

CHAPTER 1

James	1 Peter
1:3	1:7
1:1	1:1
1:10	1:24
1:12	1:7;3:14
1:25	1:12
1:18	1:23,3
1:17	1:3
1:2	1:8
1:12	1:9
1:17	1:12
1:21	2:1
Whole of James	1:13
1:14	1:14
1:17	1:23,25

Like James, Peter in both his letters is emphasizing the need to develop spiritual attributes in the light of the imminence of the Lord's coming; and he warns that false teachers would sidetrack them from the pursuit of real spirituality, which is a major theme of James.

1:1 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ*- As Peter matured by the time of 2 Pet. 1:1, he adds "a servant and an apostle". Progressive humility, an ever deeper sense of servanthood, is part of our spiritual growth. Phil. 2:5-8 speaks of the Lord's progressive humility as being our pattern.

*To the chosen ones who are temporary dwellers of the dispersion*- The reference to the dispersion suggests Peter was writing to Jews; the similarities noted above with the letter of James confirm that the same Jewish audience is in view. James too was addressed to the twelve tribes of the dispersion (James 1:1). Perhaps these were those whom Peter had baptized on the day of Pentecost, who had scattered when the Jerusalem church was persecuted, and were now in the provinces of what is now Turkey. All the NT letters are written to those whom the writer has converted, as further pastoral support. It was on this basis that they had authority to tell their converts how they ought to be behaving and believing. But "temporary dwellers" is the word for a pilgrim or foreigner, and is used in a spiritual sense in 2:11 and Heb. 11:13. By status they were to always be 'passers through' and were to remember that. Any refugee yearns for stability, to settle down again permanently. But they were being reminded that they were always on the move. In their cases, they had come from their birthplaces to live at Jerusalem, had accepted Christ, and were now refugees

in Turkey. This would make many of those whom Peter was addressing somewhat advanced in years. But even in middle and old age they were to remember that in the spiritual life, we are always moving on. We too may long for stability, and bend all our efforts to try to achieve it; the solid relationship, home, career, family life etc., but we are on a journey and that present instability is for our eternal good. For thereby we are taught that this world is not now the Kingdom of God. Jews within the land of Israel used these terms to denote Gentiles visiting Palestine; and now in Christ, these once orthodox Jews were realizing how those Gentiles felt.

*In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia-* The order of the provinces listed is the route a messenger would take, going around the provinces en route further West, perhaps to Rome.

*1:2 Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father-* Paul speaks of these ideas in Romans [where perhaps Peter had been if Babylon in 5:13 refers to Rome]. He cites them as an example of how the work of the Spirit is by grace- and therefore not by works of the law. And Peter repeats this reasoning, going on now to speak of the Spirit's work.

*In sanctification of the Spirit-* GNB "made a holy people by his Spirit". Just as we could not call ourselves nor place ourselves in God's foreknowledge, so we cannot make ourselves holy. This is all the work of the Spirit.

*To be obedient and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus Christ-* Although so much has been done for us, we must still respond. The reference to obedience to Jesus and being sprinkled / purified by His blood may well refer to baptism. It is by that act that we respond to what has been potentially planned for us.

*Grace to you and peace be multiplied-* Grace means 'gift'. He wished that the gift of the Spirit be multiplied to them each one.

1:3- see on 1 Thess. 1:2.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead-* We are born again by the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5). This would then be another reference to baptism (see on :2 *To obey...*). Peter had baptized his audience quite some time ago, and he wanted to remind them of the significance of their baptisms. Because of Christ's resurrection, we too have a living hope, a hope of living [again]. And the connection between His resurrection and ours is made by baptism. We are born again and become living because the Lord rose from the dead, and thereby shed forth the power of His living, His spirit, in our lives.

There are a series of allusions to Daniel which show him to be representative of all those in Christ:

## Daniel

### 1 Peter 1 (re. the saints)

"An inheritance... reserved... for you" (v.4)	"Thou shalt... stand in thy lot (inheritance) at the end of the days" (12:13)
In heaviness of spirit (v.6)	Daniel's heaviness of spirit
"The proof of your faith... is proved by fire... unto praise and honour and glory" (v.7 RV)	The experience of Daniel's friends Daniel praised, honoured and glorified (2:6 cp. 4:37)
"Whom having not seen ye love... now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice" (v.8)	The spirit of Daniel?
"Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (v.9)	Cp. Daniel's assurance of salvation (12:13)
"The prophets have enquired and searched diligently... searching what manner of time the spirit... did signify" (v.10,11)	Peter was certainly writing here with his eye on Daniel's enquiring and diligent searching "what manner of time" his prophecies referred to (8:15,27; 9:2; 12:8)
"Unto whom it was revealed (in response to their enquiries) that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister... ... which things the Angels desire to look into" (v.12)	This is definitely alluding to Dan. 12:4, where Daniel is told that he cannot understand his own prophecies, but they will be understood by latter day believers to whom they will be relevant. Angelic interest in prophecy is mainly demonstrated in Daniel.

1:4 *To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away*- The same word is used in the parallel James 1:11 about the wealthy shall "fade away". The sustained references to the unfading, eternal inheritance are therefore in contrast with the fading things of material inheritance now. This was particularly relevant to the refugees; whatever they managed to accumulate for themselves would fade away. It probably deeply grieved these older folks (see on 1:1 *Temporary dwellers*) that as refugees they had lost all and had nothing to leave as an inheritance. But they were to focus upon the eternal inheritance.

*Reserved in heaven for you*- The "inheritance" is therefore not simply the land inheritance to Abraham to which we become heirs by identity with Christ, the seed of Abraham. It is already prepared for us, and is safely kept in Heaven. Our reward, the nature of our eternal being, is prepared uniquely and individually for us. It is prepared and present now in Heaven, and only our own wilful fighting against God's will can stop us being given it at the Lord's return.

1:5 *You who by the power of God are guarded*- The power / Spirit of God guards, preserves us, unto salvation at the last day. This continues the theme of :2. But some who start the race shall not finish it. They will therefore have resisted the Holy Spirit, consciously tried not to

be saved, wilfully going against His will. There is a power in our lives preserving us unto salvation. Strength is given us even in our weakness; temptations removed or overcome... But God will not force us into His Kingdom. This power operates through faith in it. If on a theological level we deny this power, then we cannot have faith in it- and are left trusting solely on our own strength.

*Through faith-* The fact that God so loves us is itself a limitation to Him. Because in any relationship, one person usually loves more than the other. And the one who loves the most- which is unquestionably God- has the least power. This is why He, the more powerful in physical terms, changes His mind to accommodate us. But the Almighty also allows His infinite power to become limited by our degrees of spirituality. We are kept "by the power of God through faith..." (1 Pet. 1:5); His power in practice is in some sense paralleled with and in that sense controlled by our faith.

Whatever else it referred to in its local context, the gift of the Spirit promised after baptism in Acts 2 was related to forgiveness and the subsequent hope of salvation. At baptism we rise in prospect as Christ rose, to total victory over sin. In prospect, all our sins were forgiven. As forgiveness is a spiritual gift, or gift of the Spirit, it follows that in some way we receive this at baptism. The continuation of this gift is conditional upon our using faith to keep it active on our behalf. We are "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (alluding to our baptism), to an inheritance (a place in the future Kingdom)... reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power (spirit) of God *through faith* unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5).

*To a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time-* This is the reserved inheritance (see on :4). It is "a salvation" because salvation will be unique to each of us; whilst we shall all be immortalized, the nature of our eternity will be tailored to each of us individually.

1:6 *Wherein you greatly rejoice-* As in :8. Knowing we shall be saved if the Lord returns now is the basis for great joy. If we are not certain of this... then Christianity is hardly the source of all joy and peace, but rather a fearful looking ahead to judgment day.

*Though now, for a little while, if need be, you have suffered many trials-* The idea is as in GNB "even though it may now be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer". Rejoicing and sadness therefore go together in the Christian life. The joy experienced is something far deeper than surface level emotion; for on that level we may well be sad. This is how the Lord before His death could talk of sharing His joy with His followers; even though He Himself was sorrowful unto death.

1:7- see on 1 Pet. 3:15.

*So that the proof of your faith-* To whom is our faith proven through trials? God knows the end from the beginning. Recall how He commented that He knew that Abraham would be faithful: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD" (Gen. 18:19). The proof is surely to ourselves. The purpose of testing is that we may know ourselves. The initial application of Peter's words here are surely to the "fiery trial" of Nero's persecution, from which he hoped the believers would emerge spiritually intact and then be immediately glorified by the Lord's return; see on 4:12 *The fiery trial*.

*(More precious than gold that perishes though it is proved by fire)*- Another parallel with James, who writes of gold that rusts. The idea is that gold doesn't rust and doesn't perish; but it does at infinity. And we are to live as if we are there, at infinity. The Jewish refugees in Turkey needed that assurance, with money a daily worry, especially since they had no land, no property, and no assurance they could work towards getting it. The supreme value of their faith is therefore emphasized.

