*You shall not follow the multitude to do evil.*” Transformists are those who change into something else. Instead of letting the world do his thinking for him and following along with their lifestyles, his mind is changed into the mind of Christ. He lives and thinks at the Holy Son of God.

▶ **Be Holy - as God Is Holy**

Once an impeccably dressed Englishman was standing in line at an airline reservations counter when a pushy woman cut in front of him, slapped down her ticket and demanded an upgrade to first class. “Madam,” the Englishman said as he picked up the ticket and pressed it back into her hand, “First Class is not a boarding pass. It is a way of life.” Likewise, holiness is a way of life not just a privilege we are born into.

We have been called to be holy. Peter used the word “*called*” often in this letter (1:15; 2:9; 2:21; 3:9; 5:10). Peter presents Lev. 11:44,45 exhibiting that Israel was called to be holy. They were to separate themselves from the pagan population restraining themselves from idolatry and immorality. The book of Leviticus is a book on holiness.

All our conduct is to be holy. Being holy is not something that we can restrict to one place, one building. To the Christian, every day is supposed to be a holiday, a “holy day.” Holiness is to encompass

all thoughts, all words, and all deeds. Whether it be Sunday morning at worship or Saturday night at the ball game.

The standard of holiness is not conforming to the world's standard. God, Himself is our standard of holiness. Only God can be our standard of holiness. The word "I" in the quotation "I am holy" is emphatic in the Greek text, signifying, "I, myself, apart from all others, am holy." He is the grand model. The sole ground or basis for holiness. God is not just holy, holiness is the essential nature of God's character (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7). Although we do not reach the perfect state of holiness in that we never sin (1 John 1:7-10) we strive to be holy just like God. He is so holy that He cannot be tempted by sin (Js. 1:13f), yet we can. God is so holy He does not separate Himself from the truth and lie. Being holy like God demands we be truthful at all times. Being holy like God is holy consists of thinking as God thinks and making God's Will our will. So, the better we know God the better we can be holy.

Fear Produces Holy Conduct

1 Peter 1:17 - *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your sojourning here in fear;*

In his book *From Nothing to Fear*, Fraser Kent lists a variety of phobias. If you are afraid of baldness or bald people you have *peladonphobia*. This may explain why some do not sit next to Bob. On the other hand, if you are afraid of hairy people you may have *chaetophobia*. Some of our members do not like sitting under a fan. They may suffer from *aerophobia*. Perhaps, Robert has *odontophobia*, the fear of teeth. *Graphophobia* is the fear of writing in public. This would explain why some do not take notes in services. Some do not respond to the invitation. They may be suffering from *stabisbasiphobia*, which is the fear of standing and walking. In contrast, there is *thalassophobia* which is the fear of being seated. This would explain why some are always wandering around in the back of the building. Finally, there is the fear of all fears, *phobophobia*, that is, the fear of being afraid.

Phobia comes from the Greek word *phobos* which is translated "fear" in our text. It means to be put to fear, alarm, fright. It is sometimes translated terror. People who suffer from the fear of open, public places have what is called *agoraphobia*. Now what does that fear of open places cause this person not to do? They don't go into open public places. Our text deals with a healthy kind of fear. It is *theophobia*, the fear of God. He is the only one Christians should fear. This phobia does not immobilize. Instead, it can motivate. If you are to be holy like God you need to have a fear of God.

► **Fear God Whom You Call Father**

A worldly actress calls God the "Big Man Upstairs." An Old Testament Jew so feared God that he would not even pronounce His holy name. Between these two extremes is the reverent calling upon the Father by the fearful Christian. God as our Father desires for us to call upon Him. After all, He called you first; now you call on Him.

"Fear" is not the horror of slaves, but the reverent wonder of submissive children toward their dear parents. It is the fear of offending. The fear of producing anguish on the part of those we love by behavior incompatible with their desires. If we say God is our Father, and we are Christians, we need to live in the factuality of that avowal.

This fear is a reverence that creates an comprehension of the Father's presence in every place, every moment, and in every thought. Jonah forgot this when he in fear of his God-given duty tried to flee from God. In the belly of the great sea creature Jonah came to fear the Father. *"I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me."* (Jonah 2:2).

► **Fear God Who Is Our Judge**

The term "if" is equivalent to "since." Since you call God "Father" live in holy conduct, He is the one who will judge you. It is a comforting fact that our judge is also our Father. The point being that God is to be considered, not only as Father, but as Judge.

Many see God as full of grace and mercy, and He is. Even so, they fail to see Him as a Judge to whom one day they must give an account. They are like the bookkeeper who worked for his loving father.

He knew his father was a lenient man. So, he neglected to take care of some things and became very careless and carefree. Years later, the father left his son the company which went bankrupt in the first year.

Child of God, remember who you are working for, it is your Father who is also your Judge. You are not dealing with another man who can be fooled by your actions and attitudes. God is a perfect Judge. He cannot be fooled by artificial holiness.

In the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, Ben Johnson of Canada won the one hundred meter dash, setting a new Olympic record and a new world record. Our American contender, Carl Lewis, came in second, and most were shocked that he had not won the gold. After the race, the judges learned that Johnson had an illegal substance in his body. He ran the race illegally, so the judges took away his medal. Though he ran faster and made an unforgettable impression, he did not deserve the reward. Your friends, neighbors, family, co-workers, fellow-Christians and you, yourself, may be impressed with your level of holiness, but God is the final Judge of this matter.

Fear what God can do. God is a Judge to be feared above all others because He is able to destroy both body and soul in hell (Lk. 12:4,5). Truly, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Unlike judges among our fellow men, God always judges impartially. He never judges men on the basis of outward characteristics, such as who they are or how much money they have. Our Judge is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11). His ruling will not be affected by one's nationality, social station or financial condition. He "*shows no partiality and accepts no bribes*" (Dt. 10:17). Decades of good works cannot buy a moment of disobedience.

God judges according to our actions or work. Everyone's work will be the proof of our conformation or our noncompliance to the Will of God. The work of others around us will not be the basis of our judgement. "*Each one of us shall give account of himself to God*" (Rom. 14:12). If we learn to fear God as the One who is our Judge we will not need to be horrified to stand before Him on Judgment Day.

▶ **Fear God Throughout Life**

As we live on this earth we are on a journey to Judgment. Whether we stand on the right hand side with the blessed righteous or on the left hand side with the condemned wicked will be determined on the way we travel. When we fail to see life in this manner we are in danger of feeling at home in this world. Remember, it was when Lot stopped being a sojourner that he became a resident in Sodom.

Did your parents ever say, "As long as you live under my roof and eat my food you are going to live by my rules." As long as you are in the household of God you must live according to God's Holy standards. So, where ever we go and however long we are on this journey we must never forget that our fear of God will produce the holy conduct that will determine our eternal destiny.

Steve Winger from Lubbock, Texas, writes about his last college test - a final in a logic class known for its difficult exams:

To help us on our test, the professor told us we could bring as much information to the exam as we could fit on a piece of notebook paper. Most students crammed as many facts as possible on their 8 ½ x 11 inch sheet of paper. But one student walked into class, put a piece of notebook paper on the floor, and had an advanced logic student stand on the paper. The advanced logic student told him everything he needed to know. He was the only student to receive an A.

Good News! The same One who will give you your final exam is the same One who answers your prayers and will give you all the help you need. Consequently, let us live in fear and holiness.

Redeemed to be Holy

1 Peter 1:18-21 - *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

A preacher by the name of A. J. Gordon was a preacher of a church in Boston, he met a young boy in front of the auditorium carrying a rusty cage in which several birds fluttered nervously. Gordon inquired, "son, where did you get those birds?" The boy replied, "I trapped them out in the field," "What are you going to do with them?" "I'm going to play with them, and then I guess I'll just feed them to an old cat we have at home." When Gordon offered to buy them, the lad exclaimed, "Mister, you don't want them, they're just little old wild birds and can't sing very well." Gordon replied, "I'll give you \$2 for the cage and the birds." "Okay, it's a deal, but you're making a bad bargain." Gordon walked around to the back of the church property, opened the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue. The next Sunday he took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ's coming to seek and to save the lost paying for them with His own precious blood. "That boy told me the birds were not songsters", said Gordon, "but when I released them and they winged their way heavenward, it seemed to me they were singing, "Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!" (from Our Daily Bread).

In the previous verses Peter made several arguments for holy living. We should be holy because God is Holy, because God is our Father, because God is Judge. Now, he tells us that Christians should be holy because God Redeems. Because of our sins we have been held captive in darkness. Who will pay the ransom? The price is high - death. Christ was willing to pay the redemption price for all mankind. Peter explains the doctrine of redemption in this section.

- **Perception of Redemption, 18a**

According to Vine "*redeemed*" means "to release on receipt of ransom." Redemption implies previous bondage. In ancient times a slave could save their money and at a pagan temple by themselves from their master. A slave could be freed with the payment of money, but no amount of money can set a lost sinner free. Our redemption frees us from the power of sin, the guilt of sin, and the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15).

- **Price of Redemption, 18b,19**

Have you ever considered being kidnaped for ransom? If so, what amount would be asked for your return? Ten or twenty dollars? Well the price is much higher. However, it is not monetary. During Peter's day, a slave's freedom might be purchased with silver and gold. How can a wicked life be redeemed with gold or silver? All the gold in the world cannot buy back one lost soul from one damning sin. If it could, Christ's sacrifice would have been unnecessary.

Not only is money useless in redemption of the soul, so are traditions. They are worthless or vain. Thayer defines it as "Devoid of force, truth, success, result" (392-393).

The term "*traditions*" could refer to any number of things all of which cannot redeem man. The Pharisees may of looked to their ritual traditions. These were received from the writings and oral traditions of their forefathers, rabbis or doctors of the law. The pagans might look to their many gods and sacrifices for redemption. Even if the redemption was one of a carnal instead of spiritual nature. Today, man has many modern traditions. He looks to alcohol, drugs, sex, materialism to redeem him from his sin. Others depend on living a "good" life based on their own personal standards of morality.

The price of our redemption is incomparable. Peter tells us that it is precious and is "held in honor, esteemed, especially dear" (Thayer 624). It also refers to that of incomparable cost. Peter uses the term frequently in his two epistles (1:19; 2:4,6,7; 2 Pet. 1:1,4). The cost of mere animal blood being sacrificed for the sins of man cannot compare to the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:4). A man's blood is more precious than that of animal's, yet all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). Apart from the sinless blood of a fellow human we are all lost in sin. The Son of Man and Son of God, Jesus, came to earth. He lived a sinless life and died to be the incomparable sacrifice for sin.

Some consider the need of a blood sacrifice for sin as out of date, a repulsive and barbaric concept. A female theologian named Delores Williams said, "I don't think we need a theory of atonement at all. I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff." In some hymnals all hymns on the blood of been edited out. Be that as it may, Robert Lowery got it right when he penned that old song, "Nothing But The Blood." "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus;

What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh! Precious is the flow that makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

Just take a moment to consider all that the Blood of Christ has done and still does for mankind:

- brings the remission of sins (Mt. 26:28)
- gives eternal life (John 6:53-56)
- justifies (Rom. 5:9)
- redeems (Eph. 1:7)
- reconciles (Col. 1:20)
- washes the robes of his elect white (Rev. 7:14)
- purchased the church (Ac. 20:28).

The price of our redemption is perfect. It is "*without blemish*" being faultless and "*without spot*" being undefiled by the world. As in the Old Testament a Passover lamb had to be without blemish, now our Passover Lamb was without sin and innocent.

The price of our redemption involves an incomparable person. Only He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29; Is. 53:7; Ac. 8:32). We are not saved by His miraculous birth, His famous name, His multitude of miracles, but by the blood shed upon His cross and giving of His life as a ransom for many (Mt. 20:28). No better friend is there than One who laid down His life for ours.

- **The Plan of Redemption, 20**

The giving of Christ for the redemption of man was known before time. The atonement was not an afterthought on the part of God. Christ's death was an appointment, not an accident. God planned forward for man's deliverance.

The coming of our redeemer was at the right time. In the fulness of time Christ was incarnated. Everything that transpired in the mind of God from eternity came down to one moment in time. The cross is the climactic point in the Scheme of Redemption.

After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, he would often point to a red spot on that map that covered the area of Waterloo. Then he would say, "if it were not for that one red spot, I would be the Emperor of the entire world!" Just think how different history and your life would be if that one blood stained spot on the hill of Calvary 2,000 years ago.

- **Product of Redemption, 21**

The result of redemption is our faith and hope in God. It is by the instrumentality of our Redeemer that we have been brought to faith. It is natural that the benefactors of redemption would love, trust in and place their hope in the one who redeemed them. Since the price of redemption is great and the plan of redemption is eternal than our devotion to the Savior should be proportionately as great. They have been persuaded to place their trust and confidence in God is what they are currently doing, that is, believing in God.

Questions:

1. What does "*gird up*" mean? How does it help the Saint to be holy?
2. What does "*sober*" mean? How does it help the saint to be holy?
3. What does "*rest your hope*" mean?

4. To what is our obedience likened?
5. Instead of conforming to the fashions of this world a Christian should....
6. What is the saint's standard for holiness?
7. How do we fear God as a Father?
8. Why are we blessed that God the Father is our judge?
9. What is the meaning of "*redeemed*"?
10. What is the price of redemption of man? What are some various things man has used for his redemption?
11. List some things that the blood of Christ has done for us?
12. When did God prepare Christ as the Lamb to redeem man? When was He revealed as God's Lamb?

Purified by the Word

The Word of God

1 Peter 1:22-25 - *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

A TV news camera crew was on assignment in Southern Florida filming the widespread destruction of Hurricane Andrew. Among the wreckage and debris stood one house on its foundation. The owner was cleaning up the yard when a reporter approached him. "Sir, why is your house the only one still standing?" asked the reporter. "How did you manage to escape the severe damage of the hurricane?" "I built this house myself," the man replied. "I also built it according to the Florida state building code. When the code called for 2 by 6 roof trusses, I used 2 by 6 roof trusses. I was told that a house built according to code could withstand a hurricane. I did, and it did. I suppose no one else around here followed the code."

When the storms or persecutions of life come only those Christians grounded in the Word will be ready to stand.

► **Obeying the Word**

The Word of God is truth. Truth is the foundation of our holiness. Our life in Christ begins as a result of obeying the truth. The Word of God is *"the truth of the gospel"* (Gal. 2:5,14), *"the word of truth"* (2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 1:13), and *"the word, the truth of the gospel"* (Col. 1:5). Jesus prayed that His disciples would be sanctified through the truth, because God's Word is truth (Jn. 17:17).

We have a responsibility, not only to hear the truth, but to apply it. Just being exposed to the truth will not change us. You can put me in a room filled with musical instruments and I will not be able to do anything with them other than make noise. Replace me with a group of talented musicians and you will have an orchestra that can make beautiful music. Without study and meditation a Bible is just a dust collector.

► **Purifying by the Word**

The word *"purified"* is akin to the same words from which we derive the terms "saint", "sanctify" and "holy." Old Testament technical term for the purification of the people and priests (Josh. 3:5; 1 Chr. 15:12; 1 Sam. 16:5). Our purification is of the soul, thus purified in a moral sense.

Our purification is a result of being redeemed. Jesus shed His blood for remission of sins (Matt. 26:28). In the original text, the expression in Matt. 26:28 and Acts 2:38 is identical. It is by the Word of God that we learn of the means of redemption.

► **Loving According to the Word**

Philadelphia is a term well known as the name of cities both ancient and modern (Rev. 3:7). From *philos*, meaning love; and *adelphos*, a brother. Christians are to love one another as brothers. Aritides, sent by the Emperor Hadrian to spy out those strange creatures known as "Christians" said, "Behold! How they love one another." Today, too often it is brother-bashing and sister-smashing.

In God's Word we can learn how Christians are to love each other by reading of Christ's great love for His fellow man. When He washed the disciples feet He demonstrated a brotherly love that serves. (John 13:12ff). He showed love in His compassion for the lost sinners and the rejected publicans. He

showed love to Gentiles by healing their sick. His greatest love was to lay down His life.

When people hurt they needed to pull together and support each other. Before Andrew Jackson became the seventh president of the U.S., he served as a Major General in the Tennessee militia. During the War of 1812 his troops reached an all-time low in morale. As a result they began arguing, bickering, and fighting among themselves. It is reported that Old Hickory called them all together on one occasion when tensions were at their worst and said, "Gentlemen! Let's remember, the enemy is over there!"