*May be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ*- But in this life, choosing the life of faith as opposed to the legalism of neo-Judaism will also result in "the praise of God" (Jn. 12:43). Likewise Rom. 2:29 speaks of receiving praise of God for choosing to circumcise our heart rather than resting content with being a Jew outwardly. Being praised at the last day recalls the parable about the faithful being praised for using their talents, or for feeding the hungry, clothing the naked etc. Such praise is because of the righteousness imputed to us. But it is also because our faith in this life is so deeply significant to Him; it is indeed more precious than gold.

1:8 *Whom you love though you have not seen him*- Peter almost implies that His very invisibility is what makes us love Him, through His revelation to us in Scripture, in the way He seeks us to. We believe in Him because He is presently invisible to us; for faith is belief in what cannot be seen (Heb. 11:1-3). Yet Peter surely had his mind on the Lord's words of Jn. 20:29: "Blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed". Here Peter parallels believing in Jesus with loving Him. Belief in Him therefore involves far more than accepting His historical existence. It involves emotion and relationship which arise from that.

*On whom you believe, though now you do not see him*- The language of first faith and conversion, alluding to the Lord's promise of blessing for those who had not seen but had believed. Remember that Peter had baptized his audience at Pentecost. But believing on or into Jesus is an ongoing process.

*And rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory*- This joy was far deeper than emotion; see on :6. They were saddened and distressed as refugees; but they were inexpressibly happy. But inexpressible joy *and fullness of glory* suggests the joy of final acceptance at the last day. The awesome message is that we can experience that right now.

1:9 *Receiving the result of your faith, the salvation of your souls*- The joy of :8 and present fullness of glory can only be because of the fact that we are right now in process of receiving eternity; as John's Gospel puts it, we have eternal life, in that we are living now the kind of life we shall eternally live. We have the hope of life now (:3); and *elpis* doesn't mean a mere possibility, but a stable, certain future event. See on 1 Pet. 3:15.

1:10 *Concerning this salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you*- AV "Of which salvation...". They searched for information about this kind of salvation, the salvation that can now be experienced... and perceived that it was for us who believe in Christ. They didn't fully experience it themselves because Christ had not then died and resurrected. They prophesied about the grace that should come to *us* and was not then revealed in reality.

1:11- see on Mk. 14:35.

*Searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point to-* The Spirit of God is that of His Son, for they are of the same mind / Spirit. There is ultimately only one Spirit, God's, which is in His Son and in us. The Spirit which was about Christ was in them, so that they prophesied about Him. But they wanted of course to know *when* this time would be. And it's now, Peter is saying.

*When it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow them-* We now are "full of glory" (:8). The glories enabled by His sufferings refer to the spiritual blessings we now have, the outpouring of the Spirit as a result of His glorification, which Peter has recounted; the possibility of being certain of future salvation, the transforming Spirit of God sanctifying us and preserving our path to eternity, and living the eternal life right now.

1:12 *It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven-* The things which were not then possible; the Holy Spirit had not been given into the hearts of believers as Christ had not then been glorified; the "things" are the "glories" of :11 [see note there].

*Which things the Angels desire to look into-* A clear equation of prophets and Angels is found by comparing 1 Pet. 1:10 and 12: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently. . . which things the Angels (also) desire to look into", referring to the Cherubim Angels peering down intently into the blood on the mercy seat, the "salvation" which the prophets searched after. In the parable of redemption contained in getting a wife for Isaac, the servant went to seek out Rebecca, representing the prophets going to take us out of the world to begin a wilderness journey to our new husband. He must surely represent the word taking us out of the world; yet he was led by an Angel (Gen. 24:7), suggesting the Angels work through the word they inspire to bring us out of the world. Other passages relevant to this theme of Angels giving the Word of God are Ex. 23:22; Num. 22:35; 23:17; 24:1,2; Heb. 2:2. See on 2 Sam. 23:1-3.

1:13 *Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope completely on the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ-* Peter's letters are full of reference to the cross and various physical aspects of the trial and mocking of the Lord which he witnessed first-hand (5:1). "Girding ourselves" with humility is a reference to what the Lord did at the last supper (s.w. Jn. 13:5), although then, Peter had so misunderstood what He had done. Other examples in 1:19; 2:20; 2:22; 2:23; 2:24; 3:18; 4:1; 5:3. Well does the NCV translate Prov. 4:23: "Be careful what you think because your thoughts run your life". We are to gather together "the loins of your mind" (1 Pet. 1:13), make a conscious effort to analyse our thinking, get a grip on it and gather it together into Christ.

The eating of the meal with girded loins (Ex. 12:11,13) is seen by Peter as meaning we should have our *minds* girded, gathered up, in place and order (1 Pet. 1:13). Note how 1 Peter is replete with Passover allusions (1:17 cp. sojourning with fear in Egypt; 1:18 silver and gold taken from Egypt; 1:19 the Passover lamb; 1:23 corruptible seed= leaven; 2:9,10 cp. leaving Egypt at night, led from darkness to the glory of Sinai, where they became a nation. The

Passover night is alluded to in the New Testament as being typical of the spirit which we ought to have in daily life as we await the Lord's return. They were to eat it with their clothes girded together ready to up and go, huddled together in their family / ecclesial units, focused upon the slain Passover lamb in their midst which was to be their salvation. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind... and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ... forasmuch as ye know that ye were [redeemed] with... the precious blood of Christ, as of a [Passover] lamb without blemish" (1 Pet. 1:13,18,21). "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return... that they may open unto him immediately" (Lk. 12:35,36). In order to be ready to quit this life at any moment, with no looking back after the pattern of Lot's wife, we need to live in a daily spirit of urgent awareness of our position, living as we do in Egyptian darkness. 1 Peter 1 is packed with Passover and exodus allusions; v. 13 interprets the girding of loins: "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you". The sober minds of those families on that night, their thoughts like their garments pulled together and tightly bound, should resemble the type of mind control which we exercise in the face of our Lord's return.

Those refugees, so concerned at their lack of future security, worried about mid to long term financial issues (just like so many today) were to set their *elpis*, their confident expectation, on the fact they would be saved by grace at the last day. The operation of the grace / Spirit mentioned earlier was the guarantee that the final grace of personal salvation would be brought to them at the last day. "Brought to you" is a mild translation of a term used for rushing, a ship being driven by the wind; salvation is rushing to meet us.

1:14 *As children of obedience, do not be conformed to the lusts-* AV "conforming yourselves". The contrast is between children who are raised with principles which they are obedient to; and children who raise themselves, conforming themselves to whatever takes their fancy. This is how we shall 'turn out' unless we accept God's word as the final authority.

*You had in your former ignorance-* If my reconstruction is correct, Peter is writing to once very committed Orthodox Jews whom he had baptized in Jerusalem. But the life of legalism is in fact of living in lusts; Paul says this about his own life in Romans 7, and specifically states that he at that stage lived in lust (Tit. 3:3). Only grace can lead us out of that.

1:15 *But like He who called you is holy, be you yourselves holy in all manner of living-* This connects back to :2, which says that they had been called by God's gracious plan from the beginning, and His Spirit was at work to sanctify or make them holy. He is Holy, and His plan is to raise "children of obedience" (:14) like Him. Orthodox Jews such as they once were would have been obsessed with holiness in the sense of ritual separation. But this was to be extended to "all manner of living". By being holy / separate over a few things, they were tempted to think that vast areas of life in other areas could be lived as they wished. This was and is the problem with legalistic obedience. Hence the focus on *all* manner of living.

1:16 *Because it is written: You shall be holy, for I am holy-* This is quoting from the Levitical code of conduct for priests (Lev. 11:44,45). But those same words were spoke to all the congregation (Lev. 19:2)- for it was God's intention that all Israel should develop into a nation of priests. And this very idea is applied by Peter to the entire church (2:5,9). We likewise cannot assume that others shall take care of our spirituality; we are in fact called to be Levites for others. All of us have this calling.

1:17 *And if you call on Him as Father*- Perhaps a reference to the way early Christians used the Lord's prayer, beginning "Our Father...". If God was their Father, the first word of the prayer ["our"] demands that we accept we are not His only children. And He will judge all His children the same, and that included the Gentile converts with whom perhaps these Jewish converts were finding it hard to get along.

*Who without partiality judges*- The trial of our faith is going on now; the judgment will simply formally reveal the verdict which is now being arrived at. The Father judges now "according to every man's work" (1 Pet. 1:17), as He did in OT times: "Thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Ps. 62:12). Yet when His Son returns, He will give every man "according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). It couldn't be clearer: the judgment is going on now, and the Lord Jesus returns to give us the reward which has been 'judged' appropriate for us. With this background, Peter drives home the almost inevitable practical lesson: "... [therefore] pass the time of your sojourning here in fear". *Now* Yahweh's eyes judge and examine the righteous, as He sits enthroned; and He *will*, at the future day of judgment, rain sulphur upon the head of the wicked and chase them away with His brining wind (Ps. 11:4-6 RV- reference to the Angel of the Lord chasing the rejected away?).