Christians are to love truly. The term "love" is from "agapao". It is to love someone so much that you will do what is best for them regardless of what they think, others think, how it hurts you, or them. It is not the modern love that works on the basis of flattery. We must have a love which causes us to forget ourselves.

Christians are to love sincerely. Our love is to be undisguised or "dissembling or pretense" (Vine 1:324). It is not hypocritical. In the Greek, *hypocrites*, a play actor. A hypocrite is, therefore, an actor. Our love is not fake or faked. We are of a truth to love our brethren.

Christians are to love fervently. This term means "to stretch, and signify intense strain; feeling on the rack" (Vincent). To strain every muscle in supreme effort. As an athlete strains to win the race or make the goal. Our love is a matter of willing, not feeling. It is the kind of love that man would be saved observing business meetings because of the brotherly love displayed.

Christians are to love purely. This is a love that is clean. It is not contaminated with love that is based on mutual benefit, monetary enrichment or gratification of mere fleshly desires.

▶ **Begotten of the Word**

"*Begotten of the Word*" is a catchphrase of the denominations. Peter uses it twice in this chapter. It means having been born again to a new kind of life. The new birth gives to us a new nature as well as a new and living hope.

Jesus told Nicodemus, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit*" (John 3:7). We are born again of the Spirit, that is by the Holy Spirit revealed Word of God. The Word is the instrumentality of our new birth.

The Word of God continues to effect our new life. Our birth took place in the past, but has an impact on us now and later. We have experienced the same birth and became children of the same father. We take our instructions from the same source, God's Word.

▶ **Living Word**

The Word of God is living and incorruptible, that is, it is not subject to death. We are born into the world only to begin a journey which leads inevitably to the grave. We are born again to live forever. Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 comparing our life to a flower. Everything changes. The Word of God does not change. Our life in the Word does not change.

There is a law of science known as the Law of Biogenesis which states that "life begets life." The Word is living and begets life in us. This life is not fleeting like physical life.

The Word of God is ever enduring. It is indestructible. Jesus has also spoken of the indestructibility of the Word of God, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away*" (Mt 24:35). Diocletian tried to destroy the Word and those begotten of it. In 303 A.D. he proclaimed an edict requiring Christians and their sacred scriptures to be destroyed. Within twenty-five years, the succeeding emperor ordered that fifty copies be made and distributed at government expense! Voltaire the French atheist, boasted that within one hundred hundred years of his lifetime, Christianity would be swept from the earth. Only fifty years after his death, his own house was being used by the Geneva Bible Society to store stacks of Bibles! There is no other book 2000 years old that people read and study. Why? Because it is as alive and life giving as it was when it was first written.

The Word is Truth to be obeyed, it purifies the soul, it demonstrates the love we ought to have one for another, when preached it makes it possible for men to be born again, and is ever living.

A Change of Clothes

1 Peter 2:1- *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,*

We all have watched that popular game show “Family Feud.” Five family members would compete with another family of five to guess the most popular answers to questions like: “What do people do during a sermon?” Answers would be: “sleep”, “take notes”, “balance checkbook”, etc. Considering our text we would like to ask: What are four the things Christians need to remove upon being born again?

The phrase “*laying aside*” is the idea of removing the old clothing to put on new clothes. Now that one has been born again by the Word he is to lay aside his former life. This regeneration begins at baptism where the old sinful life is washed away and the new convert arises to walk in newness of life (cf. Eph. 4:22-24). Early Christians would put on white garments after baptism. Today, many congregations have white baptismal garments. White garments have been a symbol of purity. Before one can put on Christ and purity in baptism he must put off or lay aside the corruption of his former life. Certain sins are specified.

- **All Malice**

“*Malice*” comes from the Greek, *kakia*. Thayer tells us that it means “ill-will, desire to injure” (320). Trench says that malice “is more the evil habit of mind” (3). It is the opposite of love which seeks the best for others. Malice seeks harm for others and a desire to bring them down.

“All” forms of malice are to be put off. Every injurious attitude against others must go. Love is kind. A Christian cannot keep on wearing malice.

- **All Deceit**

In the *New Doublespeak: Why No One Knows What Anyone’s Saying Anymore*, author William Lutz defines a few of the more creative doublespeak terms currently in vogue:

Meaningful downturn in aggregate output (recession)
Resource development park (trash dump)
Recycling engineer (garbage collector).
Temporarily displaced inventory (stolen goods)
Reality augmentation (lie)
Terminological inexactitude (lie).

Deceit is also translated “*guile*.” It means “Bait,...a lure, snare; hence craft, deceit, guile” (Thayer 155). This verb means to catch with bait. To capture a fish one must lure it with a crafty or deceitful bait or trap. Instead of a baited hook or net a deceitful man uses his tongue to trap others with his lies. As Walter Scott wrote, “O what a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive!” Again, “all” forms of guile must go.

Christians are to “*speak the truth in love*”, because God is Truth and God is Love. It is Satan who is the deceiver and the father of all lies.

- **Hypocrisy**

The original idea behind the Greek term for “hypocrisy” refers to the play acting done by the actor or actress. They pretend to be something they are not. Hypocrisy is covering up one’s evil intent with a show of righteousness.

The Pharisees were most often identified with this sin in the New Testament. They pretended to be righteous based on their traditions and rules that negated the effect of the Law of Moses. Jesus told a parable of a prayer by a Pharisee and showed its hypocrisy by comparing it to the sincere prayer of the publican (Lk. 18:9-14). In the early Church Ananias and Siphira pretended to be almsgivers, but were lying to God. Today there are those who pretend to be better than hypocrites because they refuse to come worship God because “There are hypocrites in the church.” Anytime you let a hypocrite come between you and God, the hypocrite is closer to God than you are.

Why Christians cannot wear hypocrisy? “*Love rejoices in the truth*” (1 Cor. 13:6). Peter just commanded us to love each other sincerely. The word for “sincere” literally means “without wax.” When fine porcelain was sold in the market a shopper would hold it up to the sun to see if there was any wax used to fill in any cracks. If no wax was seen than the vessel was considered sincere, in contrast to a faulty piece being falsely passed off as genuine.

- **Envy**

Many view envy as synonymous with jealousy. Although related, they are two distinct sins. Jealousy is sometimes used in a good sense and sometimes in a bad sense. Envy is always used in an evil sense. It means a “feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others” (Vine, II:37). Envy is the desire to wrench from another what one does not want that person to have. Pilate knew the Jews wanted to have Jesus killed because they were envious of His popularity with the masses (Matt. 27:18).

An old Jewish story is told about an envious store keeper who was granted any wish. The wish had only one stipulation. No matter what he wished for, his rival across the street would receive double. Without giving it any thought the envious man wished to be blind in one eye.

Envy is a common problem. “How is it fair that someone who swings a bat and runs around a field gets to make 100 to 200 times what I make.” This sounds like jealousy. Envy goes further, it hopes the ball player breaks a leg and somehow loses his money. With envy the good fortunes of others sting like a wasp.

Obviously Christians cannot continue wearing envy. Envy leads to murder, for example, Cain killed Abel, Saul tried to kill David, and out of envy Joseph’s brothers sought to kill him. Envy promotes rivalry, strife, hatred. It hinders growth and destroys contentment. Remember, “*love envies not*” (1 Cor. 13:4).

A poem by Edgar Guest shows the foolishness of envy:

I wonder if the poppy shows
The lightest envy of the rose?
Or if the pansy wastes its time
Regretting that it cannot climb?
Do blossoms of a yellow hue
Complain because they are not blue?
Do birds which God designed to sing
Envy the wild ducks’ fleet wing?
And does the sparrow sadly mourn
Because he was not gold finch born?
I cannot say, but fancy not.
Each seems contented with his lot.
‘Tis only the man that thinks that he
Some other man would rather be.

- **All Evil Speaking**

This would include such things as “*backbiters*” (Rom. 1:20; 2 Cor. 12:20) and gossiping or disparagement. Paul condemned the Galatians of spiritual cannibalism when they would bite and devour one another.

For example, a Christian’s car stalls in front of a bar. A evil speaking sister sees the car and spreads all over town “where the man spent the night.” The man then parked his car in her driveway and walked home. The woman arose the next morning furious. When she called him up to complain he responded, “There’s nothing to talk about. It’s obvious where I spent the night”.

The tongue is a very willing instrument to express the ill will of the heart. It’s so tempting to cut people down because we think it makes us look better, it lifts us up as they go down. Evil speaking is almost always the consequence of envy in the heart.

In a recent National Geographic article I read that Tibetans don’t eat fish. Since fish have no tongues, they say, they cannot gossip; and since Tibetans consider gossip a cardinal sin, they reward fish for their virtue by not eating them. Likewise, Christians reject all evil speaking. God will reward all who use their tongues for edification, that is to build up instead of tearing down.

Do you use your tongue as a “Builder or Wrecker?”

I saw them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.

With a ho-heave-ho and lusty yell
They swung the beam and the building fell.
I asked a foreman, "Are these men skilled
As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
He gave a laugh and said, "No, indeed."
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do.
And I thought to myself as I went away
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care,
Measuring live by the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds by a well-made plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town
Content with the labor of tearing down?

Since you have been born again of the Word...

- Take off the malice and be kind.
- Take off deceit and speak the truth.
- Take off hypocrisy and put on sincerity
- Take off envy and rejoice with others.
- Take off evil speaking and put on edification.

Baby Like Appetites

1 Peter 2:2,3 - *as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

One man began by saying, "I'm so hungry I could eat a cow." The second man, joined in "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse." "I'm so hungry I could eat a bear", countered another. Not to be out done the fourth man said, "I'm so hungry I could eat two alligators and an anaconda." A woman who over heard the conversation said, "I think I just lost my appetite."

How can we rid ourselves of spiritual junk food and come out of wicked spiritual anorexia and emaciation? Cultivate an appetite for the pure milk of the Word. After first putting off the malice, deceit and hypocrisies of our former life we must replace our appetite for sin with an craving for God's Word.

Our appetite for spiritual food must be like the desire that a newborn would have for real milk. Many mistake this passage as referring to new converts. However, we are to have a desire for God's Word like babies crave milk. You have been around a newborn who is hungry. There is only one thing you can do to stop the crying - give it milk. When you hunger for God's Word like that you will grow. Even grown Christians must continue to cultivate this intense appetite for the Scriptures. In the Beatitudes Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*" (Matt. 5:6).

We read of this type of desire in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15). After he wasted all his money he "*longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything*" (16). He was moved to return to his father. In the Psalms we read of this type of desire for God's Word, "*My soul breaks with longing for Your judgments at all times*" or "*I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for Your commandments*" (Ps. 119:20,131).

If a baby loses its appetite and stops eating you know something is wrong. The same is true of the Christian. Often the appetite can be dulled by gobbling up spiritual junk food. We fill our souls with TV, magazines, sports, etc. Even preaching that tickles the itching ears of the audience can be spiritual junk food which only nourishes self-centeredness.

So, in cultivating an appetite...

- Begin reading your Bible 15 minutes a day.
- Parents, read to your children--before bed, at the dinner table, wherever.
- Bring your Bible to church and take notes.
- Attend a weekly Bible study.
- Replace a half hour TV show (or secular book reading) with a half hour of Bible reading.
- Purchase Bible study aids such as a concordance, Bible handbook, dictionary, etc.
- Most importantly do what it says.

On the menu is the Word of God. The spiritual manna from Heaven. Keep in mind that Peter is not referring to the *"milk of the Word"*, that is, the fundamental facts of Christianity.

The milk of the Word is of the most excellent quality: it is pure or unadulterated. In ancient times milk was often adulterated with gypsum, a chalky-like substance to increase its volume. The early Christian writer Irenaeus said, "They mix gypsum with the milk, they taint the heavenly doctrine with the poison of their errors." We long for the Gospel without any admixture of false doctrine, human philosophies or traditions of men. Those without a love for the pure Word will want it sweetened with religious entertainment and the Social Gospel, which is not the pure Gospel of Christ. However, the Psalmist found the Word of God sweet, *"How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way"* (Psalm 119:13,14).

The purpose of a baby's intense appetite for milk is for it to grow physically. The reason we need such an appetite is to grow spiritually toward salvation. Salvation refers not to our present condition but to the hope of eternal life in the future. Through the Word the Christian grows toward his goal - Heaven.

If your mother has ever placed a new dish on the table you will be encouraged to taste it with these words, "Try it, you'll like it." Peter's argument is not: "try the Word to see if you like it". Instead He is saying, if you have already in the past experienced the gracious heavenly gift you will naturally have an appetite for the Word. It is a taste that excites the appetite. "Since you have tasted that the Lord is good, continue to feed on His Word." Someone has said that Christianity is like Campbell's soup it is "mmm, good".

Far too many Christians who have tasted the goodness of God's grace do not long to feed on His Word. Instead they are content with an occasional sip. As a result they are spiritually weak and thin. The blame may be placed on the boring sermons, difficult passages, unreadable translations, etc. Yet the truth is, they just don't have a hunger for righteousness and the goodness of God. Just a sip and a nibble, nothing that will fill their souls and satisfy their deep longings.

Questions:

1. How have the saints purified their souls?
2. With what kind of love our Christians to love one another?
3. How are Christians begotten of the Word?

4. What are two characteristics of the Word of God which sets it apart for all other books?

5. Matching:

- | | | |
|-------------------|----|--|
| ___ Malice | a. | covering up one's evil intent with a show of righteousness. |
| ___ Deceit | b. | the desire to wrench from another what one does not want that person to have |
| ___ Hypocrisy | c. | seeking or desiring injury to a person to bring them down. |
| ___ Envy | d. | gossiping or disparaging |
| ___ Evil Speaking | e. | guile |

6. T F Verse two of 1 Peter chapter two is talking about the newborn Christian not the mature Christian.

7. What are some things a Christian can do to cultivate a strong spiritual appetite?

8. What is the "pure milk of the Word"?

9. What goodness have you tasted from God's Word?

10. What is the end result of a healthy spiritual appetite?

Preciousness of the Precious Stone

Christ, the Stone

1 Peter 2:4,6-8 - *"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone," and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.*

A big lump of something, a stone supposedly, lay for centuries two feet under a shallow creek in North Carolina. People passing that way saw only an unsightly clump and passed on. A poor man passing one day saw the heavy chunk as good thing to hold his door ajar, and he took in home. A geologist who stopped at the poor man's door one day saw it and recognized it as gold - the biggest lump of gold ever found east of the Rockies. It has been valued at over \$100,000.

The most valuable "stone" ever was initially rejected by the very people to whom it was promised. In the Old Testament, Yahweh is called *"the rock of Israel"* (2 Samuel 22:2). In the New Testament, Jesus used the word *"the rock"* referring to Himself. Paul said that Jesus is a spiritual Rock (1 Cor. 10:4), a corner stone (Eph. 2:20), and a stone of stumbling (Rom. 9:32,33; 1 Cor. 1:23). The word "stone" appears five times in the verses 4-8. It is not ironic that Peter's sermons in Acts developed the same theme (Ac. 2:22-24; 4:10; 11; 5:30,31).

▶ Chief Cornerstone to the Temple

Just what is a chief cornerstone? The cornerstone would determine all the proper angles of the building. If the cornerstone is not right, the building will not be right. It is the function of a corner stone to unite and securely fasten the two walls of a building. Without it the building would crumble.

Christ is the only cornerstone. He is our firm Foundation, the One we stand on. The attributes of this Rock are that He is perfect and just, He is a deliverer, He is unique, He is a fortress, He is a refuge, a stronghold, He is consistent, He is a foundation for every generation, He is eternal. A cornerstone that will never crumble into dust.

▶ Living Stone to the Christian

The reason Christ is a Living Stone is that He has been raised from the dead never to die again. All stones connected to Him can share in that life. Peter uses the Greek word *proserchomai*, translated "come." Thayer says it means, "to attach one's self to Christ, to come to a participation in the benefits procured by him, 1 Pet. 2:4" (545). No physical rock is alive. Christ not only is alive He gives life. Peter refers to a living hope; the living word; and now a living stone. Christianity is a continuous coming to the Lord. We are coming for forgiveness. We are coming for salvation. Salvation requires us to come to Christ for spiritual life. Through out life the Christian continues to come to Christ. The danger with a loose connection with the living Stone.

▶ Chosen Stone of God

Before the world began God chose Christ be to this stone. Chosen is from the Greek *eklektos* meaning "picked or selected."

Just how did God make His selection. We are told that it is according to His purposes. God has His design or desire for the how and by whom mankind can be saved. When it come to the Temple in Jerusalem the perfect stone was to be chosen. God chose His Son based on His perfection. No better

building material could be found throughout the universe upon which to erect the spiritual Temple of God.

▶ **Precious Stone to Believers**

The term “*precious*” is also a favorite term of Peter. It is also used of Christ’s precious blood. Thayer tells us that “*precious*” means “held in honor, prized.” Christ is a stone that is prized and praised, honored, and revered. Many dishonored Him on earth but He is honored by believers as the Stone upon which our salvation rests.

Isaiah had used the promise of the Messiah as a stay on which God’s people could rely for assurance as they faced the Assyrian crisis. In chapter 28, Isaiah pronounced his woe upon the drunkards of Ephraim on whom God was going to bring judgment. Verse sixteen reads, “*Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.’*”

This Stone is precious because of its qualities. The Stone is exceedingly rare. Jesus is not one of many, He is the only One. It has inherent worth. Jesus is precious because of who He is. A precious stone must be useful. Christ is the only solution to the spiritual privation of all mankind.

Christ was rejected but now we all see the great precious value of this Living, Precious Cornerstone. To those who rejected this precious stone that are put to shame or confounded. Imagine a lady who spent a great deal of money on a diamond. She bragged about it and showed it off to everyone only to find out in front of everyone that her diamond is a fake. So are those who practice false religious built upon worthless foundations.

▶ **Rejected Stone by Jews**

Those who rejected the Stone kept on rejecting it. Today, many treat God’s Precious Stone with utter contempt. He was cast aside as worthless. This reaction was prophesied in Psalm 118:22. The rejection was not without examination. Christ is examined or put on trial and then judged as worthless. When Christ walked among us He was rejected because he did not conform to man’s expectations of a Messiah. He did not come to bring the earthly kingdom that carnal minded men longed for.

At the risk of sounding anti-Semitic, the rejecters in this context are clearly the Jews who rejected Jesus. The Christ was rejected of the chief priests, the elders, and that generation (Mk. 8:31; 9:22; Lk. 17:25). This rejection was foretold by Christ Himself (Mk. 8:31). John 1:11 says, “*He came to his own and those of his own did not receive him.*” Also consider the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. During the trial of Jesus Pilate offered the Jews: Barabbas the murderer or Jesus of Nazareth their king. The builders, the religious leaders and teachers of the Jews should have gladly labored with God in the raising of His “temple”, spurned the Stone He had supplied for its cornerstone. Their denial did not arrest His building, however; it merely kept them, and those who followed in their insubordination out of God’s temple.

Christ was rejected because of His lack of political ambition. They were expecting an earthly kingdom with a reigning monarch. When Jesus refused to live up to their expectations many of His disciples rejected Him (Jn. 6:15,66). Christ lacked physical fortune (Mt. 8:20). He lacked a formal education (Jn. 7:15). They were confused by His hatred of sin and love of right. His action of cleansing the Temple (Mt. 21:12,13) and pronouncing woes against the religious leaders (Ma. 23) challenging their religious authority (Mt. 15:7-9) was out of character with their ideal Messiah.

When Solomon was building his temple, almost all of the work was prefabricated. They did not want the noise of the workmen to defile the temple site. So the stones were quarried and shaped in other places, then were dragged to the temple site and, like a jigsaw puzzle, they were put together. As story goes there was one stone that didn’t fit. It had an odd shape and so it was laid aside. In the following months it became overgrown with weeds and forgotten. But then as they began to put the pieces together, they discovered that they couldn’t build because there was a crucial piece missing, They realized that they had set aside the corner stone, so they went back and found it, dragged it to the temple site and put it in its proper place. The stone that had been rejected became the head of the corner.

▶ **A Stumbling and Offensive Stone to the Disobedient**

In this quotation, Peter alluded to Isaiah 8:14. As Isaiah tried to give direction to Ahaz and the rest of the people of Judah in the face of the Assyrian threat, he directed them to God and His promise of the coming of the Messiah. At the specific time, Ahaz was being threatened with an invasion by the joint forces of Syria and Israel to force her into an alliance against Assyria. He formed an alliance with Assyria to ward

off this Syria-Israel threat. Syria and Israel were just *"two tails of these smoking firebrands."* Isaiah promised that all of these together could not destroy Judah if they trusted God (8:13-14). Those who rejected trust in God would find this rejection of His promises of the Messiah to be the source of their own destruction. Faith in these promises was a condition for salvation; rejection of them was the reason for destruction.

Once rejected the Stone was something in the way of the rejecters. Yet it was more than just a stumbling block it was a rock of offense. This refers to "a trap-stick - a bent stick on which the bait is fastened, which the animal strikes against, and so springs the trap" (Robinson). From the Greek *skandalon*, comes the English word "scandal." The rejection of Jesus was a scandal.

Peter is contrasting those who believe in the Stone with those who rejected it. To some people, Jesus serves as a "cornerstone." To others, He is a "stumbling stone." No alternative; there are only two choices, belief or unbelief. Jesus still has these opposing effects upon people. Like to poles of a magnet they reject each other. Turn them around and they attract each other. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* said of Jesus, "He is the Sovereign Lord of the Universe. We either believe him and make him the foundation of our lives, or we reject him and spend the rest of our lives falling over him. There is no other alternative". This was Jesus point in Mt. 21:44: *"And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*

Those who reject Christ had been appointed to stumble. Calvinists see in "appointed" predestination. Literally, it means: "who being disobedient stumble at the Word." Stumbling is the unavoidable consequence of rejection. They were not appoint to sin, but appointed to be punished because of their sin. The rejecters brought ruin on themselves. If their fall was appointed or literally laid out or ordained by God then how can they still be held accountable or responsible for their fall? When the infant Jesus was being presented to the Lord at the temple, an interesting statement was made concerning Him by Simeon: *"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel..."* (Lk 2:34).

We often sing "Jesus, Rock of Ages," for truly Jesus is like a rock. But what kind of rock is He to us? A rock of offense or a stone of stumbling or a chosen, living, precious cornerstone.

Precious Blessings From a Precious Stone

1 Peter 2:5,9a - *"you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, ..."*

In these verses, Peter mixes his metaphors. By alternating between the figure of a temple, priests and offering sacrifices he is able to adequately represent these heavenly mysteries. They are used to represent the relationship we have to the Christ who represents the chief corner stone that is precious.

Because of the Precious Stone we are...

...living stones

This represents quite a paradox. How can stones be living? Because they are not made of inanimate material but are redeemed souls made alive in Christ. As Isaiah wrote to the Jews, *"Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn"* (51:1).

...a spiritual house

Each living stone is quarried out of a sinful world is built into the spiritual house of Christ. It's nature is not material but spiritual. The materials used of its construction are the living souls of men. There is a famous story from Sparta. A Spartan king boasted to a visiting monarch about the walls of Sparta. The visiting monarch looked around and could see no walls. He said to the Spartan king. "Where are these walls about which you boast so much?" His host pointed at his bodyguard of magnificent troops. "These," he said, "are the walls of Sparta, every man a brick" (via William Barclay). Each Christian is part of the building project of Christ. Note the solidarity of the construction. Christians are built together to make this spiritual house. The design of the construction is by the architect Himself. Every stone fits where the

Master wants it. Finally, the idea is expressed in the text that this is an on going project. Marshall translates it "are being built".

...holy priesthood

In modern America religion has become one big spectator sport. Yet we are living stones built into a spiritual house for spiritual service as priests. We are one duty 24/7. In the Levitical priesthood a priest could only begin his ministry if he had been chosen by birth, clean by ceremony, clothed with special garb, and consecrated with oil. Thus he was holy or separated for the special work. Our special work is to "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God." Literally, it means "to bring up to the altar." What is brought must be a spiritual sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart. One that is acceptable to God. According to Malichi it must be the best we have (1:6-8) not our left overs. Pleasing sacrifices must be offered with sincerity and zeal (1:12-13) and in conjunction with righteous lives (2:13-16). These sacrifices can only be offered up through the agency of Christ our High Priest who is also the ultimate Sacrifice. A wide variety of such spiritual sacrifices are mentioned in the Bible: our bodies (Rom. 12:1-2); our praise (He 3:15), our doing good and sharing (Heb. 13:16), even our deaths (2 Ti 4:6-8), support of evangelists (Phil. 4:18), even the people we win to Christ are sacrifices for His glory (Rom. 15:16).

...a chosen generation

The Greek word *eklekton* and translated "chosen" means picked or selected. Good news! You have won the election in Christ. The Christian is chosen for privilege of being a part of God's royal family. He is chosen for obedience and for service. Unlike the perverted, twisted generation who have chosen to live in sin, as a result of our obedience to the Gospel we have become a chosen generation.

...royal priesthood

The New Testament does not teach a separate priesthood. No backward collars; taking confessions; special robes and titles or dispensing sacraments. In the Roman Catholic system, the priests are sacrificers who offer the real body and blood of Christ to God as an expiation of the sins of the people. They are intercessors with the power to forgive sins. They have the power of life and death. This view reduces people to a state of absolute subjection and denies them access to God. Now Christ is our only Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5). No man stands between us and God. We are all clergy. We are all priests before our High Priest. True Christianity is not a priestless religion, but a priest filled religion. A Kingdom of Priests. Yet, priests who are also royalty. This could never have been so in the Old Testament. Priests came from the tribe of Levi and Kings of Judah. The one King who tried to serve as priest was punished with leprosy (2 Chr. 26:16-21). Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was both king and priest. Thus, we too can be kings and priests (Rev. 1:5,6).

...holy nation

"Nation" here could be translated "race." "Race" denotes a blood-relation. The term "holy" indicates that Christians are separated from other nations like the nation of Israel. Separation is not segregation. Instead it is communication without contamination. We march to the beat of a different drummer. We sing a different national anthem and pledge our allegiance to a different flag.

... a peculiar people

Many have taught that "peculiar" means Christians must be odd or weird or strange. The Greek term comes from the right of a slave to acquire private property through his own skill and labor. It mean "purchased possession." Literally, we belong to God. We have been purchased: purchased from the world: purchased from sin, purchased from a sure eternity in hell. God owns us as His special people. It does not imply that He has purchased a bunch of odd balls. God paid a great price for His people. God thought that you and I were special enough to pay the cost to have you to His people. Thus, we are not an ordinary people we are special.

Proclaiming the Praises of the Precious Stone

1 Peter 2:9b - "...that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

When a wealthy man died, forty sundials of various sizes and configurations were found among

his collection of antiques. They were stored in a windowless room, displayed in special cabinets or standing on the floor. None of the instruments served any practical purpose, however. No one could tell the time by looking at them because they were kept inside. Sunshine is essential in reading sundials.

Every Christian has had many blessings sent down from God through His Son. Each Christian has a duty to let the light of God shine upon him. Yet if we keep ourselves hidden away we will never reflect the light into this dark world (Matt. 5:16). As a result God will not receive the glory due Him.

Since God has made us living stones, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and His own special people we should proclaim His praises. "*Praises*" could be translated "virtues" or "excellencies." The Greek word literally means, to speak forth God's deeds. Praise is from *arete* which has the meaning of "any excellence of a person." Therefore, we as a royal priesthood should be proclaiming the excellent virtues of God. Isaiah prophesied that we would be God's special people who would sing His praises. "*This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise*" (Is. 43:21) and "*Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare His praise in the coastlands*" (Is. 42:12).

Reasons for Praising the Precious Stone

Peter now gives three good reasons why we as living stones should proclaim the excellent virtues of God.

First, because we are called out of darkness. The method of this calling is by the Gospel. Marshall translates it as "having been called" (913). This would point to our calling to obey the Gospel at a particular point in the past. The place from which we were called is out of darkness. Darkness is often used as symbolic of sin and ignorance. Sinful deeds are called "*works of darkness*" (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:11). Sin has a blinding effect that leaves man in the dark. Through the Gospel we are called to the light. As the light dispels the darkness so in coming to Christ who is the light of the world our sin, ignorance and misery is dispelled.

The next reason for our need to praise God's excellencies is *because we are a people of God.* Perhaps, Peter is making an allusion here to Hosea 2:23. Paul applies the Hosea passage to Gentiles as opposed to Jews (Rom. 9:25). You belong to Him now. You are part of His people or race or family. This shows the intimacy of our relationship with God. If God had a wallet, your picture would be in it. If He had speed dial, your number would be on it. If the Christ and the Holy Spirit have a prayer list, your name would be inscribed.

The final reason given by Peter as to why we should shine forth the greatness of our God is *because we have obtained mercy from Him.* Why did God choose Israel? Was it because they were so much more righteous than all the other nations? Was it because God picks favorites? No! God chose them because of His loving grace (Dt. 7:6-8). Vine says that mercy "signifies, in general, to feel sympathy with the misery of another, and especially sympathy manifested in an act..." (III:61). All Christians can praise God for showing mercy to them in their great need of overcoming sin. Not one of us could save ourselves. We need the unmerited favor of God to help us even when we did not deserve it.

God has made His choice of who will be His special people, royal priesthood, holy nation, etc. It is all those who respond to the call of the Gospel to leave darkness and come into His marvelous light. He has made His choice. Have you made your choice?

Questions:

1. Why is a chief cornerstone so important?

2. Why is Christ called a living stone?
3. How is it that Christ is a precious stone?
4. Why did the Jews reject Christ - the Stone?
5. How is Jesus like a stumbling block?
6. What sacrifices does God's holy priesthood offer up today?
7. What makes our priesthood so unique?
8. T F When Peter states that Christians are a "peculiar people" he means they are odd, weird or strange.
9. What is the purpose of God making us living stones, a royal priesthood, a special people, etc?
10. What are three reasons for Christians to praise the precious stone?

The Citizenship of Pilgrims

Christian Conduct Before the World

1 Peter 2:11,12 - *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

Since God has made us living stones, a spiritual house, holy priesthood, a chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, and a peculiar people, how should we live in this world?

- **Abstain from Fleshly Lust**

According to Thayer the Greek word for “*fleshly*” means “under the control of the animal appetites...” (569). “Lust” means the “desire for what is forbidden” (Thayer, 238). It would include such things as the works of the flesh, envy, murder, hatred, fornication, etc. (Gal. 5:19-21).

The solution to fleshly lusts is to abstain, that is, keep them under restraint. The animal appetites in you must be kept chained. This is the leash law for Christians. We all have God given appetites, but we are obligated to keep them under control. For example, there is the desire for sex. Yet, sex outside of marriage is the sin of fornication. In order to avoid fornication, each one should have his own spouse (1 Cor. 7:2). The desire for sexual relations that comes from God is not sinful until one satisfies it outside marriage, because God did not authorize it outside of marriage.

- **Wage the War**

There is a war going on. The Christian has already chosen sides. Earth is a battleground not a playground. The idea of “*wage war*” is not a little battle or minor skirmish, but an extended military campaign. We are to fight the good fight of faith. As soldiers of Christ we must put on the whole armor of God and fight (Eph. 6:10f). We are not living in a world that is at peace with Christianity. Instead we are an army fighting a spiritual battle every day of our life.

- **Keep Your Conduct Beautiful**

This statement does not seem to work together. The conduct in war is anything but beautiful. Some translations use “*honest*” which comes from the Greek word *agathos* meaning good, fine, attractive, winsome. It is the beautiful deeds which our enemies “*behold*” which help us wage the good warfare. We are obligated to let our lives be attractive and beautiful to the wicked. As a song we sing: “Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in you.”

In Tokyo a 69 year old man won a beauty contest for bald men sponsored by the Tokyo Bald Headed Men’s Association. Contestants were judged partly by the luster on their scalps and the ability of their bald heads to reflect light. He won by not covering up his beauty with a rug of hair or ball cap. As Christians we must let our beautiful lives shine.