God will judge every man's work "forasmuch as ye know that ye were... redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb slain..." (1 Pet. 1:17-19). The link between our judgment and Christ's death needs to be reflected upon here. Our appreciation ("forasmuch...") of the cross is related to how we will be judged. The Lord's death should influence our works and therefore it is intimately related to our final judgment. We will be judged in accordance with how far we have let the cross influence our daily works. Baptism can never be undone; as a result of that covenant statement before God, we for evermore live our lives with a sense of responsibility to Him. "If ye call [upon yourselves] on the [name of] the Father [an allusion to baptism into the Father's Name]... pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: *forasmuch* as ye know [i.e. the more you realize this, the more you will live in fear / reverence] that ye... were redeemed... with the precious blood of Christ".

*According to each man's work*- Peter had found it hard to accept that truly "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:37). And, as was well known, there had come a time when he had slipped back into the old mindset, and had once again respected persons by refusing to break bread with Gentiles. And yet he reminds his Jewish readers that their prayers ascend to a Father "who without respect of persons judgeth according to *every* man's work" (i.e. Jew or Gentile). He was asking them to learn what he had so slowly and falteringly come to accept as the articulation of the very same grace to the Gentiles which had been his salvation too.

*Pass the time of your sojourning in fear*- Or, "exile". The Jewish Christians had been driven out of Jerusalem by the Orthodox Jews, thus making a parallel between the Orthodox and Babylon, who had likewise driven Judah into exile. And "Babylon" may be a title for Jerusalem in 5:13 and in Revelation. It has been demonstrated that the record of the exile from the land is framed in terms of the exile from Eden; the offer of return to the land is therefore an offer of paradise restored, fellowship with God renewed- for those who wanted it. Let's remember that the exiles were symbols of us. We in this life are passing through "the time of our exile" (1 Pet. 1:17 RSV).



1:18- see on Lk. 24:21.

*Knowing you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold-* Gold only corrupts at infinity, and that is where we are. The connection is with the reference in :4 to the transitory nature of wealth (see notes there); and how our relation to the Lord's blood, which has *eternal* effects, ought to make us not materialistic. All wealth can buy is temporary; but we stand related to the eternal wealth.

*From your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers-* The Orthodox Jewish life of legal obedience was in fact "vain". And they were redeemed from it. And the Lord's death redeems us likewise from whatever was our spiritual and psychological inheritance. Do we feel that life is just pointless, an endless round of childcare, working all day doing in essence the same job for 30 years, a trudging through an endless tunnel until our mortality catches up on us? We were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ from the "vain way of life handed down from the fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18), from the frustration of this present life. The word used for "vain" is that used by the LXX for the 'vanity' of life as described in Ecclesiastes, and for idol worship in Lev. 17:7 and Jer. 8:19. We have been redeemed from it all! Not for us the life of endlessly chasing the rainbow's end, slavishly worshipping the idols of ever bigger homes, smarter technology... we were redeemed from the vanity of life "under the sun" by the precious blood of Christ. We were bought out of this slavery, even if in the flesh we go through its motions. Knowing this, we the redeemed, the bought out from vanity, shouldn't spend our hours in front of the television or doing endless crosswords, or frittering away the time of life as the world does. James foresaw that a man could appear to be religious, and yet have a religion that was "vain" (James 1:26)- because he didn't appreciate that the cross has bought him out of vanity.

New life is always needed. This is why in our daily reading and fellowship with our Lord, as we enter ever more deeply into His character, we are challenged afresh daily. We aren't professionals, committee members, in this drive for spirituality. We are amateurs at heart, children, wide eyed with wonder at what we are being shown, ever moving on to some fresh endeavour. Our spiritual new life need never become a mere routine, a burden, a duty to be performed, a habit. For "[in the heart] where the spirit of the Lord [Jesus] is, there the heart is free" (2 Cor. 3:17); we were brought out from the pointless, repetitive bondage of Egypt by the blood of Christ. What this means is not that red liquid somehow did something for us; His example of death, how He was there, inspires us to break out from the vain way of life we received by tradition from our fathers. We alone, as true believers in the representative nature of His sacrifice, are thereby empowered to break out of the routine of our lives.

1:19 *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot-* 1 Pet. 1:18,19 sets the blood of Christ in utter opposition to materialism; the very historical fact of His cross of itself means a rejection of material things. The financially strapped refugees needed to be reminded of this. We are familiar enough with the way in which Israel's crossing of the Red Sea represents our redemption in Christ. Their response when they got the other side was to willingly sacrifice the riches of Egypt which they had brought with them; they gave them to the Lord's work, so that the tabernacle could be built up. Israel's exodus and establishment as God's Kingdom at Sinai was the prototype of the early church's experience. They too, for the sheer joy of the Truth, resigned their material possessions. The merchant man for the sheer

joy of finding the beautiful pearl sells *all* he has, for the pure excellency of possessing just that one pearl (Mt. 13:44-46).

"Precious" is the same word just used about how precious is faith (:7). The blood of Christ is only precious to those who believe that by His work we shall eternally live. To damage the faith of another is to damage something so very precious, and if they stumble, then the blood of Christ is no longer for them precious.

1:20 *He was foreknown before the foundation of the world*- The same word has been used in the opening argument in :2. We were foreknown in God's plan; but this is because we are "in Christ", and all that is true of Him is true of us. By baptism into Him, all that is true of Him becomes true of us. This solves the problem of how some were foreknown from the beginning, and others apparently were not. The truth is that all those who choose to become "in Christ" share all that is true of Him. If He was foreknown, so then are we. It is our choice as to whether we wish to be in Him. And note that as He was foreknown, so were we. That does not require His literal, personal pre-existence, just as it doesn't demand ours.

*But was manifested at the end of times for your sake*- The "foundation of the world" could refer to the Jewish or Mosaic age. For Judaism, in which the readers had grown up, referred to the Sinai covenant as "the foundation of the world". So "the end of times" would then refer to the end of Jewish times, the time of the Mosaic Law, which was ended by the Lord's death. His manifestation would then refer particularly to His death rather than His birth. His death was the supreme manifestation of Jesus as the sacrificial lamb without spot (:19).

1:21 *Who through him are believers in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory*- Nearly everyone in the first century believed in the God-idea. There were very few atheists. Hence the radical nature of statements like 1 Pet. 1:21: we "through him [Jesus] are believers in God", because God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection of the Lord inspires faith in the Father to such an extent that anyone whose faith in 'God' is not based on the risen Jesus does not actually count as a believer in God.

*So that your faith and hope might be in God*- The hope / certain expectation which is in view is not simply the existence of God, but of final salvation. That is guaranteed by the Lord's death and resurrection.

1:22- see on 2 Cor. 6:6.

*Seeing you have purified your souls*- This returns to the theme of :2, that the Spirit has sanctified us, purified us. But we must respond by living in practice according to what we are in status; we must allow the operation of God's desire to purify / sanctify us, and the working of His Spirit to that end. Hence they had "purified your souls... through the Spirit".

*In your obedience to the truth*- Peter writes in the RV of "your obedience of the truth unto [issuing in] unfeigned love of the brethren... having been begotten again... of incorruptible seed, through the word of God" (1 Pet. 1:21,22 RV). The purity and truth of the "word of God" - and by this he surely refers to the Gospel message- is what issues in a true love for others, in comparison to the pseudo-love that fills our human experience in this world. Truth leads to true love- that's the message. This is the importance of correct teaching of the word of the Gospel. And yet how often have we used the concept of 'truth' to hate and divide our

brethren...? John's writings reflect many struggles. But in the end they all forge into one ultimate struggle- between light and darkness, love and hatred, truth and error, life and death. Hence the struggle for purity of doctrine becomes parallel with the struggle between love and hatred. Love is therefore and thereby connected with purity of doctrine.

*To sincere love of the brothers-* We obeyed the truth "unto unfeigned love of the brethren... [therefore] see that ye love one another" (1 Pet. 1:22 AV). Our obedience to the truth of Christ placed us in the status of those who unfeignedly love their brethren; but this means, Peter is saying, that we'd better get on and love them in practice.