- **Show Good Works**

What makes the story of the Good Samaritan so compelling? The merciful deeds were done on behalf of a total stranger. You are being watched so show forth good works. Alexander McClaren said, “The world takes its notions of God most of all from the people who say that they belong to God’s family. They read us a great deal more than they read the Bible. In fact, they see us, they only hear about Jesus Christ.” We are the only Bibles most people will ever read. The only sermons they will ever see. While we are doing the good works the Gentiles are observing. We walk the talk. We back up our words with our works.

Why Christians Should Watch Their Conduct?

▶ **We Are Beloved**

"Beloved" is a term of endearment. It is found sixty-three times in the New Testament. It could be translated "my friends whom I love." Loved by whom? By Peter, of course. But most of all God and Christ. Behavior is effected by those who love us.

▶ **We Are Sojourners and Pilgrims**

I love the song: *Here We are but Straying Pilgrims*. It reminds us that we are strangers on this earth, that is, aliens who live in a foreign land without the right of citizenship (Thayer 490). Also, we are reminded that we are pilgrims on our way home from this foreign land. We cannot regard this earth as our home. Heaven is where we have our citizenship (Phil. 3:20). "This world is not my home, I'm..." What? "...just a passin' through, my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue." If we become too attached to the world we will become like caged birds who will not fly away from the cage even if the door is opened. Why? They are content to live in a cage. The Christian life is a pilgrim journey, not a sightseeing tour.

▶ **Our Soul Is at Stake**

The casualty of losing this war is to lose your soul. If you lose it, what will be given in exchange for it (Mt. 16:24). The way you live our life on earth will determine where you spend eternity in the next life.

▶ **Their Souls Are at Stake**

What is the day of visitation? Visitation these words are used to express God's favor and in many other places, God's displeasure. Several ideas have been given from the destruction of Jerusalem to the day of Judgment. Yet the most common use is what is meant here, the preaching of the Gospel (Luke 19:44). When Jesus raised the son of the widow of Nain, the observers said that a great prophet was among them and "*That God hath visited his people*" (Lk. 7:16). When the Gospel is preached to the lost men are visited by God with the offer of forgiveness. If we live wickedly then the Gospel will not be well received by the lost. On the other hand, those who see our good conduct will be moved to receive the Gospel and glorify God by obeying Him and being saved by Him.

The result of our good conduct is to convert our enemies. What better way to wage war than to live so as to make your enemies your allies. Wives can so win their husbands who view their godly behavior.

▶ **Silence the Critics**

The world often speaks evil of Christians, that is, they speak down on us. The early Christians were charged by their critics with "*turning the world upside down*." They were accused of being enemies of the government (Acts 17:6,7). They were condemned because they opposed others religions (Acts 19:27-29). An early Christian writer by the name of Tertullian wrote: "If the Tiber rises to the walls of the city, if the Nile does not irrigate the fields, if an earthquake takes place, if famine or the pestilence arise, they cry forthwith; Away with the Christians to the lions." Augustine reports that it became a proverb in North Africa, "If there is no rain, tax it on the Christians." Celsus, accused Christians of ignorance and foolishness and superstition and all kinds of things - but never of immorality. Roman historian Tacitus called Christians "a class hated for their abominations". They were falsely accused of incest because they called themselves brothers and sisters and yet some were married and still calling each other brothers and sisters. Early saints were condemned for cannibalism because they partook of the Lord's Supper every Sunday.

How can we silence such blind criticism? By showing them the true beauty of our good works. When Plato was told that a certain man had been making certain slanderous charges against him, his answer was: "I will live in such a way that no one will believe that he says." May we so live that no one will believe the lies, but instead become one of us.

Submissive Citizens

1 Peter 2:13-16 - *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you*

may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free, yet not using your liberty as a cloak for vice, but as servants of God.

In 1920 the city of Waterloo, Nebraska passed the following law: *"It shall be illegal for any barber in this town to eat onions between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m."* Another looney law was passed in Kansas: *"When two trains approach each other at a crossing they shall both come to a full stop, and neither shall start up until the other has gone."* Today, you may think that some of our laws are looney. What do you do when there's nobody there but you and a stop sign? Some people believe that all civil government is in rebellion to God and that Christians can have no part in it whatsoever. Others believe that civil government is authorized by God and that whatever it requires is right to do. Others believe that one's relation to civil government should be controlled by the will of God.

Peter did not criticize the Roman government or suggest that it be overthrown. Not only are Christians to conduct themselves with good behavior before the world, they are to be submissive citizens.

▶ **Submit to All**

"Submit" is from *hupotasso*, a military term that means "to fall in rank under an authority." During this chapter and the next Peter is going to focus on the submission of citizens, Christ, workers, marriage partners, etc.

Submission involves all types of governmental authority. This includes human creations, such as, "ordinances" or supreme authority as exercised by the king, i.e. the Roman emperor. Also, Christians must submit to those who are appointed by the king, such as, governors. Whether the government is a monarchy or a republic is not the question. Government, not necessarily the form of it, is a divine ordinance. We live in a democracy. In New Testament times the state was authoritarian. The Roman Emperors were absolute rulers. We must remind ourselves to honor the office even if we cannot admire the officer. Nero who was emperor at the time of Peter's writing. His wickedness and cruelty is well attested to by history.

▶ **Submit Because it is Ordained by God**

God has created the home, government, and the church. Naturally, He should have the right set the rules in regard to how we view these institutes. They only exist and exercise their authority because God permits. Pilate had said that he had the "power" to put Jesus to death (Jn. 19:10). Jesus said His authority came from above (Jn. 19:11). This statement shows that the right that Pilate talked about could not be his unless God had appointed or granted it to civil government. Pilate misused his authority in executing an innocent man.

▶ **Submit to God, First**

The exception to our submission to governments: we must obey God rather than man! Daniel was appointed by King Darius of the Persians to rule all of his land. His enemies passed a law that made it an offense to pray to anyone but the king. But the prophet openly went to his room, as was his custom, knelt down by his window in full view of everybody and prayed to God, not the king. He was thrown in the lions den for breaking this law of the Medes and the Persians, but was delivered by God, He was willing, however, to lose his life rather than obey the law of the land. The apostles refused to obey men Peter and John had upset the religious elite in Jerusalem. The city's power brokers were disturbed by the message the two men preached and the miracles they performed. They had to be stopped. Peter and John were arrested and thrown into jail. They had every reason to be afraid. Yet, the next day they stood up to their accusers with great courage. *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge"* they boldly said (Acts 4:19). They feared God more than they feared their persecutors. Although the apostles had been told by the Sanhedrin not to preach Christ. They are arrested the second time. They are bluntly told that the apostles are under God's authority not their prejudices. *"But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men'"* (Acts 5:29). They did not cause a rebellion or in any way question or deny the authority of the council. Many people don't understand our behavior because they do not know our heavenly Father. His authority outranks all others. Yet, many appear to be strange because they refuse to heed the authority of others. A teacher asked the kids to join a dance in the chemistry lab instead of class. One student is strange. He refuses. A professor asked artists to draw sketches of live nude models both male and female. One student states that she cannot do this and requests options or will take a failing grade. A boss tells workers they must contribute to a

specific cause. One unusual employee says he cannot give to such an organization without violating his conscience. A government tells a mother she must abort her second child. She will risk her life to save her child from being murdered by a government doctor. All these refusals are real. They represent the courage of those who are able to say no to men while living right before God.

Reasons Why Christians Should Submit

First, we submit for the “*Lord’s sake.*” Of course, everything we do should be for the glory of the Lord and the good of His kingdom. Do you realize Paul never resisted arrest? Never. They put him in stocks, do you think they had to wrestle him in? If any Christian is ever arrested, he will be arrested for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nothing less.

Second, we submit to government because they are for the “*punishment of evildoers.*” God has appointed governments to exist for this very purpose. Those who do good must support the government for this very purpose.

Next, we submit to government because it exist for the praise of those who do good. Government should punish the criminals and reward good citizens. Christians by submitting to the government can support this.

Another reason is because our submission to the government is the will of God. The governing authorities that exist have been appointed by God (Rom. 13:1). Therefore, to oppose the government means to contest God Himself (Rom. 13:2-4). It is God’s will the government exist and His will that we submit to it.

By submitting to the government we can silence the ignorance. The early Christians were plague by the foolish charges. In Thessalonica, for example, it was charged *that “they act contrary to the decrees of Caesar”* (Ac. 17:7). They were also charged with cannibalism and incest. These accusations were made in ignorance, that is, “without reason...senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly” (Thayer 90). The Christians should silence these ignorant remarks. Literally, “*silence*” means to “muzzle.” When Christians lead a life of uncompromising honesty our enemies will not be able to substantiate their claims.

The Manner of Submission

We must submit ourselves to the government “as free.” Not free from the government. Yet, some Christians might have wondered why they should submit to the evil Roman government when they were free in Christ. They are free from sin and its quilt. They are free to serve God and free from fear of men. Christians do not to submit like slaves but as free men in Christ. No one can truly force you to submit. Submission is by person will or choice. We are free to choose. Free to use the government ordinances (Ac. 16:16-24; 16:35-40; 22:22-29; 25:1-12). Not free from all restraint; not at liberty to indulge in all things, but bound to serve God in the obedience of His laws.

Liberty is not license. Liberty is not libertinsim - free of all law. It is not “Love God, and do what you like.” One Christian said he doesn’t pay taxes or obey the speed laws because he is a citizen of heaven, not of this earth. Without submission to restrains men do not find liberty but helpless slavery. Seneca said, “No one is free who is the slave of his body.” Cicero wrote, “We are the servants of the laws that we may be able to be free.” In the Bible, Eve’s “freedom” lead to eviction from the garden. The prodigal son lost his way when he demanded his freedom.

We are to submit as bond-servants of God. A bond-servant according to Thayer is “one who gives himself wholly to another’s will” (158). Free servants sounds like an oxymoron. Freedom and loyalty to rulers may co-exist, but only has bond-servants to God. By serving God and submitting to the government the Christian avoids sinful conflicts. If God prohibits an action by the Christian not even the government can order him to do it.

Gardel, 80, was a poor widow in France. She had enough money only to pay taxes. She walk fourteen miles to the nearest tax office. “We need to take care of our government financially so that it stays democratic. I don’t have a checking account, and can’t afford the bus fare. I thought of hitch-hiking, but it isn’t proper for a lady.” Tax officials, arranged to give her a ride home. Whether the government stays democratic or not we are to submit with this lady’s kind of devotion.

Submissive Bondservants of God

1 Peter 2:17 - *"Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king"*

In verse seventeen Peter sums up our four sided relationship as citizens in this world and as bondservants of God. These short messages are relevant for all Christians, of all nations, and in all ages.

Socially: Honor All People

The Chicago Tribune (9/1/96) ran the story of Buddy Post, "living proof that money can't buy happiness." In 1988, he won \$16.2 million in Pennsylvania Lottery. Since then, he was convicted "Of assault, his sixth wife left him, his brother was convicted of trying to kill him, and his landlady successfully sued him for one-third of the jackpot. 'Money didn't change me,' insists Post, a 58-year old former carnival worker and cook. 'It changed people around me that I knew, that I thought cared a little bit about me. But they only cared about the money.'"

Yes, money changes the way some people feel about others in society. Those who have money are envied by those who do not. In turn, those who have money tend to look down upon those who do not have money. Becoming a Christian and receiving salvation should change our attitude toward all people in society for the better. Rich, poor, black or white, regardless of race or religion. The lawyer, the politician, the waitress, the barber, postman, and contractor are all included. The charge is an inclusive one, not exclusive

Why honor ALL people? All men and women are the offspring of a loving, merciful God. No matter their race, sex, nationality, income or education we must respect and love them as fellow creations of God, made in His image. Because God sent His Son to die for them showing all men that much love and honor, we must also honor those who were the object of the Savior's compassion.

Fraternally: Love the Brotherhood

Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, was passing along a street one day, when a beggar stopped him and pleaded for alms. The great Russian searched through his pockets for a coin, but finding none he regretfully said, "Please don't be angry with me, my brother, but I have nothing with me. If I did I would gladly give it to you." The beggar's face flamed up, and he said, "You have given me more than I asked for. You have called me brother."

We are fraternally related to those who are our brothers in Christ. The Greek word used here is *adelphotes*, meaning "to keep loving the brotherhood". A continuous active goodwill toward them. The brotherhood is the universal church over which Christ is head. Don't make the mistake of limiting this to just those in "our congregation." This should not be watered down by questions about who we can and should fellowship. We can love all those in the brotherhood even those we disagree with. No where are we commanded to stop loving a false teacher. Just because I believe a brother is not teaching the truth or practicing the truth does not mean I do not love him. Just because I cannot have joint participation with him in worship or the preaching the Gospel does not mean I have stopped loving him.

The New Testament is resplendent with commands to love one another.

- 1 Peter 1:22 - *"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,"*
- 1 Peter 3:8 - *"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;"*
- 1 John 3:11, 14 - *"For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,... We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death".*

Why so much consideration on loving the brethren? Because of the common fatherhood we have before God, the intimate relationship we share in Christ, and all the duties, such as, the "one another" commandments we must fulfill toward each other.

Just what type of love is involved here? After all, there are four different words for love. *Eros* is physical love. *Storge* is the love we have for kinfolks. These are not used in the New Testament in relation to Christians. However we are to have brotherly affection toward each other or *phileo*. The most commonly used word is *agapao*. It involves seeking the highest good for another. It is not an emotion or a feeling. This love requires us to seek the highest good will as we attend with, discipline or rebuke our brethren.

Spiritually: Fear God

The word “*fear*” is from *phobeo*. According to Thayer it means “to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience” (656).

This is a fear of offending or causing pain through misconduct. We show fear toward God by respecting His authority. Augustine said, “Love God and do what you please.” If you love God, of course, you will do what pleases Him. You will keep His commandments (1 John 5:3).

Since God made us and loves us it should be only fitting that we fear Him. “*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*” (Prov. 1:7). Remember the hymn, “Amazing Grace”? One verse says, “’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. . . .” When we fear God, all other fears are relieved. If we have a proper respect toward the King of kings having a healthy fear of mere kings of this earth should come naturally and easily.

Civil: Honor the King

As mentioned above all governmental authorities are ordained of God. They are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Solomon instructed his son, “*My son, fear thou the Lord and the king*” (Pr. 24:21). Paul exhorts us to pray for those who are in authority over us (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Give honor to whom honor is due by paying taxes, by living in subjection to him and by cooperating with them in every worthy endeavor. Not so much out of a fear of suffering but of doing wrong. When Daniel and his three friends refused to obey the king’s dietary regulations, they disobeyed the law; but the way that they did it proved that they honored the king and respected the authorities (Daniel 1). Later, when Daniel prayed in violation to a law signed by the king of the Medo-Persian Empire he was cast into a lions den. The king’s reaction shows that Daniel did not dishonor the king. Remember, even Herod was regretful when he had John the Baptist’s head removed. We cannot always obey the government. Yet in obeying God rather than men we do not have to behave or treat the government in a dishonorable fashion.

The verb tense on all four of these commands indicates a continual action, that is, Christians are to keep on honoring and loving. May you remember to follow these four short duties as submissive bondservants of God as you live day by day in this world.

Questions:

1. What is the nature of our war?
2. As Christians what are we to show the world?
3. Give five reasons why Christians should watch their conduct?

4. What is the "*day of visitation*"?
5. What are some of the slanderous lies which Christians faced in the first centuries?
6. Who was emperor at the time of Peter's writing? What kind of ruler was he? Were Christians to submit to him?
7. Give examples from the Bible where godly men or women could not obey or submit to the laws of the land?
8. Give five reasons why Christians should submit to the government?
9. In what manner does a Christian submit to the government?
10. Why should Christians honor all people?
11. List some other passages which command Christians to love one another.
12. What is the verb tense in all four commands in verse seventeen? What does this imply?

Servants Suffering Submissively

Submissive Servants

1 Peter 2:18-20 - *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer for it, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

When you think of a slave do you think of Kunte Kinte and the mini-series *Roots*? Many of the converts that Peter was writing to were slaves. The Gospel had a great appeal to those who were slaves. The poor find the Gospel appealing while the rich do not (Js. 2:5; 1 Cor. 1:26). On a grave in ancient Greece: "Zosime, a slave in body alone, has now found freedom." In Christ however there was freedom. "In Christ there is neither slave nor free man." In the early church a slave could be a bishop of the congregation while his master could be a member of it.

This new found freedom had its difficulties. Being a freeman and equal to His master on Sunday the slave once again became a tool on Monday. It was difficult for them to reconcile subjection to men with liberty in Christ. Some equated spiritual freedom with personal freedom. Thus, Peter informs these converts of the need to be submissive.

Slavery in Ancient Israel

The Israelites could impose slavery on those whose iniquity was full (Gen. 15:16; Lev. 25:44-46). Jews were not to sell each other into slavery. However, they could be indentured servants (Lev. 25:39-43). A Hebrew in slavery was to be set free in the seventh year (Ex. 21:1,2) or sooner if the year of jubilee occurred (Lev. 25:39-41; Dt. 15:13-15). So, the longest period to be served was six years. The Old Testament clearly condemns the oppression of slaves. Even a servant who ran off was not to be oppressed (Dt. 23:15,16). In the event that a servant was smitten and lost an eye or a tooth, the servant was to be set free for the sake of the other eye or for the sake of the tooth (Ex. 21:26,27).

Slavery in the Roman Empire

According to Roman law one could sell themselves into slavery if they were in financial difficulties. Later, they could save up their money and buy themselves back. As the Romans began to conquer the world they used their prisoners of war as slaves. Soon there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire. According to Roman law a slave was a thing, not a person. He had no legal rights. The Roman historian Cato, writing in the first century B.C., said, "Sell worn-out oxen, blemished cattle. . . old tools, old slaves, a sickly slave, and whatever else is useless." Aristotle writes, "a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave." Varro, another writer, divides the instruments of agriculture into three classes...the articulate, the inarticulate, and the mute. The articulate are the slaves, the inarticulate comprise the cattle, and the mute are the vehicles. Most the labor done in the Empire was by slaves. Romans revered idleness and delegated work to slaves.

There were four classes of slaves: those who worked in the mines, those who worked on the farms, those who worked for the cities, and those to whom Peter is writing, the "house servants." The term applied to those who were sold into slavery or hired as servants. These would sometimes become as trusted members of the family.

The New Testament several books gave some rules for Christians who found themselves in the

servant/master relationships. One rule which would have been so natural to break was the command not to rebel, to throw off the yoke of bondage (Eph. 6:6,7). There had been many revolts before in the past, yet they were put down by the authorities with great violence. Christian slaves were to be in the Lord, as free, as a bond-servants. The human condition in relation to one's standing in the Lord is irrelevant. With God the issue is not human economic relationships, but one's relationship with Him and consequently a spiritual relationship with others. Being a Jew or a Gentile, or being a slave or being free was not abolished by being a Christian (Gal. 3:28). One can be spiritually free while living his life as a slave. Another command to both servants and masters was to view each other as brothers in Christ. When Paul sent the runaway slave Onesimus back to Philemon, he did not for a moment suggest that Philemon should set Onesimus free. He did not suggest that Philemon should cease to be the master and that Onesimus should cease to be the slave. What he did say was that Philemon must receive Onesimus not now as a servant, but as a brother beloved (Philemon 16). Yet another command reversed the long standing view that work is bad and idleness is a virtue. Christianity introduced a fresh disposition toward work. Work is good and pleasing to God even if the work is performed for an unbelieving master. The Christian was to do his work as if he were working for the Lord.

All this did not mean the New Testament approves of slavery dealing in slavery by kidnaping men (men stealers) and selling them is atrocious and severely condemned in the New Testament (1 Tim. 1:10). The Gospel was not just the good news to slaves. Yet, indirectly it was bad news for slavery. Although the Gospel's intended design was to save men from their sins, it did have as its by-product the cessation of the practice of slavery. By 314 A.D. Christianity had spread and influenced the Roman world to the extent that Emperor Constantine abolished slavery.

Now let us take a look at some additional commands from the apostle Peter to household servants of the first century. Peter says that servants must be...

◆ **Be Submissive**

Today, everybody is into rights. Strikes, protests, walk outs, law suits are all common experiences because people are clamoring for "my rights." Submission is a dirty word and a demeaning concept. Yet, somebody has to lead, somebody has to follow, somebody must be in charge, and somebody needs to submit.

The term for "*submit*" means to yield. It means literally "to stand under." Like the concept of LaMaze in childbirth, you don't fight the pain you submit to it and work with it. Submission is more than just on outward obedience to the boss. It also involves an inward attitude. In a cartoon I remember seeing, Dennis the Menace is sitting in his rocking chair facing the corner, where his mother has put him to punish him. He is saying over his shoulder to his mother, "I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside!"

In the first century a slave did as little as he could. If he could he would pilfer or steal from the masters (Tit. 2:9,10). Not only is this condemned but God wants servants to work heartily (Col. 3:23) and with singleness of heart (Eph. 6:5), that is, sincerity or honesty.

◆ **Be Submissive to Good Masters**

Submission is a lot easier for you if you have a good master. A gentle master was "equitable, fair, mild" (Thayer 238). Not all slaves were unhappy. Many would have enjoyed a great deal of freedom and success. There were some believing masters (1 Tim. 6:2). Masters are to forbear threatening their slaves (Col. 4:1). Christian employees must never take advantage of Christian employers.

◆ **Be Submissive to Mean Masters**

Just because you have a lousy master or boss does not give you as a Christian the right to be disobedient. The Greek word used here for "*harsh*" is *skolios*. You've heard of scoliosis of the spine or curvature. That's the word, it means bent, crooked, curved, metaphorically perverse. A boss may be crooked, but the Christian worker must be straightforward in his labors for this employer.

◆ **Be Fearful**

Fear could apply in many ways. Servants work in fear of offending their masters, of being punished by their masters or the authorities, but mostly the fear of offending God and bringing reproach on the name of Christ.

◆ **Be Patient in Punishment**

A master has a right to punish or buffet his servant. According to Vine the word “buffet” means “to strike with clenched hands, to buffet with the fist.” Some believe it meant to give a box on the ear. Today, employers have ways to punish workers for poor performance on the job.

The question asked is a rhetorical one. Of course, a worker who deserves to be punished should take it patiently. He deserves it and should take it “like a man.” However, if one is innocent of doing wrong or is suffering punishment due to his relationship with Christ he is not only to take it with patience, but he finds favor with Christ for doing so. So if you are always late to work, doing a half-hearted job, stealing or having a bad attitude and uncooperative disposition, God wants to take your punishment with a calm attitude. Yet, if you are suffering punishment for Christ’s sake and taking it patiently, you are bringing honor to the name of Christ.

Why Servants Suffer Patiently

1 Peter 2:18-21 - Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer for it, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

Peter previously addressed the need for Christians to be submissive servants who are submissive both to good masters and harsh masters, to be fearful and suffer patiently. Now we will explore the reasons why we must suffer patiently.

● **It Is Commendable Before God**

Submissive servants must suffer patiently “because this gains the favor of God.” In the NKJV, the word “commendable” is used twice in verses 19,20. The NASV translates it as “finds favor.” It makes God grateful.

How we can be sure to have this commendable conduct? Celebrate that you are counted worthy to suffer. Combat the temptation to retaliate. It was because David refused to take vengeance on King Saul that we remember his story to this day. It was because Joseph was so willing to forgive his brothers that we admire him to this day. Reply to mistreatment by doing more good. Count on God. As Job did in all his suffering.

● **Because of Conscience Toward God**

The Greek word for “conscience” is composed of “sun”, meaning “together or with”, and “oida”, “to know”, and thus it means “joint knowledge.”

One can bear up under mistreatment for several different reasons. Fear of further or greater abuse can move one to bear it calmly. A sense of hopeless despair can cause one not to fight back. However, the Christian must be patient in suffering because of His knowledge of God. He is a son of God and must behave in a way pleasing to Him.

● **Because You Were Called to Suffer**

The term “called” means “to invite one” (Thayer 321). The Gospel is an invitation to suffering with Christ for the cause of righteousness. Those who wish to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. Many of those in the New Testament who have been known suffered bodily affliction (Phil. 2:27; 2 Tim. 4:20; 2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Tim. 5:23). This does not sit well in relation to the Health/Wealth Gospel which teaches that God wants all Christians to have good health and wealth.

● **To Follow Christ’s Example**

We have the perfect example to follow if we find ourselves suffering unjustly. Christ suffered at the hands of His enemies and yet showed us how to suffering patiently. When Christ mentioned His suffering and dying, Peter at first rejected it. Later, he denied the Lord and wept bitterly. Now he looks to Him as the supreme example. All Christians of all ages are to keep their eyes on Him.

The Greek term for example is *hupogrammos* meaning literally “to write under.” Remember how in grade school the teacher would have you practice writing your letters. A practice sheet would be handed out with the letters written at the top of the page with lines to write the letters under it. The letter on top served as the example.

Next the metaphor changes from an ancient wax tablet for copying letters to a guide we are to follow. Because He is our example we are to follow Christ’s footsteps. Disciples are followers. He goes where the master goes and does what He does.

You can find all sorts of things today, bracelets, necklaces, etc with the initials W.W.J.D. These initials stand for “What Would Jesus Do?” That is a good question to ask ourselves when we find ourselves suffering in a difficult situation. Christ never led a protest. He never led civil disobedience. He never led a demonstration against Roman abuses. He never led a demonstration against the crimes of Jewish leaders. He never led a protest against the pathetic laws of Gentile leaders. He never even protested when they violated every law of justice in His own trial. He spoke only of the Kingdom of God. His words to Pilate in John 18:33-38 are proof that He was in complete command of the situation. *“Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself on this, or did others tell you this about Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all.’”*

A disciple must expect to go where the master leads. If the master was “ripped off”, mistreated, had His “rights” violated than the disciples must expect the same. You cannot bargain on fairing better than your master. After all, no matter how much we suffer in this life it cannot compare to what Christ suffered. Have you been nailed to a cross by your boss for something you did not do? Have you been crucified by the business world because of your relationship to Christ? Have you been whipped without cause by the demands of a godless world? Then look to Jesus and suffer it patiently.

A Christian on the job has more at stake than his rights or a paycheck. The salvation of your soul, your co-workers’ souls and even the soul of your boss is on the line. Let them see Christ living in you even when you have to suffer wrong.

There is an old story of a Persian prince with a physical deformity that forced him into a constant stoop. The prince had a statue made of himself as he would appear if he were straight and tall. Day after day he stood before the figure and wished he could be like it. According to the legend, the prince eventually stood as straight as the statue. If you look to Jesus every day, one day you will see that you have become like Him in many ways.

Questions:

1. What was slavery like in the Roman world?
2. Did Christianity condemn Christian masters for having slaves or encourage Christians to rebellion against ungodly masters? Explain.
3. Did a Christians liberty in Christ guarantee them freedom from slavery?

4. What commands are given to Christians who are slaves?
5. Is God pleased when Christians suffering for righteousness?
6. Explain how Christian slaves were to be fearful?
7. How can Christians suffer in good conscience?
8. How is it that the Gospel is an invitation to suffering?
9. Give examples in the life of Christ where He suffered and why we are to imitate Him?
10. How can the suffering of Jesus help Christians in their suffering on the job or by the world?

Submissive Suffering Savior

1 Peter 2:21-24a - *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree,*

Peter writes out of a personal experience. He was present when the Lord was betrayed. When our Lord was arrested. Peter was there at the trial before the members of the Sanhedrin, and finally before Pontius Pilate. He saw Jesus suffer. He now urges Christians to follow the footsteps of Christ who has shown His example as a submissive suffering Savior. Peter explains the manner of Christ's suffering...

Christ Suffered Without Sin. During the trials of Jesus, Pilate said, *"I find no fault in Him."* Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him declared, *"I have betrayed innocent blood."* Although as a man and tempted as all men He did no sin. No man had ever before or has any man ever since lived life without sin, much less, suffered without sin. If Christ can suffer without using it as an excuse to sin, so can we.

Christ Suffered Sincerely. Guile means deceit. Christ was honest, He did not engage in any type of deceit. To speak with guile would be to use double speak. To trap others in a conversation with half-truths. Guile is found in the mouth because it is first found in the heart (Mk. 7:22). In all areas of His life He never deceived any man, because His interest was not in what others had, but what they didn't: eternal life.

Christ Suffered with Self-Restraint. Although many reviled Christ He did not return the same upon His abusers. To *revile* here means to "heap abuse upon" (Thayer 382). The enemies of our Lord had accused Him of being a seditious man; in league with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; a blasphemer of God, a wine bibber and a glutton. Yet, while accused before Pontius Pilate He made no reply to them (Mt. 27:12-26). He suffered on the cross and men heaped abuse upon him (Mt. 27:34-44). *"He saved others; himself he cannot save"* (Mt. 27:39). He did not seek revenge. He did not return evil for evil, but good for evil. Praying to God on the cross for the forgiveness of His killers.

Christ Suffered in Silence. Christ did not have any remarks to fire back at His accusers so he remained silent. He could have called twelve legions of angels yet remained silent. He could have said, "I'm coming back when this is over, and when I do I'm going to get you!" He denounced hypocrites with severity never equaled, but he never threatened in revenge for what he suffered.

Christ Suffered in Submission. Christ it is said "committed himself." The word *commit* means to surrender. He submitted Himself to the Judge of all men. God the Father who judged Adam and Eve, the generation of Noah's day, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Egyptian, Israelites by sending them into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. If you know you cannot receive justice from men you can only trust in God who will always judge righteously.

Christ Suffered as a Substitute. He bore our sins. Literally this means Christ "carried up" as one carries a sacrifice up before God. His sacrifice was Himself, not our sins. Christ had no sins of His own, so He bore our sins. Man was guilty of sin and needed a sinless sacrifice, a substitute for his sin-filled life. Christ was the only one who could be a substitute. As the scapegoat for the sins of the people so Christ was for all men.

Christ bore the sins of mankind on a tree, that is, the cross. The cross in early English poetry is often called "christos tre." Jewish people did not crucify criminals; they stoned them to death. But if the victim was especially evil, his dead body was hung on a tree until evening, as a mark of shame (Dt. 21:23). It was a particularly evil thing for a body to be so displayed. *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of*

the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')," (Gal. 3:13).

Christ bore them in His body. The consequence of sin hurt or afflict the body. Christ did not just receive the penalty of sin figuratively, or spiritually in His soul, but He suffered physically for the sins of others. He was beaten and crucified.

Victories Via the Suffering Savior

1 Peter 2:24b, 25: *"that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls"*

Christians Are Dead to Sin. *"Died"* the literally meaning is "having ceased to be." The cessation from sin occurred when one obeyed the gospel. No longer are we slaves to sin, but servants to righteousness. When you come upon a snake in the path and you want to know whether or not it is dead you do not walk up and kick it or pick it up. Instead you pick up a big, long stick, preferable fifteen to twenty feet long. If you hit the snake with the long stick and it does not move or react after several hits you feel confident that the snake is dead. If we are dead to sin we will cease to respond to it. In this case Christians are dead to the habits or guilt of their past sins.

Christians Are Alive To Righteousness. This means the opposite of sin, it is doing what is right instead of what is wrong. Paul states, *"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God"* (Rom. 6:13).

Christians Are Healed via His Stripes. Modern divine healers include healing of the body from affliction and disease. These are spiritual diseases healed by His stripes. Stripes here does not refer to scourging, but the effect of it. It is a bloody bruise that arises from a blow. Christ would have received many of these from His scourging. Because He went through such a beating we can be healed. Ironically, one Man's physical stripes resulted in the healing of all men's stripes, spiritually. The cure for sins' wounds remains the same.

Christians Have Returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of Our Souls. Imagine a flock of sheep that work as traffic cops. I don't think that they run up behind your speeding car sounding "Baaah, Baaah, Baaah, Baaah!" Nor would they fleece you with a big ticket for you to pay? Yet in Culemborg, Netherlands a fluffy flock of sheep patrols the road in a neighborhood to act as mobile speed bumps that slow down speeding cars. This is a rare occasion when sheep have become overseers of men. Sheep are not like dogs or cats who can sniff their way home. They just keep eating and walking, and eventually fall over a cliff or are eaten by a wolf. They need a shepherd or overseer to constantly watch out for them. Jesus saw aimless, sinful man *"as sheep having no shepherd"* (Mt. 9:36).

The point at which we return to Christ is when we are converted. The Greek word for return is *epistrepho* which means "to turn to" or "to cause to turn to." It is also translated "convert" and "repent" in various passages.