Jonah 2:9 contains the enigmatic statement that those who "hold to empty faiths" (Heb.) "forsake their own *hesed*". *Hesed* basically refers to the capacity a superior has to show mercy, grace and love to someone in an inferior position. For over 20 years I wondered what Jonah was really getting at. I think I then grasped it- those who hold to empty faiths forego the capacity to show *hesed*, favour to others- the implication being that the result of the one *true* faith is that we are empowered to show *hesed*, love, favour, grace, mercy, to others. And this ties in perfectly with 1 Pet. 1:22- we obey the truth *unto*, with the result that, we show "unfeigned love of the brethren". This is how and where true doctrine comes to its ultimate term- love of others. Karl Barth put it powerfully: "The best theology would need no advocates: it would prove itself". If each doctrine of the Gospel had its intended outworking in our lives, there would be no need for the explanation of Gospel doctrine; the doctrines would be lived out in our personalities. Perhaps this was why there was so little 'theology', propositional truths or academic doctrine, on the lips of the Lord Jesus. For He was the word of the Gospel made flesh. To quote Barth again: "Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is Himself the way".

*Fervently love one another from the heart-* The experience of the grace which brought about the forgiveness of our sins will make us gentle people, kind hearted, generous, not hard-minded in our judgment of situations; it will make us dedicate ourselves to the work of sharing this superb grace with others through preaching, and will inspire us to work unceasingly to reclaim those who have wandered away from the grace of God, and to build up those who hesitate to fully accept it. As God has reached out into our little world, so we will try to do in the lives of those around us. The end result of obeying the truth is "unfeigned love of the brethren... love (of) one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22). "Ye were running well; who did hinder you, that ye should not [keep on] obey the truth?" (Gal. 5:7) suggests that obeying the Truth is not just in baptism; it is an ongoing motivation to keep running the race of practical life in Christ.

1:23- see on Job 22:27,28; Lk. 8:11.

*Having been begotten again-* AV "Being born again". This second begetting was by the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5). God has taken the initiative. But we must respond, allowing His movement, and living the life of conscious love, which is the singular fruit of the Spirit. We "love one another from the heart fervently: having been begotten again...". Love of the brotherhood is in the end the result and guarantee of the new birth. We are asked not to receive God's grace in vain, nor do despite unto the spirit [power] of grace. These phrases surely suggest that the experience of grace is a compulsion to action, which we can resist but ought rather to allow to work in us to bring forth fruit. The [Gospel of the] Kingdom of God and our relation to it now ought to bring forth fruit in us (Mt. 21:43). It isn't just a set of true propositions.

The Greek tense of "begotten again" could imply an ongoing process; thus Peter in :3 speaks of how we have already been born again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Christ (a clear reference to baptism), and yet here goes on to say that having obeyed the truth, we must go on in being (continuous tense) born again by the work of God's word (1 Pet. 1:3,23). See on Col. 2:6; Gal. 3:27.

*Not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and endures-* See on :25 *The word of the Lord*. I suggest the "word" here refers to the Lord Jesus. It is He who now "lives and abides for ever".

1:24 *For, All flesh is as grass and all the glory of it as the flower of grass-* We shouldn't see the mortality of man and the true meaning of the Hebrew word *nephesh* as a negative thing that we unfortunately have to tell people who believe their loved ones are alive in Heaven. "The voice" tells Isaiah to cry. "And I said, What shall I cry?" (Is. 40:6 LXX; RVmg.). What was to be the message of Isaiah's Gospel? The voice addresses Isaiah as "O thou that tellest good tidings", and tells him the good news he is to preach. It is that "All flesh is grass... the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever". The reality of man's mortality is the backdrop against which we can see the eternity of God and the offer made to us through His abiding word that we really can escape from our condition. Christian preaching about "man is mortal" need not be bad news. The message can be turned into good news! For it was this message of mortality which prepared the way for men to accept Christ (Is. 40:3-5); the mountains of human pride are made low by this message so that we can accept salvation in Christ. 1 Pet. 1:24 RVmg. quotes these verses and concludes that we are being offered salvation through "the word of the God who liveth for ever" - the Gospel that is prefaced by the message of human mortality. God's eternity and man's mortality are placed side by side- and thus the way is prepared for the wonder of the fact that through "the word" of Jesus, of the Gospel, we the mortal are invited to share in that immortality.

*The grass withers and the flower falls-* The seed of all things produces fruit which cannot abide, no matter how beautiful and pleasing it may appear for a moment. The contrast is with the seed of the Gospel of Jesus, which produces permanent results. The great salvation in Christ is an inheritance which will not fade away, like the flowers (see on :4) and which produces eternal glory (:7), unlike the glory of the flower which fades. The things of the Kingdom and the great, eternal, glorious salvation in Christ are being contrasted with material things- because it was materialism which was the problem faced by the exiled Jewish believers in Turkey to whom Peter was writing.

1:25 *But the word of the Lord endures for ever-* The word of the Lord Jesus is put for the fruit brought forth by it. See on 1:24 *The grass withers*.

*And this is the word of good news which was preached to you-* "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth (accepting the basic doctrine of the Gospel)... see that ye (continue) being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God... and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet.1:22-25 AV). Note the continuous tense of "is", according to the AV; remembering that Peter is writing to those already converted. The once off act of intercourse and begettal, whereby the seed or sperm initiates new life, is here spoken of in the continuous sense. Similarly, a sower sowing seed is a once-off act, yet the parable has an ongoing application. Human "seed" and begettal is "corruptible" (1 Pet.1:23)- i.e. the offspring does not have the exact character of the person

from whom the seed originated. Yet God's seed is "incorruptible" in that it will eventually result in our being brought forth in the exact image of God after the judgment, when we are fully born of Spirit nature. This is because "the word (seed) of God... liveth and abideth for ever", i.e. God's word can have constant intercourse with us, constantly creating us after the image of our spiritual Father.

The word is to be made flesh in us as it was in the Lord. "The word" in the New Testament often refers to the basic Gospel rather than every inspired word which there is in the whole Bible. But here it specifically refers to the word which is Jesus. "The word of God (a title of Jesus)... the word of the Lord... is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:23,25 RV). It is this word of the basic Gospel which is the "milk of the word" which enables us to "put away therefore all malice... guile... hypocrisies" (1 Pet. 2:1,2). And having spoken of tasting / drinking the word of God (the same figure is in Heb. 6:5), Peter then speaks of tasting the grace of the Lord Jesus (2:3). He is the word of the Gospel made flesh- to taste His Gospel, the word, is to taste of Him.

## CHAPTER 2

*2:1 Therefore, put away all wickedness, deceit, hypocrisies, envies and all evil speaking-* The behaviour of the exiled Jews whom Peter had once baptized in Jerusalem wasn't good. They had allowed the stress of the refugee life to lead them into unspirituality; they had now allowed free operation to the gift of Holy Spirit made available to them at baptism.

“Hypocrisies” recalls how Peter was carried away with the “dissimulation” of the Judaizers (Gal. 2:13), and he uses the same word when he appeals to the brethren to lay aside “all hypocrisies” (1 Pet. 2:1); he was asking them to do what he himself had had to do. He had been a hypocrite, in living the life of legalism within the ecclesia whilst having the knowledge of grace.

In Jeremiah's time, gossiping was associated with 'proceeding from evil to evil' (Jer. 9:3); it is part of a downward spiral of spirituality. Once gossip starts a quarrel, it's like water bursting out of a dam; soon the whole land of Israel will be flooded (Prov. 17:14 NIV). So it's best not to start it, not only for our own sakes, but because of the effect it will have on the rest of the body. Peter likewise points an antithesis between gossiping and receiving "the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1,2). Real spiritual growth is impossible if we are taken up with gossiping; and this is true on the communal as well as individual level.

*2:2 Be as newborn babes, longing for the spiritual milk which is without deceit-* Peter was writing to those he had baptized many years ago, who had become hardened by this world. He urges them to look back to their conversion, and start again. Hebrews criticizes Jewish converts for needing milk rather than meat, so Peter's exhortation here is not without an element of criticism and regret that they had not matured more. The euphoria of those thousands of baptisms at Pentecost must be considered against how Peter now writes to them, years later.

‘Be babes’ he exhorts, ‘and grow as they do’ (1 Pet. 2:2). The same word occurs in Lk. 18:15 in description of the “infants” whom Peter rebuked. The Lord’s response had been to tell Peter to be like them (Lk. 18:17). And, having been humbled into learning something of a child’s teachableness, a babe’s desire for the sincere milk, Peter now asks others to learn the lesson.

*So that you may grow thereby to salvation-* “Salvation” is being like the Lord, the saved one; we grow into it, as well as being granted it finally. James 1:18 speaks of "the word of truth", the inspired word of the basic Gospel message. But he goes on to appeal for us to be "doers of the word" (James 1:22,23). "The word" must be that of v. 18- the word of the Gospel. He sensed the tendency to accept the word of God as true, to show this by baptism: and yet not to be "doers" of that word. It is in this sense that the word of the Gospel is what we grow by (1 Pet. 2:2 cp. 1:23,25; 2:8; 3:1); by our daily response to the most basic things which we have understood and claim to believe, we will grow spiritually. When we were baptized, we read the simple Biblical statements about baptism and obeyed them. That translation from Bible reading into practice is something which we thenceforward struggle to maintain for the rest of our lives. There is a power in the inspired word, whereby one mind- God's- can penetrate another with no intermediary but a piece of flattened wood pulp, black print on white paper. It's an amazing phenomenon to be part of. Lev Tolstoy in his spiritual autobiography A

*Confession* tells in gripping manner how he read the words of Jesus "Sell everything you have and give to the poor" and then finally overcame all the restraints of his nature to do just that. He freed his serfs, gave away the copyrights to his writings and began to dispose of his huge estate. Words on paper must likewise lead to action in us. The more familiar we become with the text of Scripture by daily reading, the stronger is the temptation to become blasé, and not read the word expecting to be taught something new, expecting to be challenged to change.