Christ is our Overseer. In other places it is translated "bishop." It does not carry with it the sense of an elevated ecclesiastical title. It comes from the Greek word *episkopos*. The great champion of the Trojans, is called the *episkopos*. His duty was to guard the city of Troy. Justice, for instance is *episkopos*, who sees to it that a man shall pay the price for the wrong he has done. Plato calls market-stewards the *episkopoi* who "supervise personal conduct." In Athenian law and administration the *episkopoi* were governors. In Rhodes the main magistrates were five *episkopi* who presided over the good government and the law and order of the state. It means the protector of public safety; the guardian of honor and honesty; the overseer of right education and of public morals; the administrator of public law and order. Thayer defines it was "guardian of souls, one who watches over their welfare" (Thayer 243). Christ is "The Bishop of bishops" not the pope. As Christians we are blessed with an overseer for our souls.

Christ is our Shepherd. Not only is Christ our Overseer, but our Shepherd. He will guide us and keep us from wandering aimlessly in life. Truly, *"The Lord is my shepherd"* (Ps. 23:1; Is. 40:11; Ezek.

34:33; 37:24; Jn. 10:1-18). In the Old Testament, the sheep died for the shepherd in sacrifice or for food; but at Calvary, the Shepherd died for the sheep (Jn. 10).

A tourist who had visited a church in Norway said that he was surprised to see the carved figure of a lamb near the top of the church's tower. He learned that when the church was being built, a workman fell from a high scaffold. His co-workers rushed down, expecting to find him dead. But to their surprise and joy, he was alive and only slightly injured. How did he survive? A flock of sheep was passing beneath the tower at the time, and he landed on top of a lamb. The lamb broke his fall and was crushed to death, but the man was saved. To remember that miraculous escape, someone carved a lamb on the tower at the exact height from which the workman fell.

The Lamb of God who became our suffering Savior has now made us dead to sin, alive to righteousness, healed our stripes, and allowed us to return to Him who is our souls' Overseer and Shepherd.

Questions:

1. How or in what manner did Christ bear His suffering?
2. How is the suffering of Jesus different from that of any other man who has ever suffered?
3. How is it that Christians are dead to sin?
4. In what way did Christ demonstrate submissiveness in suffering?
5. How did Christ demonstrate self-restraint as he suffered?
6. Why did Jesus suffer in silence?
7. In what way is Christ our substitute?
8. How are our wounds healed? What do these wounds represent?
9. Why do Christians need an Overseer?
10. Why do Christians need a Shepherd?

Submissive Duties of Christian Wives

1 Peter 3:1-6: *1. Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2. when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. 3. Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; 4. but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6. as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.*

The ancient world had a very unbiblical view of women. Socrates wrote of Greek husbands and their treatment of their wives: "Is there anyone to whom you entrust more serious matters than your wives, and is there anyone to whom you talk less?" Seneca wrote in 64 A.D.: "Women were married to be divorced and divorced to be married." Cato: "if you were to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her with impunity without a trial." Sulpicius Gallus dismissed his wife because she had once appeared in the streets without a veil. Antistius Vetus divorced his wife because he saw her secretly speaking to a freed woman in public. Publicus Sempronius Sophus divorced his wife because once she went to the public games. A Jewish prayer went like this: "Thank you God that you did not make me a gentile, a slave, or a woman." It was unthinkable for a wife to leave her husband, though her husband could divorce her at any time for the most trivial of causes. Christianity has caused us to change our concept of a husband from that of a ruling tyrant to one of a self-sacrificing man who puts the welfare of his wife above his own.

Wives are discontent, husbands are frustrated, children are confused because the functions of men and women, husbands and wives are no longer clear. Sometimes the family relationship itself can be a source of suffering. How can Christian women maintain their marriage in the midst of suffering?

Christian Wives Should Be...

- **Be Submissive**

So far Peter has commanded Christians to submit before God (1:14,15), before the world (2:11,12), as citizens to the government (2:13-17), and as servants to their masters (2:18-25) and now as wives to their husbands. The word translated "*subjection*" is a military term that means "to place under rank." Soldiers who are called to rank will drop whatever they are doing and immediately fall in. The Phillips Version renders it, "adapt yourselves to your husbands," the New English Bible says, "accept the authority of your husbands." Submission is "voluntary selflessness."

To be a submissive wife does not mean recognizing the man's headship as a dictatorship. She is not to be a "door mat." Our Lord allowed women to discuss, challenge and reason with Him (Mk.7:26-30). Submission does not mean the woman is inferior to the man. It has nothing to do with equality or morality, but order and role. The buck private in the army may be a better person than the five-star general, but he is still a buck private. Subordination does not mean women are inferior to men intellectually, morally or spiritually, but in God's order of authority, women are to be in subjection to man (1 Cor. 11:3).

The term "*likewise*" indicates an example has already been given. Just as Christ was in submission to the Will of God and to Pilate and the Jewish rulers. He did so even though it involved unjust suffering on His part. Wives with unbelieving husbands may also suffer innocently as Christ did.

Submission has boundaries and limitations. Wives are to submit to their own husbands not to every man. Her submission is "as unto the Lord" and "as the church is subject to Christ" and "in everything"

(Eph. 5:24) and “as fit in the Lord” (Col. 3:18).

The Bible gives several good reasons for the submissiveness of the wife to the husband (see 1 Tim. 2:8ff). The man was created from the earth; the woman “from the body of man.” The role of man in marriage is leadership or headship. The role of women is care for children and the home. When two people disagree it can be resolved by force or by subordination. When the wife willingly yields to her husband in matters not already determined by the will of God, she allows for headship and family harmony.

- **Be Silent Soul Winners**

The idea of submission can be complicated when a Christian wife is married to an unbeliever. Sometimes wives have to make a choice to serve Christ or family (Matt. 10:34-37). This is one reason why it is wise to marry a Christian. But there are times when one becomes a Christian and the spouse does not. They are to remain married even though it may be more difficult. Paul does not advise the wife to leave her husband (1 Cor. 7:13-16).

In such situations a wife can work to change her unbelieving husband into a Christian. Peter tells her this can be accomplished not by preaching or arguing with him. In fact, she can do this “without a word.” Of course he is not suggesting she is not to speak at all to an unbelieving husband. Without a lot of talking or nagging her conduct as a Christian before her husband can result in her winning him to Christ. She wins him with her life not her lips. Submission becomes her silent instrument to preach Christ.

- **Be Reverent and Pure**

The word “*behold*” literally means “having closely observed.” Just as the husband observes the football game with his eyes glued to the TV set, so his eyes will be upon the good deeds and words of a godly wife. Though husbands may be deaf to a wife’s words a times, they are by no means blind to her actions. Two things he should notice: her reverent behavior toward him and her pure or chaste conduct before the world. Thayer refers to this as “pure from every fault, immaculate” (8). For example, she is to dress before other men not to be chased by them but to be chaste.

- **Be Beautiful**

Far too many times women will resort to using her feminine physical charm to motivate and manipulate men to get what they want. This is not the solution suggested by Peter. Instead of sex appeal he wants them to appeal to her man from the standpoint of her inner beauty. A husband cannot be won over to Christ with fancy hairstyles, shiny jewelry and an expensive dress. With the inward change of clothes he notices how she is adorned spiritually with love, joy, peace, self-control, etc., he may be attracted.

Peter is not prohibiting women from wearing jewelry or make-up. He is using a Hebrew idiom (or form of speech). The apostle is making a contrast (“not this...but this”) for the sake of emphasis. For example, “*Let it not be...the wearing of gold...but let it be the hidden person of the heart.*” If there is a prohibition of wearing any gold jewelry, then by the same logic one would have to argue that no garments can be worn. After all the word for “*adorning*” is *kosmos* in the Greek our English words “cosmos” and “cosmetic.” It is the opposite of chaos. She is to first and foremost focus on her inward life to make sure it is not in a chaotic state but rather beautified. This is in opposition to using an ostentatious display of their worldly and expensive adornment which has not positive effect on the soul. Attempt to win her husband like this would be akin to those who try to attract sinners in the world by building and decorating a very fancy church building.

Outward beauty is and has always been popular. Why not? After all, God is the artist who has created all the beauty of this world. He made the rainbow, the stars in heaven, the flowers that bloom, the snow capped mountains, etc. Cosmetics is a multi-billion dollar industry. Fashion magazines often serve as prophets of idolatry. This is not a new problem. Juvenal (satire, 6) “the attendants will vote on the dressing of the hair as if a question of reputation or of beauty; with so many tiers does she load, with so many continuous stories does she build up on high her head. She is tall as Andromache in front, behind she is shorter. You would think her another person.”

Christian women should not spend eternity getting themselves fixed up externally. Everyone woman wants to be beautiful. But wearing too little clothing as well as wearing too much adornment can lead to sin.

Whereas outward beauty can be a cover-up for a wicked heart, inner beauty is true. Inner beauty

focuses more on who a woman is on the inside than what she looks like on the outside. *“As a ring of gold in a swine’s snout, so is a lovely woman who lacks discretion”* (Prov. 11:22). Inner beauty is the only beauty which is eternal. Clothing will wear out or get dirty. Skin will wrinkle. Hair will turn gray and thin out. Jewelry will tarnish.

The inward beauty is a gentle and quiet spirit. Gentle or meek “is the temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting” (Trench 152). Quiet “causes no disturbance to others” (Vine 3:242). When women lose their youth to the effects of aging then must “not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Finally, all need to remember that it is the inner heart and its beauty which is most appealing or pleasing to God. When Samuel was sent to anoint a new king over Israel from the house of Jesse, God told him that He *“sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”* (2 Sam. 16:7).

- **Be Trusting of God**

Holy women in the Old Testament put their trust and hope in God. This hope yields a meek and tranquil spirit. Consider Hannah who wanted a son. God answered her prayer with a son. When he was weaned she took him as promised to the Temple and gave him to the High Priest, Eli. Although Abigail was married to a fool she trusted God and did the right thing toward God’s anointed, David. She was later married to David due to her inner beauty of wisdom. Although Sarah did not always trust in God, her faithfulness to Abraham proved to be a reward when she bore Isaac in her old age.

- **Be a Daughter of Sarah**

Wives are encouraged to be daughters of Sarah in the sense of spiritual descent. Just as Abraham represented the ideal man, so Sarah is symbolic of a submissive mother.

Sarah was a beautiful woman. When she was sixty-five years old she was still able to attract attention of the Pharaoh of Egypt. Later, at ninety years of age she attracted the attention of another king in Canaan. Although many women of history are known for their beauty such as, Helen of Troy or Cleopatra or Marilyn Monroe, yet Sarah had more to offer women of all ages than just good looks.

First, she had a great relationship with her husband Abraham. She was submissive and called him “Lord.” This occurrence took place in Genesis 18:12 where she is not speaking to him but about her husband. The term used is not the Greek *despotes* but a term which could be translated “Sir.” A good wife, like Sarah, show respect to her husband when she speaks about him. Sarah died at the age of 127, Abraham was simply inconsolable. He wept and mourned for Sarah for days.

Next, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham. That is when he spoke, she listened to what he had to say with a submissiveness of spirit. And therefore a desire to obey.

Finally, she was calm and quiet, trusting in God who had made promises to Sarah and Abraham. *“By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised”* (Heb. 11:11). At first Sarah laughed to herself when she heard the angels tell Abraham that a son would be born within the year (Gen. 18:12). God rebuked her saying, *“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”* (Genesis 18:14-15). Sarah learned to trust in God.

- **Be Good Not Afraid**

Wives of today will be blessed if they too learn to trust and hope in God and fear no man. They need to do what is good regardless of how bad things are or even how bad their husband may be behaving. By so doing they will have no reason to fear. Whatever comes their way they are not to become overly frightened or alarmed. If they practice goodness they will not need to fear the husbands or their God.

It is doubtful there are many husbands who actually merit the type of Christian woman described in these verses. There are more likely only three such men, don’t ask me who the other two are I have not met them.

Questions:

1. How were women treated in the first century?
2. Why is it essential that someone submit in the marital relationship?
3. What are some “silent” ways or things a wife may do to help bring her husband to Christ?
4. What are husbands to “behold” in their Christians wives?
5. Does Peter condemn women wearing jewelry and putting on make-up? Explain.
6. Can a Christian woman become too concerned with hair and nail salons, high-end fashions, cosmetics, plastic surgery, fitness programs? Explain.
7. Give some Bible examples of women who trusted in God?
8. How can a Christian wife today be a daughter of Sarah?
9. How is it that if a wife does good she does not have to be afraid?
10. Contrast inner beauty with that of outer beauty?

Submissive Duties of Christian Husbands

1 Peter 3:7: *Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

A few years ago the Forester Sisters sang a song about men. It went something like this:

They buy you dinner,
Open your door,
Other than that what are they good for?
Men
They want a girl just like the girl that married dear old dad.
That makes me so mad.
Talking about men.
Well you can't beat'em up
Cause they're bigger than you.
You can't live with them
And you just can't shoot'em.
Men,
We're talking about men.

– Chalres Lowery, SBC Life, June-July, 1995, p. 5

Husbands, Likewise, Submit You Your Role

It may not seem fair to have six verses for women and only one for husbands. However, the theme of this epistle has more to do with suffering as a Christian. Do to the nature of marriage in the first century more women would suffer if their husbands were not Christians than vice versa.

The term *“likewise”* refers to the husbands need to be submissive to his role just as the wife is to hers and Christ was to his. A marriage must be based on reciprocal obligations.

The Bible does not give husbands the right to be tyrants. Cato: “if you were to catch your wife in an act of infidelity, you can kill her with impunity without a trial; but, if she were to catch you, she would not venture to touch you with her finger and, indeed, she has no right.” This verse says the wives of Christian husbands do have rights.

Although no where in the Bible is a husband commanded to be obedient to his wife, husbands must be obedient to the will of God concerning their leadership in the home. The facts from the creator of man, woman, and marriage has not changed: man was first in creation, woman was taken to man, the woman is the glory of man and the woman was made for the man and not the man for the woman (1 Cor. 11:7-9). These facts enter into the order or structure that God ordained. They take nothing from the dignity of woman nor her standing with God. Men must not abdicate their God-given duties. As one father said, “I let my wife decide whether the children are to go to Sunday school and church. That's her job.” Some others act like nothing more than grown-up little boys who have never taken responsibility and are content to leave it all up to their wives.

A wife once advised all husbands about their role in the home as head or leader: “Don't yield your leadership, that's the main thing. Don't hand us the reins. We would consider this an abdication on your part. It would confuse us, it would alarm us; it would make us pull back. Oh, we will try to get you to give up your position as Number One in the house, that is the terrible contradiction in us. We will seem to be

fighting you to the last ditch for final authority on everything for awhile, but in the obscure recesses of our hearts we want you to win. You have to win, for we aren't really made for leadership. It's a pose."

Two Commandments for Husbands

- **Dwell with Them**

The command to live with or dwell with ones wife has several implications. First, he must physically abide in the same home as his wife. Far too often there are some cultures where men keep a wife in a house and visit them without living with them. This is very hard on a marriage even if it is necessitated by his military service or his business affairs.

Just living in the same house is not enough. It is possible for husband and wife to spend a lifetime in a small home and never get to really know each other. One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had thirty-seven minutes a week together in actual communication.

Perhaps, this command will also demand that husbands provide for their wives both in physical and material needs. Even more so help her spiritually by spending time together.

Peter not only commands husbands to live with their wives but tells them the manner by which they are to do so: "*according to knowledge.*" Get to know you roommate. Husbands know all about sports, guns, monster trucks, and power tools, but very little about their wives. Men say they cannot understand women. To them they are nothing must a mystery wrapped up inside of an enigma. Books like *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women* by James Dobson and *Women are from Venus and Men are from Mars* demonstrate that husbands have a great need to comprehend their spouses. This does not require them to read everything by Martha Stewart or watch *The View*. However, God would not require men to understand their wives unless it were possible. Once I had a new groom confess that he could and never will understand his wife. He was shocked when I suggested that he had better repent. After all, understanding a wife is part of God's commandments to husbands.

The Phillips translation reads "live considerately as trying to understand." This is not only an ongoing duty but the only means by which spouse will be able to get along with each other in the same abode. Communication in marriage is indispensable. There is no way the president of a corp. can effectively lead unless he knows the organization "inside out." Marriage will not be what God ever intended them to be unless husbands get not know their wives.

- **Giving Honor to the Wife**

He is to give, that is, portion out to her. Paul says he must nourish and cherish her (Eph. 5:29). This does not mean to give into the wife. As head of the family he will have to make decisions which affect the wife. These must be made with knowledge of the wife and done so while respecting the wife's feelings, thinking, and desires. To give her honor is to render to her a just amount of self-esteem. Chivalry may be dead, but every husband must be a "knight in shining armor" who treats his wife like a princess." By the way, the name Sarah means "princess"

To honor or esteem the wife requires husbands to accurately assess their value. To value their work at home and for the home. To esteem her opinion. To demonstrate her importance.

The manner in which she is to be honored by her husband is by treating her like a weaker vessel. To give honor to that which is weaker seems paradoxical. "Vessel" is a word applied to men (1 Th. 4:4). Man and woman are alike vessels - vessels made by God for his service. The woman is the weaker, and must, for that very reason, be treated with gentleness. Weaker how? She is not to be regarded as the lesser partner in the marriage. She is not weaker mentally or morally. This is not to say she is of less value spiritually. However, physically a wife is almost always weaker than her husband. "Vessel" is sometimes used to mean body (2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Th. 4:4). Because she was designed by God with the role of child bearing and caring she is different and more delicate physically. Women get pregnant and men do not. God told man after the sin in the garden that his living would come "by the sweat of his face" (Gen. 3:17-19). He is the provider (1 Tim. 5:8). The woman's role of childbearing and keeper of the home (Gen. 3:16; Tit. 2:5). God promised the woman that he would "multiply thy sorrow and thy conception" (Gen. 3:16).

Her emotions are different than her husbands. Things that may seem minor and insignificant to

a man may be a crisis to a woman bringing her tears. She is weaker like a fine piece of china but still far more valuable than the coarse piece of crockery used to make pickles. She must to be treated with care. One wife complained, "My husband simply takes me for granted. To him I'm another piece of furniture around the house. I'm only important to him for what I do for him, not for what I am."

Again, Peter gives the manner in which this command to honor the wife is to be obeyed by the husband. He must remember that their relationship is not just with themselves but with the God of their salvation. They may be different with different roles but they are still *"joint-heirs of the grace of life."* An heir is "...one who obtains something assigned to himself with others, a joint participant" (Thayer 593). They clearly have the same spiritual rights to all that God has to offer. This does not mean she has the same role in the church and can become an elder, deacon, etc. Remember, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are equal but have different roles. Since the wife also was created in the image of God, there is no distinction between male and female (Gal. 3:28).

Warning to Husbands

These two commands for husbands come with a warning. If he does not dwell with her in an understanding way or honor her as the weaker vessel, their spiritual life may suffer and his prayers will not be regarded or honored by God. It is assumed that the husband and wife do pray and may even pray together. Literally, the phrase is, "so that your prayers will not be detained." Like the man who was detained at the Mexican border for forgetting to respect the Mexican laws by bringing into their country contraband. Husbands who do not respect God's laws with regard to how he treats his wife will find his prayers detained before they reach the Father's throne.

Why would God detain their prayers? When people suffer at the hands of others God will still hear and notice their cries in heaven. Marriage is a three fold bond. If you cannot maintain a relationship with your wife you will lose the one you have with the Lord. When husbands and wives are bickering, quarreling and striving with each other God will not listen to them. An unforgiving husband cannot expect his prayers for forgiveness to be honored. God has a right to accept or reject worship (Mal. 2:10-17).

The solution: if husbands are having a conflict with their wives they need to take care of it before the sun goes down. Remove the obstacle to your prayers before you go to sleep at night. Husbands and wives your eternal destiny depends on how you treat your spouse.

Questions:

1. Why six verses about the duties of wives and only one verse for husbands?
2. What does the term *"likewise"* imply?
3. Is it okay for a husband to turn his role of head and leader of the family over to the wife? Explain.
4. What all might the command "dwell with them" imply?
5. What can a husband do to assist him in understanding his wife better?

6. Define "*honor*"?
7. How is a wife a "*weaker vessel*"?
8. How are husband and wife joint-heirs? How can they help each other get to Heaven?
9. What warning does Peter give husbands? Why?
10. What is the solution to the consequence of the husband failing to obey these two commandments?

Duties of Christians to All With Reward

Duties of Christians to All

1 Peter 3:8,9: 8. *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9. not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*

This paragraph begins with the word “*finally*.” Here it indicates a conclusion of Peter’s commandments concerning the Christian’s various relationships with government, masters, husbands, and wives. Now he defines our responsibilities to each other as brethren in Christ. However, just like a preacher, finally does not mean he is done talking. Peter will resume his commands about relationships in chapter five.

- **Be Likeminded**

Phrenology is the study of the bumps on the head or skull and its various contours so to help understand the patient’s personality. Akin to this word is the Greek work *homophrone* which Peter uses for “*mind*” and “*one*.” A good translation would be harmony of the mind. This is a very common command in the New Testament. Christians are to have the same mind as Christ (Phil. 2:5). Paul instructed the Corinthians to be like minded (1 Cor. 1:10). Jesus prayed for this kind of unity in John 17:20-21.

In light of suffering from persecution unity will give strength to Christians. It will encourage them to be bold and help promote the gospel message. Modern-day denominationalism with its great diversity of teachings calls into question the truth of the Gospel message.

- **Be Sympathetic**

Sympathetic is comparable to the word compassionate which comes from the Latin. It means “suffering or feeling the like with one another, sympathetic” (Thayer 596). When wives are pregnant men can buy a “sympathetic suit” so they can experience with their wives what it means to carry an extra thirty pounds on their belly. Christians need to be sympathetic to each other to the point we can feel what the other experiences. To walk in another brother’s shoes. To be able to “*rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep*” (Rom. 12:15).

Christians who are suffering can become self-absorbed and focus solely on their own pain to the point they forget that others may be suffering as well. Suffering causes some to want to isolate themselves from others. Some Christians cannot bear to be around other saints who are in pain. Some chose to feel nothing of their brothers pain and ignore one another’s needs.

- **Be Loving Brethren**

Peter uses the word *philadelphos* meaning brotherly love. A *philadelphian* is a lover of his brethren. Philadelphia is the city of brotherly love. Unfortunately it has one of the highest crime rates in the nation.

The standard for loving one another is the love with which Christ lived His disciples (Jn. 13:34,5; 1 Jn. 3:14,15; 4:20). So unique was it in human experience that He called it a “*new commandment*.” We are “*taught of God to love one another*” (1 Th. 4:9). 1 John 4:21 says, “*Whoever loves God must also love his brother*.” This love is not to overlook the sin or false teachings of our brother. Remember God still loves us even though we will sin and not practice the truth. Tertullian wrote “But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that leads many to put a brand upon us. ‘See,’ they say ‘how they love one another,’ for they themselves are animated by mutual hatred; ‘see how they are ready even to die for one another,’ for they themselves will rather put to death” (Apology 39). True discipleship is marked by our love for one

another. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn. 13:34,35).

- **Be Tenderhearted**

The Greek word for "tenderhearted" is *eusplagchnos*. Literally Peter is encouraging them to have strong bowels. The bowels were considered the seat of human emotions, such as, kindness, benevolence, and compassion. We are to "be tenderhearted", to be "full of pity, tenderness"

- **Be Humble-minded**

In West Africa the Masai tribe expresses gratitude by first bowing, next putting their foreheads on the ground, and saying, "My head is in the dirt." The Greek word for "humble-minded" is *tapeinophrones*. It means the the mind does not rise far from the ground. It is saying the mind is humbled before the other person. Our word humble is from the same Latin word humus which today describes a grass which grows very close to the ground. It is another way of saying lowliness of mind. Man was made from the dirt and if he is wise will not try to raise himself too far above his humble beginning.

- **Be Not Vengeful**

In a cartoon of a newborn baby shows the doctor smacking the child and the child hollers out, "That's it, I want a lawyer." I often joke that when I was born the doctor smacked me and I smacked him back. Revenge comes easy to us humans. We learn to hit back from early childhood. Peter is telling Christians not to give back what has been given to them. The most common way we express vengeance is verbally with abusive and reproachful speech. Leviticus 24:19 says, "if anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured." In contrast, Christ commands us to love our enemies and do good to those who abuse us.

- **Be a Giver of Blessings**

When they came to arrest Christ, Peter defended Him with a sword cutting of Malchus's ear (Lk. 22:47-53). Instead of giving the opposition trouble for trouble give them a blessings. After all, Christ miraculously restored the severed ear. "Being reviled, we bless" (1 Cor. 4:12). "Bless them which persecute: bless and curse not" (Rom. 12:14). To return evil for good is to put us on the level with Satan. To return evil for evil puts us one the level with our enemies. To return good for evil puts us on the level with Christ Himself.

- **Be a Receiver of Blessings**

If we bless others we "might inherit a blessing." Being a Christian is a blessing and brings us an inheritance in Heaven. God has blessed us and we bless others. As we bless others God will continue to bless us.

In Proverbs 6:16f is a list of things that God hates. The list of commandments of Christians toward other Christians is just the opposite of the abominations which God abhors. We are to be courteous - but the Lord hates a proud look! We are to be compassionate - not abusing the innocent. We are to be tender-hearted - God hates cruelty. We are to return good for evil - but those who respond quickly with evil, the Lord abhors! We are to be of one mind - but if we sow discord by murmuring and complaining, we are abominable in God's sight!

To Love Life and See Good Days

1 Peter 3:10-13: 10. For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile; 11. let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 12. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 13. And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

Do you love niacinamide, zinc oxide, yellow dye #5, pyridoxine hydrochloride, thiamin monoitrate,

folic acid and sodium phosphate. If you love Life cereal then you must love these. If you love the Christian life you will love its ingredients. Being a Christian makes one feel like life is worth living. So if suffering through persecution comes, love of life will not have to go. Whereas the Greek thought that the short life was good so as to end suffering, Christians want to keep on living to see good days.

How to Love Life and See Good Days

- **Restrain the Tongue**

Winston Churchill and Lady Astor had a habit of hurling insults at each other. On another occasion Winston Churchill and Lady Astor engaged in verbal sparring when she told him, "If I were your wife, I'd put arsenic in your tea". He responded, "if I were your husband, I'd drink it." When the emotions of dislike run high the tongue is difficult to control. The tongue is a *"restless evil, full of deadly poison," "a world of evil among the parts of the body."* The tongue is hard to restrain. Evil speaking, lying, gossiping, and slander are but a few of his mischievous deeds. Christians who are suffering are prone to say things that they would never under other circumstances. Hit your thumb with a hammer will bring out the words

- **Refrain from Evil**

The Greek term means to lean out away from evil. "The word here refers to the act of bending aside from one's path at the approach of evil" (Weust 86). If you do not like the smell of a skunk you lean away from or you avoid the direction the smell is coming. Like avoiding a head on collision. When you come across evil in your path turn to the side and avoid it. When suffering it is hard a time to put forth the extra effort to shun evil.

- **Respond with Goodness**

Just avoiding evil will not make for living a long and prosperous life. If a farmer only avoided sowing bad seed he would still reap no harvest. Avoid evil and pursue good is what it takes to love life and see good days. When it comes to goodness Christians are to be zealots. They are to be zealous for good works (Tit. 2:14). Zealots of the first century were prepared to sacrifice anything including their lives for the good of their cause.

- **Reach for Peace**

Most of the peace monuments in Washington DC were erected after a war. Peace is not the absence of trouble or war. Peace is like the eye of the hurricane or the calm ocean below while the storm rages above. Seeking peace shows the motive of a Christian. Anyone can find trouble, all you have to do is look for it. Christians are to follow after things that make for peace (Rom. 14:19). As much as lies within us, we are to live at peace with all men (Rom. 12:18). Peace is not the natural result of a lack of conflict. It just does not happen automatically because a peace treaty is signed or the storm has passed.

- **Recognize the Benefits**

Peter uses an anthropomorphism referring to God as if he were a man. God's eyes are upon the righteous and His ears are opened to their prayers. He hears the prayers of those striving to do right, like the husbands in verse seven. God's face is against evil doers. Jesus turned and looked at Peter after the disciple denied his Lord three times. As a result God's do-gooders will not be harmed. Avoid harm by living right. Those who suffer for the cause of Christ are fortunate, for God is with them. Don't worry about what is happening in your life. God is God. God is Lord. And He is in charge. *"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"* (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Questions:

1. What does the word *"finally"* indicate in verse eight?

2. List other passages showing that Christians are to be like-minded.
3. How will being sympathetic aid others who are suffering?
4. What does it mean to be humble-minded?
5. Instead of being vengeful Christians should....
6. Those who bless others will receive...
7. Why is the tongue so hard to restrain (Js. 3:2f)?
8. How are Christians to be like Zealots?
9. Define the "peace" Christians are to reach for?
10. What are the anthropomorphic attributes of God in this passage?

Victorious Suffering in Christ

Suffering for Righteousness' Sake

1 Peter 3:14-18a: 14. *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."* 15. *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;* 16. *having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.* 17. *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.* 18. *For Christ also suffered...*

Persecutions will Come

Roman emperor, Nero was suspected of setting the fire in Rome. Tacitus commented, "Consequently to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. ...Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to flames and burned, to serve as a nightly illumination when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car" (Annals 15:44).

Was Peter writing to prepare the next generation to face faithfully such persecutions? Paul told Timothy that he suffered "*persecutions, afflictions*" at various places but "*out of them all the Lord delivered me*" (1 Tim. 3:11). He then added, "*yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (2 Tim. 3:12). Christians must expect opposition. They also need to realize that when persecution comes they can overcome.

Fear

Sometimes we are afraid to even admit that we are a Christian to those around us because of our fear of what they might think. The English word "martyr" comes from the Greek term for "witness." Peter knew the pressure this fear brings when you are surrounded by others and fear causes you to fail to witness Jesus the Christ. He denied the Lord three times. Once was while a slave girl was questioning him. Later, he repented and Jesus specifically told Peter that he would die as a martyr for the faith (Jn. 21:18-19). When we are called upon to witness concerning Jesus as the Son of God just ask yourself: What is the worst they can do to you? They can kill you but they can never take away your faith or eternal reward.

What Is Involved in Suffering for Righteousness

- **Benediction: "You are blessed"**

When the early Christian leader Ignatius was on his way to Rome to be martyred, he wrote several letters to fellow Christians. One of these letters begs the believers not to attempt to rescue him or otherwise thwart his execution. Ignatius believed that his martyrdom was the best way to proclaim his Lord and to assure his salvation.

The final beatitude of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount was the blessedness of being persecuted for the sake of righteousness (Mt. 5:10-12). Jesus speaks of two rewards: one that is great in heaven and the fact that the disciples would be in the company of God's prophets of old who also suffering persecution for their righteousness. Suffering is a blessing for the Christian. After all, not all man can escape suffering in this life only in eternal life is the hope of a pain free existence.

- **Resolution: "fear not nor be troubled"**

Ahaz, king of Judah was asked to join a confederacy against the king of Assyria. He refused. But instead of trusting God he formed an alliance with the king of Assyria. God sent Isaiah to warn him not to do this. They attacked the prophet by accusing him of treason. God reassured Isaiah telling the prophet: *"nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled"* (Isaiah 8:12). Don't be afraid of the sorts of things men threaten you with. Dread not what man can do, instead secure your alliance with the all powerful God. Both afraid and terror are from the same root term *phobeo*. According to Arndt and Gingrich's lexicon it means "fig. Stir up, disturb, unsettle, throw into confusion...do not let yourselves to intimidated 1 Pet. 3:14) (813). Just as a tree with good strong roots and fellow trees around it does not fear the storm neither does the faithful Christian. He who fears God need have no other fear.

- **Separation: "*sanctify the Lord*"**

This does not mean that we have the power to make God a holy or separate God. He is already Holy and the very standard for holiness. Christians are to set the Lord aside in their hearts. He is first place in our lives. He in on the throne of our hearts. So when the king of Kings is in residence there is not need for any saint to be afraid of even a king of men. In contrast to being seized with alarm on the one hand, one is to set apart in one's heart the Lord God, on the other hand.