2:3- see on Rom. 2:4.

*If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious-* 1 Pet.2:2,3 describes desiring "the sincere milk of the word" as *tasting* the grace of the Lord, through knowing "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:32). Peter may well be alluding to Heb.6:4,5 concerning *tasting* "the Heavenly gift", *tasting* "the good word of God", which parallels being "made partakers of the Holy Spirit". Thus the word of Jesus is connected to the gift of the Spirit, a connection made all the stronger once we realize that the Greek word for "grace" sometimes refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter is quoting here from the LXX of Ps. 34:8, so we can agree with the GNB: "As the scripture says, "You have found out for yourselves how kind the Lord is"". In this case, we have the sense that in our receipt of salvation at the last day, we will have a totally unique and personal experience. We will have found out His grace for ourselves.

2:4 *Come to him as to a living stone-* The contrast is with the dead stones of the temple, which had played such a crucial role in the culture and faith of Peter's Jewish readership. Peter goes on to say that we too are "living stones" (:5); the titles of the Lord Jesus are applied to all of us in Christ.

*Indeed rejected by men but chosen by God and precious-* The Jewish believers had been rejected by the same group in Jerusalem who had rejected the Lord Jesus. And so Peter uses titles of the Lord Jesus [taken from Is. 28:16 LXX] which he has just used about the believers. They too were "chosen by God" (1:2) and were "precious" (1:7). All that is true of Him becomes true of us.

2:5 *You as living stones are being built up-* Even though the Jewish believers being addressed were at a low point in their spiritual growth, the Spirit was seeking to build them up. The wise man builds his house upon the rock of Christ (Mt. 7:26), and yet the Lord Jesus builds His church on the rock of our faith in His resurrection (Mt. 16:18). Our efforts are confirmed by the Lord; this is His way of working by the Spirit. The implication is that the Lord is the builder; in contrast to the builders of the Jewish leadership, who rejected the Lord as the chief corner stone (:7). It may have been a frightening, scary and lonely prospect to be rejected by the 'builders' of Judaism and driven into exile, without any structure of spiritual support and leadership. For the early Christians continued to attend the temple and remained in the synagogues until they were cast out. Peter is urging them to realize that the Lord Himself is their builder, their good shepherd.

*Into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood-* Exile from the temple system would have been a frightening experience for these orthodox Jewish converts. But they were being reminded that *they* are the temple, they are the priesthood. So often, structures we depend upon are removed and we are made to realize that it is for us to do and be what those

structures were for us. Every Israelite was intended to be a priest; they were to be "a Kingdom of priests". The "covenant of my peace" was with both Israel (Is. 54:10) and the priesthood (Mal. 2:5). The same is true of spiritual Israel; "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5). The process of baptism recalls the way in which the priests washed and then embarked on service to the rest of Israel. Christ is the supreme priest; but because we are "in Him", we too have some part in the priesthood. See on Rom. 12:1.

As it was God's intention that Israel were to be a nation of priests to the rest of the world, so the new Israel likewise are to *all* discharge the priestly functions of teaching their brethren (Ex. 19:6 cp. 1 Pet. 2:5; Rev. 1:6; 5:9,10). Under the new covenant, we should *all* teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16). Indeed, God told Israel [unrecorded in the historical records]: "Ye are gods [*elohim*] and all of you are sons of the Most High" (Ps. 82:6 RV). Further, Ps. 96:9 makes the paradigm breaking statement that even the Gentiles could come before Yahweh of Israel in holy, priestly array- they too could aspire to the spirit of priesthood (Ps. 96:9 RVmg.). Moses spoke of how all Israel should pray that God would establish the work of their hands (Ps. 90:17)- but this was in fact his special request for the blessing of Levi, the priestly tribe (Dt. 33:11). Ps. 135:19,20 parallels all Israel with the priestly family: "Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron: bless the Lord, O house of Levi: ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord... praise *ye* the Lord". All Israel were to aspire to the spirit of priesthood. Indeed, the Psalms often parallel the house of Aaron (i.e. the priesthood) with the whole nation (Ps. 115:9,10,12; 118:2,3).

*To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ-* Our offerings are acceptable to God by (Gk. *dia*, "in", on account of) Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5); by / by being in Christ we offer to God the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15). The fact we come unto God directly *dia*, "by", through, on account of the Lord Jesus does not mean that therefore Christ must interpret our every word to God; it cannot mean that in prayer we cannot come directly to the Father. If this were so, the Lord's model prayer would be seriously lacking in its omission of any such clause which reminds us that we are praying to God through the mediation / interpretation of Christ. If English and Greek mean anything, the Lord categorically stated that He does *not* transfer our prayers to God; through Him, as a result of His work, we have a direct approach to God: "Ye shall ask *me* nothing... Ye shall ask [the Father] *in* my name (i.e. because you are located there, in that position / relation): and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you" (Jn. 16:23,26,27). Christ does not pray for us in the sense of offering up our words of request to the Father; He prays for us, according to Rom. 8, of His own freewill, with His own agenda, not ours. The aim of His suffering and Heavenly mediation today, is that He might "bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). This refers to His reconciliation of us to the Father, rather than His offering of our prayers. Because we are in His Name, on account of ("by") Him and His work, we can pray directly to the Father. He does not pray the Father for us.

We are all parts of the same body, branches on the same vine, bricks in the same building; we are all strangers and pilgrims, lacking any rights of a citizen. We are all members of the same priesthood, with equal responsibility to offer up acceptable sacrifice. Don't miss the power of this to New Testament Jewish ears: the special responsibilities of the priests were now applied to *every* believer.

*2:6 Because it is contained in scripture: Look, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, chosen, precious-* The Jewish converts who were now in exile from Jerusalem, excommunicated from the temple, were in fact still in Zion- spiritually. Peter is clearly aware of the sense of



spiritual loneliness which they felt after being cut off from the temple system. They had left their homes to come and live, or retire to, Jerusalem- because the temple was there. Peter had baptized them, and they had been cast out of the temple system and were now refugees in Turkey. But they were the temple and the priesthood- that is the force of his argument.

*And he that believes in him shall not stumble-* The Jewish refugees, cast out of the temple system, perhaps felt they would stumble as a result of being outside the temple structure; and perhaps Peter sensed they were close to doing so. But he urges them to retain their faith in Christ as the true corner stone, who like them had been rejected by Jerusalem Judaism.

2:7- see on Jn. 12:3.

*Therefore, for you that believe he is precious-* The repeated emphasis upon the Lord Jesus being "precious" connects with the preciousness of their faith (1:7). Their faith was precious to the Lord, and He was precious to them. We see here the mutuality between a man and his Lord.

*But to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone-* The Lord is a stone- either of stumbling, or the chief cornerstone of our faith. Yet the Lord presents a different two options with regard to Him as the stone. We either fall on the stone and are broken; or it falls upon us and grinds us to powder, with full allusion to the stone of Dan. 2:44 which will grind the condemned to powder by the Lord's return (Mt. 21:44). But stumbling over the stone means it is a stone of offence to us. We either stumble upon the Lord, we sin and are broken by it but repent; or else He will condemn us at the last day. It's rather like the parable of the two sons; we are either the prodigal and end up saved, or the self-righteous older brother who ends up outside the Lord's fellowship.

2:8- see on 1 Pet. 5:2.

*A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence-* Looking back, it must have been shameful for Peter to recollect how he had sought to dissuade the Lord from going up to Jerusalem to die there for the world's redemption. At that time the Lord had called him a rock, upon whose declaration of faith he would build his church, and then soon afterwards a stumbling-stone, an offence. Peter combines these two descriptions in styling the Lord "the head(stone) of the corner (upon which the ecclesia would be built), and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" (1 Pet. 2:7,8). There is undoubted allusion to the very titles which the Lord had given Peter. And yet here Peter applies them both to the Lord Jesus, even the "rock of offence". His point perhaps was to show that he saw Christ as manifest in him, and he being "in Christ", *even in his weakness*. Nothing could separate Peter from the love of Christ; and therefore he merges the titles of Christ with those of himself, even when they describe his weakness. This was the unity that was possible between a man and his Lord, and Peter holds it up in inspiration to his readers.

*For being disobedient, they stumble at the word-* But the Lord Jesus is the rock or stone over which they stumble. So "the word" refers to Him, in that attitudes to His word are attitudes to Him. He is the word, made flesh. We cannot claim to love Him if we disregard His word. The "disobedient" here refer to the Jews who did not accept Jesus as the Christ; for the Greek really means to disbelieve. So when Peter later uses the same word in warning his readership about those who are disobedient to the Gospel, or husbands who do not initially obey the word, he has specifically in view Jews who do not believe in Jesus as Christ (3:1; 4:17).

*To which they also were appointed-* This does not just say that the wicked are disobedient; they are *appointed* to this. God therefore had a hand in their disobedience- through confirming them in their conscious rejection of Him. On the other hand, "Whom (God) did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). The predestination was not just to know the Gospel, but to be righteous- to be able to conform our characters to the perfect example of Jesus. Thus "I have chosen you... to bring forth fruit" (Jn. 15:16), i.e. spiritual attributes.

2:9 *But you are an elect race-* They who believed in Christ were the true Israel of God, and not those back in Palestine who had rejected and persecuted them.

*A royal priesthood, a holy nation-* God intended Israel to be "a Kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6). "All the people of Israel" were the builders of the spiritual house of God, i.e. His people (Acts 4:10,11). All Israel were to lay their hands on the Levites to show that they were truly Israel's representatives (Num. 8:10). When Israel were rejected, they were told that they as a nation could no longer be God's priest (Hos. 4:6). By baptism, we become spiritual Israel; and this idea is relevant to us too. Peter picks up these words in Exodus and applies them to every one of us: "Ye *also* are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices" (1 Pet. 2:5,9). The Lord Jesus is a King-priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:13-18; Ps. 110:4); and through being in Him, we share this position. Through what He achieved for us on the cross, we have been made *now* king-priests, with the future hope of reigning on earth (Rev. 1:6; 5:10). Israel were constituted a Kingdom of priests; a whole nation who would preach forth God's ways to those about them. And this designation and commission is applied now to the new Israel (1 Pet. 2:5,9 cp. Ex. 20:5). Males who could not procreate were barred from the congregation (Dt. 23:1), possibly in prototype of how spiritual procreation was to be a vital characteristic of the future Israel.

Israel were called out of Egypt in order to declare among the surrounding nations the character and greatness of Israel's God. In this calling to be a missionary nation they failed miserably (what similarities with the new Israel?). The very reason why we are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood (is) *that* we should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness (cp. Egypt)". Our separation from this world is therefore related to our praise of God. We don't shew forth the knowledge and praise of God to this world by singing to them; but rather by showing in our lives and preaching that we have been separated unto a glorious Kingdom of light. This is the true shewing forth of praise.

*A people for God's own possession, that you may show forth the excellence of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light-* Judaism was therefore "darkness".

2:10 *Who in times past were no people-* The true Israel of God are those who are the baptized seed of Abraham. The very negative language and imagery used here about Judaism and natural Israel was designed to comfort the Jewish refugees who had been rejected by Orthodox Judaism and the "Jerusalem that now is". Paul in Galatians 4 likewise speaks most negatively of the then current Jerusalem.

*But now are the people of God-* After their baptism at the Red Sea, Israel were declared the Kingdom of God by reason of God being their King through their promised obedience to His word (Ex. 19:5,6). They were "saved" (Jude 5) from the power of Egypt (cp.sin). Yet they

had to walk through the wilderness (cp. our probations), behaving according to the responsibilities of being God's Kingdom, and yet still capable of backsliding before they became established as the physical Kingdom in the land. Those very same Abrahamic promises of inheriting the land of Canaan as the centre of the coming Kingdom are made to us through our Red Sea baptism. Abraham lived in the land of promise in his mortal life, but did not of course experience what it would be like in the Kingdom (Heb. 11:9). That he had to look forward to in faith, as do we, his seed. Peter leaves us with no doubt as to the validity of this parallel: "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (cp. "a Kingdom of priests and a holy nation", Ex. 19:6), an holy nation, a peculiar (i.e. purchased) people; that you should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness (Egypt) into His marvellous light (cp. the glory at Sinai?). Which in time past were not a people (Kingdom), but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2:9,10). Alluding to this same idea, our guardian Angels, speaking on our behalf, welcomed the risen Lord into Heaven with the song "You... have made us unto our God (now) a Kingdom of priests; and we shall (in the full manifestation of that Kingdom) reign on earth" (Rev. 5:10). Hebrews 12 describes our being in Christ in language referring back to God's declaration of Israel as His Kingdom at Sinai (Heb. 12:18,29= Ex. 24:17). See on Acts 7:36.

*Who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy-* Hos. 2:23 is being alluded to. The son of the whore Gomer was adopted by grace by the faithful Israelite Hosea, into his prophetic family. Clearly that child represented the Gentiles. But it also represented Israel. In this beautiful way, Jew and Gentile are united by grace within God's family.

*2:11 Beloved, I urge you as temporary residents and pilgrims-* Language directly relevant to their position as refugees in exile from Jerusalem, but also reminding them that thereby they were in fellowship with Abraham, father of the faithful, and were thus his true seed.

*To abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul-* It could seem that the exiled Jewish Christians were slipping away into fleshly lusts. Such lusts war against the soul in that the Christ-man within us is our real being, our true self. But this comes under attack if we give in to fleshly lusts. Such internal warfare is not therefore how things should be. Gal. 5:17,18 likewise speaks as if this kind of internal lusting is not how things should be in those led of the Spirit: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. For these are contrary to each other, so that you cannot do the things you should. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law". Their soul, their real person, was the spirit, the spirit person formed in them, potentially, by the work of the spirit. I take this to be a criticism of how things were with the Galatian believers, rather than a general statement of how things are for all those possessing human nature.

*2:12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable-* It would seem that the cash strapped exiles were not behaving as honestly as they might as they lived amongst the Gentiles of Turkey.

*So that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God-* Peter, like Paul, seems to have expected the Lord's coming very soon. He reasons that the Gentiles observing them may be persuaded by their good deeds, so that when Christ comes, they would glorify God and accept the Lord then. This principle is valuable for us in this age.

*On the day of visitation-* The “day of visitation” is coming for us all (1 Pet. 2:12). The Greek is related to the word describing how after the denials, Christ turned and *looked* upon Peter (Lk. 22:61). This was for him his day of judgment, which we must all pass through. He called down Divine curses *upon himself* if he knew Jesus of Nazareth- and thus brought the curse of God upon himself (the record of his cursing and swearing refers to this rather than to the use of expletives). This was for him his day of judgment, which we must all pass through.

2:13 *Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake-* They were to consider the Gentile rulers as the Lord; just as the obedience of slaves to their masters was reckoned as serving the Lord, so submitting to rulers would likewise be reckoned as submission to the Lord.

*Whether to the king, as supreme leader-* Maybe an allusion to Caesar, but he is called “the king” rather than the emperor because Peter wants us to figure that the real king is the Lord Jesus. Peter asks his sheep: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man... unto governors... as free... honour all men” (1 Pet. 2:13-17). This is all evident allusion to the way he had once felt that as free in Christ and in Israel, he didn’t need to submit to men and pay taxes. But the Lord had gently rebuked him, and provided the coin to pay for them both (Mt. 17:25-27). The Gospels records would have been well known amongst the early believers; there is a tradition that at least the Gospel of Mark was learnt by heart as part of instruction for baptism. Peter’s readers would have known of the incident, and now, here he is telling them to learn the lesson he had had to learn.

2:14 *Or to governors as those sent by him to punish evil-doers and for the praise of those that do well-* This is hard to understand when not all civil leaders in history have done this; and it was soon not true at all in the Roman empire. But “the king” could refer to the Lord Jesus, and the governors could refer to church elders. But the more comfortable reading is that at that time and place Peter is writing about, the governors were as stated, and should be obeyed. This would then go to show that the NT letters are not always to be read as global statements for all time, but are specific to a time and place in the commands they give.

2:15 *For so is the will of God, that by well-doing you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-* As in Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus (e.g. Tit. 2:8), there is great concern that the Lord's Name should not be brought into dishonour in a situation where the believers were surrounded by critics eager to slander them.

2:16 *As free and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God-* Here again we see Peter influenced by the letter to the Romans, which is understandable if he had been in Rome when the letter arrived (5:13). We are free and yet slaves of God. That freedom from law was it seems leading them into sin; hence the need for the appeal not to continue in sin because grace abounds. The Gentile Galatians, who were in the same geographical area as these Jewish exiles, had to be warned likewise not to use their freedom in Christ as an excuse for sin (Gal. 5:13). So this was clearly a problem in the churches of that area.