Jesus warned would-be disciples, *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"* (Luke 6:46). "A lord is someone who has sovereign power and authority over me to whom I submit with reverent obedience, because I am his possession." It comes from the Greek word is *kurios*. Calling Jesus "Lord" means he is the to whom we belong, he is the master of our life. He has control over us because we have willingly submitted to his sovereign rule over our hearts.

- **Preparation: "*always be ready*"**

How Christians sanctify the Lord in our hearts is seen by our preparations to give a defense for our faith in the Lord. Christians are to be prepare at all times with a well reasoned verbal apology for why we put our hope in Jesus. The term "always" implies that there is never a moment or occasion when a Christian is not willing or too fearful to have a ready defense of his relationship with the Lord.

"Defense" is a legal term which means "to be able to pick up where your opponent leaves off." The Greek word is *apologia* from which we get the English term "apology." Involved in the term is the idea of making argumentation to show the basis on which one holds a view and conducts one's self. When some asked a Christian, "How is it that you handle the suffering so well?" they were to be ready to explain it to them.

This defense is to be given *"to everyone who ask you."* Since the gospel has no feet but our feet and no hands but our hands and no tongue and lips but ours, everyone depends on Christians to answer their questions. While it is good to answer questions, there are times when it may be just as well not to answer, depending upon the questioner (Matt. 21:23-27; Jn. 8:1-11). If people are asking for the sake of truth, that is one thing. It is quite another if they are asking for the purpose of entrapment and ridicule.

People will ask for "a reason." That is an account or evidence or ground for you behavior and belief as a Christian. Christianity is founded on evidence (Heb. 11:1).

The area of questioning is with regard to ones hope in Christ (Col. 1:27). Although very few if any Christian is able to answer every question put to them, they need to be ready to answer at least why they have hope in Jesus Christ. This hope concerns all that one expects from his being in Christ.

Notice that it refers to location of our hope: *"that is in you."* If you are a Christian who has lost hope in Christ, you are not going to be able to give a very compelling defense of your faith. This hope is not hype. It is based on proof not wishful thinking.

The Bible is filled with examples of those who were ready to defend they hope. Having been commanded to worship a golden image and condemned to a burning fiery furnace for failing to do so, King Nebuchadnezzar said to Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego: *"What god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"* The answer: *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up"* (Dan. 3:16). When King Darius threw Daniel from the Lion's den, the next morning he asked him: *"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"* Daniel replied: *"O king, live*

forever! My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." On the day of Pentecost Peter and the rest of the apostles were ready with an answer to the people who asked them what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:37,38). Stephen in Acts 7 explained the history of the nation and the coming of the Messiah to the council of the Jews. When Philip the evangelist met the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert he was able to explain to him the meaning of Isaiah 53. Paul's ministry had him constantly appearing before kings and governors, before Jews and Gentiles explaining that Jesus was the Messiah. Festus and King Agrippa asked Paul: "What do you have to say for yourself?" Paul: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently."

This prepared defense of your hope must be given with in the proper spirit. First, Christians must answer in a spirit of meekness. Do not answer with an arrogant belligerence. Do not treat them as if they are a fool. Do not try to force the facts upon them. Sometimes its okay to ask, "I don't know the answer to your question, but I'll find out." Remember, great answers always start with listening (Pr. 18:13). "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1). Second, the defense needs to be given in the spirit of fear. This is not a fear toward the other person who is asking the question. Toward them we are to show a spirit of meekness. Before God our attitude is one of reverent fear. We are speaking for God. Sometimes Christians will need to "contend earnestly for the faith" (Jude 3). But remember, they are not the enemy, Satan is; they are the victims. Also hate the sin, but love the sinner. Fear God for souls are at stake: yours and theirs.

- **Purification: "having a good conscience"**

Thayer defines the action of the conscience as "The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, and condemning the other; conscience" (602). In order for the conscience to work effectively it must be good, that is, clean or pure. The enemy will fire accusations attacking the righteousness of a Christian. A guilty conscience will not enable one to face the threat of death without fear and trembling. A clean conscience will feel no guilt.

Just how does the conscience work? A good conscience is trained by the Word of God to know what is good and what is evil. So when the saint does evil his conscience gives him pain known as guilt. When the saint does good his conscience encourages and emboldens him. Yet, he can weaken his conscience (1 Cor. 8). He can sear his conscience by ignoring it. One can even have an evil conscience (Heb. 10:22).

A good conscience enables Christians to give an effective defense without guilt. Joseph and Daniel were both imprisoned being innocent men. They suffered in prison but they did not suffer guilt. A guilty conscience makes suffering much more intense.

Peter gives a very good reason for the saints to keep their conscience clean. When the wicked accuse you falsely and are found to be liars they will be ashamed. You will be exonerated before your enemies. It may cause your enemies to be ashamed for mistreating you. When they see this, they will blush with the shame of humiliation.

- **Exoneration: "it is better...to suffer for doing good"**

Christians often suffer precisely for doing what is right and saying what is true. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). The prospect of offending God should be a much more dreadful thing to him than the prospect of being persecuted by men. Suffering for doing right is not a new thing (Heb. 11:32-38), but it is always a better thing.

- **Illustration: "For Christ also suffered..."**

The suffering Christian must always remember that he had a suffering Lord. Christ suffered for doing right, never for doing wrong. It is easier to follow someone who shares in your sufferings. Peter introduced Jesus Christ as the absolute illustration of one who suffered unjustly, and yet continued to obey God.

One day a biology student noticed the struggle of the butterfly trying to exit its cocoon. He thought he could help by cutting up the cocoon. The butterfly emerged swollen and struggling. Its wings were shriveled up and it died. For in the struggle to free itself from the cocoon the butterfly would squeeze the

juice of his body into the shriveled up wings and be able to fly.

Eternal life is in the struggle to exit the cocoon of suffering through the door of death. The suffering of a Christian can bring life eternal.

Christ's Victories Through Suffering

1 Peter 3:18-20a: *18. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19. by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20. who formerly were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,*

What is the purpose of the Savior and the saint alike suffering for righteousness' sake? No pain no gain. Christ's life shows that there is victory in suffering. This is not the attitude of most religions or religious people. They want a religion to show them how to avoid pain not use it.

Where s man has many books about pain and suffering, God has but two: Job in the Old Testament and 1 Peter in the New.

- **Illustration: "For Christ also suffered"**

Also is in contrast to those antediluvians who suffered for evil-doing as Christ suffered for righteousness. His suffering was planned before the world began.

- **Propitiation: "once for sins"**

This phrase means "once for all" according to W.E. Vine. "Once, uniquely, once for all" (Balz and Schneider 1:115). Although the sacrifices of the Temple were repeated daily (Heb. 7:27) Christ only was to be sacrificed on the cross but once for all time never to be repeated. It was not for His sins but ours.

- **Substitution: "the just for the unjust"**

Although tempted in all points as men are, Christ was without sin (Heb. 4:15). He is therefore wholly just, upright, or righteous. His sacrifice was vicarious: the just for the unjust. Edwin H. Robertson: "only forgiveness without reason can match sin without excuse".

- **Reconciliation: "that He might bring us to God"**

Due to man sins he was alienated away from God - lost. Through Christ's death we have access to grace (Rom. 5:2). The sinner can be reconciled to God. The right of access to the Holy of Holies is granted. Once enemies of God through our sins now through His son are sins are forgiven and friendship with God restored.

- **Crucifixion: "being put to death in the flesh"**

It was "by means of flesh" that Christ died. On the one hand, he was put to death in the flesh and, on the other hand, he was quickened by the Spirit.

- **Resurrection: "but made alive by the Spirit"**

Seven times "quicken" or "made alive" is used with direct reference to the raising of the dead (Jn. 5:21; Rom. 4:17; 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:22; 36, 45) "Spirit" is referring to his spiritual, incorporeal life. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," simply made the announcement of His finished work. However, Paul, in Rom. 1:4 states that Christ was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit of God. The death of Christ was the death of Christ in flesh, and that the quickening of Christ was the quickening of Christ in spirit. At death, this spirit passed into a new sphere of existence, hence was said to have been made alive when resurrected. The contrast is between His flesh and His spirit.

- **Declaration: "He went and preached"**

"Went" means "to make a personal visit." It was a personal act of going by the Lord. It was He who was preaching to the spirits in prison. The preaching was made by Jesus AFTER "being put to death in the flesh" and AFTER He was "made alive by the Spirit." Killed in the spiritual realm he is found alive in the spiritual realm. The reason for his preaching is not for salvation, but "inasmuch as they were sometime disobedient." These are the disembodied spirits who were awaiting the judgment (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Notice they had been disobedient.

Peter is here speaking of that descent into Hades of which he had spoken in his sermon on

Pentecost(Acts 2:31). The words seem to limit the preaching to the time when the Lord's soul was left in Hades (Ac. 2:27). Christ did not go to Hell or to Tartarus, but to paradise (Luke 23:43). Christ could not have been with the saved robber in Paradise, and at the same time, with the lost antediluvians in "hell." His preaching, therefore, was a proclamation of victory over death, not an offer of a second chance to a select few!

Questions:

1. Can and should a faithful saint avoid all suffering for the cause of righteousness? Explain.
2. What did Peter know of fear and suffering for the cause of Christ?
3. According the eighth beatitude what two reasons are their for persecution being a blessing?
4. What does it mean to "*sanctify the Lord*"?
5. To whom are Christians to give a defense? Of what are they to give an defense?
6. Give some Bible examples of those who gave a defense?
7. In what manner are saints to give a defense?
8. How does a conscience work? How will a good one help saints in suffering and answering?
9. Who is the ultimate example of suffering? Why?

10. Why did Christ only have to die once for sins?

11. What does the phrase: "*just for the unjust*" mean?

12. Where did Christ go and preach? When? Why?

Salvation: “Baptism Now Saves Us”

1 Peter 3:20b-22: *20 ... while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21. There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22. who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

Little Cathy was sitting on her grandfather's knee one day. After looking intently into his face for some time, she said, "Grandpa, were you in the ark with Noah?" "Certainly not!" replied the Grandfather. "Well then, Grandpa," asked the little girl, "why weren't you DROWNED?"

Even in suffering death Jesus was victorious. He was even able to demonstrate the victory to those who died before the flood and were awaiting their eternal reward while in Paradise. How is this possible? Just as God used water as a means to wash away the old world and save eight souls, so God uses water baptism to now save us.

Water Baptism Saves

- **Baptism Is an Antitype**

Baptism and the Ark of Noah are related to each other in regard to salvation. The ark is the type and baptism the antitype. Type can refer to a seal that would leave an impression in the hot wax. The impression it leaves would be the antitype. The type comes first but the antitype is what is important it is the real reason for the type. Just as an old typewriter had keys which moved the type to strike the ribbon which then left an impression on the paper. The impression left on the paper is the antitype.

The comparison between the type, the ark and baptism are both involved souls being saved through water. The water did not save Noah and his family. But through the water they found salvation. The ark protected them from the flood waters which washed away the wicked world and at the same time lifted the ark above the death and destruction of the wicked world. The comparison between the two is not meant to be seen at every point. For example, the ark was not immersed in water, yet baptism means immersion.

The flood can be seen as part of the death, burial and resurrection. The waters buried the earth in judgment, but they also lifted Noah and his family up to safety. They came out of the ark to rebuild a new world. Baptism is also in the likeness of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12). As the waters of Noah's day separated him from the wicked world by destroyed them and saving him, so water baptism destroys our old life of sin and resurrects to a new life in Christ.

- **Baptism Saves Us Now**

As water saved Noah and his family back then, so baptism is now saving you. Salvation means "to save out of danger, rescue" (Thayer 142). It is the idea of escaping danger or being delivered from it.

Baptism is not referencing a past event nor is it in reference to a future event. Baptism is what is saving people now through water just as Noah was saved through water.

Some believe this is Holy Spirit baptism. Holy Spirit baptism does not involve water. Since there is but "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5) it is either the baptism of the great Commission which was a command to be obeyed (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16) or Holy Spirit baptism which was a promise to be received.

Others are claiming water baptism is simply an outward expression of an inward reality. According to this view one is saved at the point of believing and is later baptized because they have been saved. However, baptism NOW saves.

The power to save is not the water. Some argue, "Well, you're teaching a works salvation because

you believe baptism is necessary to being saved.” In the Bible God word attributes salvation to faith (Eph. 2:8), repentance (Ac. 11:18), and baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). Salvation is also attributed to the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28); to Christ’s death (Rom. 5:10) and even the Word itself (Js. 1:21). All these are complementary and consistent statements; they involve no contradictions. It is not water that saves; it is obeying God’s command of baptism. There is no power in the mere application of water in any form or with any ceremonies of religion, to put away sin. When Philip baptized the Eunuch, they went down into the water, Philip baptized him, and they came up out of the water (Ac. 8:37-38). Naaman did not attribute miraculous power to remove leprosy to Jordan’s muddy waters. The power to heal resided only in God.

Many scholars agree. Augustine (A.D. 354-430) wrote "the salvation of man is effected in baptism." Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225-1274) wrote, "consequently it is manifest that all are bound to be baptized: and that without Baptism there is no salvation for men." (ibid., p. 31).

- **Baptism Does Not Cleanse Flesh**

The nature of baptism is viewed from both negative and positive aspects. Some say that his reference is to circumcision. Baptism is not a ceremonial cleansing. But more is needed than the old Jewish washings, the frequent purifications. Consider what baptism will not do. Baptism will not remove temptation. Baptism will not solve all of life’s problems. Baptism will not assure eternal salvation. Baptism will not forgive, save, result in newness of life, or put one into Christ who is not a penitent believer.

- **Baptism Is an Answer of a Good Conscience**

The term “*answer*” means “a pledge, a demand.” When a person was signing a contract, he would be asked, “do you pledge to obey and fulfill the terms of this contract.” The good conscience is sought through baptism, that is, when baptism washes away guilt one is left with a clear or good conscience. Or because one has a good conscience they are baptized. It is possible to have a good conscience before baptism. Saul of Tarsus Possessed a good conscience while in unbelief and a persecutor of the church (Ac. 23:1). When Paul was baptized it washed away his previous sins (Acts 22:16) resulting the him have a good or clear conscience. However, it is more logical with Peter line of reasoning and the rest of the Bible teaching about water baptism that a good conscience is a result of having been saved at the point of baptism. The blood of Christ and water baptism in His name work together in tandem to produce a cleansed conscience/salvation (Heb. 9:11-14). This is why those in the book of Acts are baptized immediately (Acts 8:35:38). Examples of those with a cleared conscience. The Pentecostians who had killed the very Son of God (Acts 2:36). Saul of Tarsus who killed Christians (Acts 22:16). The Philippian Jailor who had imprisoned Paul and Silas (Acts 16:34).

The Victorious Suffering of Christ Through

- **Salvation**

Salvation is only possible now by being baptized in water because Christ suffered, died, and arose.

- **Resurrection**

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is what makes redemption possible (1 Cor. 15:14-17). Baptism derives its benefits “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” which it symbolizes (Rom. 6:3-5; Cor. 2:12-13). One is baptized so their sins can be washed away and they can rise to a new life through the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead!

- **Coronation**

Jesus is often said to be at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1 Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3). Thayer says this is used “to indicate that he has become a partner in God’s universal government” (128). Though rejected by the Jewish leaders and crucified he resurrected and then ascended to the right hand of God as King of kings over his kingdom.

- **Subjugation**

All these authorities and powers embrace the hierarchy of heaven. The “rulers and functionaries of the spirit world” (A&G 278). Christ’s complete victory shows he is over all “angels and authorities and powers.”

Though men teach “faith only” in spite of James 2:24, Peter clearly teaches that baptism can now

save you. Have you been baptized with the baptism of the New Testament? There are a few things that can be learned from Noah's ark. God can save through water today just as he did in Noah's day. And it is important to plan ahead, after all, it wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark. So plan to obey God's command to be baptized in water if you have not already done so.

Questions:

1. What is a type and antitype?
2. If baptism is an antitype, what is the type?
3. What comparisons can be made between baptism and the salvation of Noah and his family on the ark?
4. Is the power to save in the water?
5. List several other things that are said to save?
6. What is the "*filth of the flesh*"?
7. How is baptism the answer of a good conscience?
8. Give some examples of those whose consciences were clear after baptism?
9. What happened with Jesus after His resurrection?
10. List other passages which demonstrate that baptism is necessary for salvation?