2:17 *Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king-* “The King” could refer to the Lord Jesus. See on :13. But it may be an allusion to the Lord's comment that His people were to render to Caesar what was Caesar's. For he was “the king” of the Roman empire. The Jews strongly disliked this and had a tendency not to honour him, and Peter is

asking them to act outside of their cultural inclination- again a principle which is valid for all time. These calls to respect others are psychologically understandable- for exiled refugees would have a tendency to bitterness and therefore disrespect of others.

2:18 *Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the harsh-* I have argued that Peter is writing to those he had baptized on Pentecost, who had now been scattered from Jerusalem by Jewish persecution of the church. Perhaps some of them were wealthy and had slaves; and some of those masters were "harsh". Or perhaps some of the exiles were so poor that they had ended up selling themselves into slavery, and detested them. Yet they are exhorted to live in a spirit of respect to all people, as stated in :17. Human beings should be respected, whoever they are and whoever you are in relation to them, even if they are bad- because they too are made in the image of God.

2:19 *For it is commendable if because of conscience toward God one endures grief - suffering unjustly-* For the sake of our conscience, we should endure persecution *after the pattern of Christ on the cross* (1 Pet. 2:19-22). He did not hang there fearing a bad conscience; it was his clear, sinless conscience before God which motivated him to endure. See on 1 Jn. 3:18. "Commendable" is *charis*, "grace" or "gift". In this case, we could look upon unjust suffering as a gift. In the context of :18, the reference would be to slaves who refused to be obedient to their masters for the sake of their conscience toward God. Masters owned their slaves and used their bodies just as they wished; it would be understandable if Christian slaves refused to be obedient, and refused to accept that their minds and bodies belonged to an earthly master. For they knew they were God's slaves (:16).

2:20 *For what glory is it, if, when you sin and are beaten, you shall take it patiently?-* The reference is to Christian slaves being beaten by their masters (:18). "Beaten" is the s.w. in Mt. 26:67 about Christ being struck with a fist- something Peter would have probably watched out of the corner of his eye from where he was.

*But if when you do well, and suffer, you shall take it patiently-* By a slave refusing to obey the master's commands to do sinful things. See on :19.

*This is acceptable with God-* The parallel is with the reference to "glory" in the first half of the verse. Those who refused to be obedient to their master's sinful demands will be praised for this in glory when they are accepted at the last day with God. Those slaves would be glorified for their quiet words of refusal in a villa in southern Turkey, and their endurance of a beating for it in the garden shed...

2:21- see on Jn. 21:19.

*For this were you called-* The letter begins with a reference to our calling, and the way the Spirit strengthens us to follow that calling to its final end in salvation at the last day. It is interesting to note the changes of pronouns in 1 Pet. 2:20 ff: "Hereunto were *ye* called: because Christ also suffered for *you*, leaving *you* an example, that *ye* should follow his steps... who his own self bare *our* sins... that *we* having died to sin, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes *ye* were healed". In the context, Peter is speaking about the need for slaves to live out the death and life of Christ; but when he comes to speak of the Lord's death for sin, he cannot but include himself as a sinner and a beneficiary in the cross.

In Peter's final maturity, his mind was full of the cross. His letters and preaching were full of allusion to Isaiah's prophecies of the suffering servant (especially Acts 3:13,26; 4:25-30; 1 Pet. 2:21 ff.); he and Philip are the only preachers to explicitly make this connection. It could be that Peter was so impressed by the way the Lord washed his feet that his mind was evermore transfixed with this image and the Biblical allusions behind it. And note that initially, Peter had totally failed to grasp that Jesus was indeed "the servant". Every allusion he makes to Jesus as the servant was a reflection of his recognition of his earlier failure to perceive it.

*Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example-* The brutal beating of the Christian slave woman in the garden shed of a villa in southern Turkey connected her directly with the Lord's sufferings. And she would share in His resurrection. His cross and experience was such that we can find direct connection with Him there, through our experiences of aspects of His sufferings in our own. Truly He was our representative.

*That you should follow His steps-* The beating of the Christian slaves was to be connected with the Lord's beating; and after that, He walked to Golgotha. And the slaves were to follow even further- in His steps there.

*2:22 He did no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth-* Through being justified, any repentant sinner will then have the characteristics of Christ, in God's sight. In Christ there was no guile, as there was not in David (or any other believer) after the justification of forgiveness (Ps. 32:2). The Lord's trial attempted to find evidence that He had spoken bad words during His ministry, but no evidence was found. "Found" translates a legal word, s.w. Mt. 26:60; Jn. 18:38; 19:4,6 concerning Christ's trial, parts of which Peter would have seen or heard first hand. And yet it was ultimately God's judgment which found no deceit in the Lord's mouth- note how never deceiving, being totally honest, is paralleled with not sinning. Sin is a lie, the devil [sin] is a false accuser. All sin is a form of dishonesty.

*2:23 Who, when he was insulted, did not retaliate with insults, when he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to Him that judges righteously-* a reference to the Lord's final words on the cross: "Into thy hand I commit my spirit"? We likewise should follow that example in our dying with Him, in that we too "commit the keeping of [our] souls to him in well doing" (4:19). See on Mt. 27:26. At the Lord's death, the Father judged both His Son's righteousness and the world's rejection of it at that time. See on Jn. 12:42; 19:13,37. It's as if the Father judged the world as unworthy and His Son as worthy in the time of the Lord's death.

2:24- see on Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 5:1.

*Whom himself bore our sins-* "Who his own self bare our sins in his body up on to the tree" (2:24 RVmg.) suggests the watching Peter reflecting, as the Lord's body was lifted up vertical, that his sins of denial and pride were somehow with his Lord, being lifted up by Him.

*In his body upon the tree-* An unusual term for the cross (he also uses it in Acts 5:30; 10:39).

Perhaps because he saw the crucifixion (5:1) and was struck by the way the Lord carried a piece of a tree and was impaled upon it. He carried our sins in His own self (AV), in His body. I take this to mean that He was totally identified with us in our sinfulness; not that our sins were part of His body in some metaphysical sense. His physical body was like ours; there was nothing unique in that body of itself which carried our sins. The language speaks of identity rather than anything else.

*That we, having died to sin, might live to righteousness-* A reference to baptism, our identity with Him in response to His identification with us. The Lord died as He did so that we might live righteously (1 Pet. 2:24); the account of the crucifixion is written as it is so that we might be inspired to a true faith (Jn. 19:35). He "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that *we might die to sin* [Gk.] and live to righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24). He died for our sins, there all our weakness met their death in His death- so close was the association between Him and our sins. Our response to that is to put those sins to death in *our* bodies, as He put them to death in His on the tree. He carried our sins "*that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes* (Gk. weals- Peter saw them) *ye were healed*" (1 Pet. 2:24). Because of the suffering entailed in the putting to death of our sins by the Lord's cross, we should respond in likewise mortifying them. Because He died, so should we. We recognize that principle in baptism and are to continue living it out.

*By whose stripes you were healed-* Gk. 'weals', the swollen up bruises, which Peter would have seen when Christ turned and looked at him through blackened eyes (after the beating of Mt. 26:67). See on Mk. 15:15.

2:25 - see on Lk. 15:4-6; Acts 2:39; 3:19.

*For you were going astray like sheep-* Peter is clearly concerned that they were going astray, but he now writes as if they had stabilized and returned. He spoke of his hopes for them as if they had happened. Or perhaps the reference is to how their lives in Judaism had in fact been no better than sheep going astray.

*But are now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls-* The same word for "converted". Peter reminds his sheep of how they are now "returned" (s.w. 'converted') to the Lord Jesus, just as he had been. His experience of the Lord's gracious spirit inspired him. Time and again in his letters he alludes to his own weaknesses in order to inspire his flock.

## CHAPTER 3

3:1 *In like manner*- Just as the Jewish Christian slaves were to be subject even to bad masters, so that principle continues in family life.

*You wives be in subjection to your husbands*- As slaves were to be subject even to bad masters, likewise wives to, presumably, bad husbands, on the principle of "as unto the Lord". This is how slaves have just been asked to be in subjection to bad masters. The women were converts from Jewish orthodoxy; perhaps their husbands had now left the faith due to the persecution or being caught up with the worldly stress of being refugees in Turkey. But :7 speaks of "husbands" as if believing husbands are in view; Peter is therefore addressing the situation of sisters whose believing husbands are not believing and behaving as they ought to.

The church is *subject* to Christ, as wives are to their husbands (1 Pet. 3:1). Yet because the wife too represents the body of Christ, all of us are to be subject to each other (1 Pet. 5:5). See on Eph. 5:31.

*That, even if any do not obey the word*- Peter has used this word for 'disobedience' in reference to Jews who refuse to obey the Gospel of Jesus- see on 2:7,8. So their husbands were Jews who now didn't believe in Jesus as Messiah. Or perhaps they never had done, and had had to flee Jerusalem because of the persecution of their Christian wives.

*They may without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives*- But is not the word of the Gospel what ultimately wins converts to Christ? It is, but that word must be made flesh in persons, and it is therefore their witness to that word in life lived which is equally the preaching of the word to a person. This statement is disproof of extreme Biblicism, whereby it is held that the word alone is all sufficient to save someone.

3:2 *Seeing your chaste behaviour coupled with fear*- This continues the connection between wives and slaves in difficult domestic situations; for the slaves were to likewise be subject to their masters with "fear" or respect (2:18). The respect for persons, mixed with a good way of life, was intended to be a powerful witness to the unbeliever.

3:3 *Whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel*- 'Not A but B' doesn't necessarily have to mean 'Not A at all'. Such a grammatical construction is common in several languages. The idea is that they were to focus upon internal beauty far more than upon external beauty. The idea of adorning for a husband is used approvingly elsewhere in the Bible.

3:4- see on Lk. 24:39; Rom. 7:22; 1 Cor. 2:15.

*But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit*- This is not corruptible, surely alluding to the description of our spiritual treasures as eternally lasting in Heaven, where there is no corruption (Mt. 6:19,20). Our future inheritance is described by Peter as "incorruptible" (1 Pet. 1:4), yet he also speaks of God's word which creates the new man, as also being "incorruptible" (1 Pet. 1:23), as is the hidden man which it develops (1 Pet. 3:4). This teaches us that the new man created within us here and now by the action of the word, is in fact strongly related to the future "incorruptible" inheritance we will receive at the second coming. And yet our spirit is incorruptible- although we die, our spirit



will continue eternally, in the sense that who we are now in spirit, by personality, is who we shall eternally be. This demonstrates the importance of character and spiritual mindedness.

*Which is in the sight of God of great value-* Just as our faith is so precious to Him (1:7). Those exiled from the temple needed to remember that their personal spirituality was so intensely noticed by the God of Heaven.

*3:5 For after this manner, in the past, the holy women who trusted in God also made themselves beautiful by submitting to their husbands-* Submission is a real theme with Peter (2:13; 3:1,22; 5:5). Perhaps he had struggled with this idea himself. The Jewish exiles would have struggled to submit themselves to the situations they found themselves in.

*3:6 As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord-* The way in which God chooses the good side of Sarah and recognizes it for what it is can be seen even more finely in 1 Pet. 3:4-6. Here sisters are bidden follow Sarah's example of

1. Having a meek and quiet spirit
2. Not outwardly adorning herself
3. Obeying Abraham
4. And calling him her "Lord".

It can be shown that the Spirit in Peter is adopting an extremely positive reading of Sarah.

1. She isn't revealed as having a meek and quiet spirit at all; but presumably, God saw that underneath her anger and bitterness there was a meekness and quietness, perhaps especially seen as she grew older.

2,3. Concerning not outwardly "adorning", the Greek text is alluding to the Septuagint of Gen. 20:16, which says that Abimelech told Sarah that he had given Abraham many silver pieces "that these may therefore be for thee to adorn thy countenance". Abimelech is speaking sarcastically (note how he calls Abraham "thy brother", referring to Sarah and Abraham's family relationship). It was a custom for married women to wear their silver pieces on their face (cp. Lk. 15:8). Presumably she had taken these off, in order to appear single and sexually available. Abimelech is saying: "I've given your so-called 'brother' Abraham 1000 silver pieces, so just make sure you wear them in future and don't lead any more men into sin". And what does the Spirit comment? "Thus she was reprov'd" (Gen. 20:16). Her willingness to pretend she was single and not refusing the sexual advances of Abimelech can only be seen in a negative light from the Genesis record. She lacked continued faith in the promises of a seed, and she disregarded God's marriage principles for the sake of an all too convenient 'obedience' to her husband. It may have been that she regarded her inability to have children as partly his fault (cp. the deadness of Abraham's body, Rom. 4:19). The thing is, she had already shown enough faith to conceive (Heb. 11:11), and presumably the effect of this was seen in the physical rejuvenation of her body, which made her so attractive to men, although she was 90 years old. Both Sarah and Abraham had shown faith, she was living with her own body as the constant reminder of God's faithfulness, and yet in the incident with Abimelech she wavered and had to be reprov'd. Yet she is seen in a positive light by the Spirit; her lack of wearing ornaments, even though it was to show she was single, is commended; as is her obedience to her husband, even though she was reprov'd for this. The point is, like all of us, her motives were probably

mixed. She did want to be truly obedient to Abraham, she did want to have a meek spirit rather than outward adorning. Her wrong motives surfaced, and were rebuked. But God saw deep inside her heart, and saw the good motives, and drags them out and holds them up as an example.

4. Sarah is commended for calling Abraham her "Lord" (1 Pet. 3:6). She is recorded as doing this in one place only: "Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" (Gen. 18:12). She doubted God's promise; she is rebuked for this by the Angel. Yet in doing so, when she came to think of Abraham, in her heart she called him "my lord". So in the midst of her lack of faith in one respect, she also had a commendable attitude to Abraham. All this, don't forget, was going on "within herself". God searched her thoughts, He saw her wrong attitudes there deep in her heart, and He saw what was commendable there too; and through Peter He drags this out and reveals it to us all as an inspiration. See on Gal. 4:30; Heb. 11:11.

*Whose children you now are, if you do well-* Peter was writing to Jewish believers. But his point is that they were only the true descendants of Abraham and Sarah if they acted and believed as they had. Whilst this was quite confronting for Jewish believers to be reminded of this, in this context it was comforting; for those back in Jerusalem who had driven them into exile were not in fact the children of Abraham and Sarah. Paul makes the same point in writing to the Galatians, the same area where Peter's audience were located. He says that orthodox Judaism is the offspring of Hagar and not Sarah.

*And are not put in fear by any terror-* Perhaps an allusion to how Abram and Sarai lied about their marital status.

*3:7 You husbands, in like manner-* The "manner" refers to submitting to the other just spoken about. For Peter will go on to appeal to all to be subject to each other (5:5).

*Live with your wife with understanding-* This refers to having the wisdom to submit and be sensitive to each other.

*Giving honour to the woman as to the weaker vessel-* To honour women for the sake of the fact they were weaker than men was unheard of in the ancient world. Women were dishonoured exactly because they were physically weaker. This was radical, counter cultural stuff- just as radical as the call of the Gospel in our age.

*As being also joint-heirs of the grace of life-* Peter describes sisters as 'joint-heirs' with their husbands, implying "full religious equality with man- a thought impossible for Judaism". But the grammar really suggests that they were both joint-heirs. They were "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). But they were both joint-heirs. Because they were both connected to Christ, they ought to therefore be with each other. Husbands and wives are "*heirs together*" just as the whole church are "heirs together" through being one in Christ (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 3:6). See on 1 Pet. 3:1. "The grace of life" may refer to the gift of life in the Spirit which is received now, and comes to full term in the eternal life of the Kingdom age.

*That your prayers are not impeded-* 1 Pet. 3:7 gives an unexpected reason for appealing for husbands and wives to get along with each other: that your prayers be not hindered. So important was prayer in the thinking of Peter. Comparing ourselves with the first century

community, it seems to me that we simply don't give prayer the place of importance which they did. 1 Tim 2:1 reflects *their* balance: "I exhort therefore, that, *first of all* [the Greek implies 'most importantly' rather than just being first in a list], supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men". Marital strife results in prayers being "impeded", the same word translated 'hewn down' (Mt. 7:19) in a judgment day context. The evidence that the experience of answered prayer is an indicator of God's pleasure with us is quite compelling.

The way Paul talks of how in 'marriage', the man represents Christ and the woman the church, helping each other towards salvation, would indicate that he presumed marriage was only relevant to believers; Christian marriage seems to be the only model of marriage he assumes. Here Peter speaks of husband and wife praying together (1 Pet. 3:7); he too assumed marriage in the Faith as the only model of marriage.

3:8 *Finally, all of you, be likeminded, compassionate, loving as brothers-* Unity is not uniformity. This is not a call to have identical positions on everything. Rather is it similar to Phil. 2:5, where we are asked to have the mind of Christ. The one mind we should have is the mind of Christ. This is what binds believers together in spiritual experience, rather than an on paper agreement about theology.

*Sensitive, humble-* Husbands were to likewise live sensitively with their wives (:7). The principles regarding marital relationships are to be practiced within the wider community of believers.

3:9 *Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, but instead give blessing-* To give blessing to those who sin against us is exactly what God did to us; for the Gospel is all about blessing, just as was first preached to Abraham.

*For this were you called, that you should inherit a blessing-* Peter opened the letter by saying that believers have been called from the beginning, and God's Spirit has been tirelessly at work down the ages preparing *us* for the moment when we respond to the call and we are given the blessings of the Gospel, which shall finally be revealed at the last day. We should respond to this by blessing those who sin against us.

3:10 *For he that would love life and see good days-* The "good days" are those of the Kingdom to come; if we love the idea of the life eternal, then we must live now as we shall eternally live. For the Gospel gives us eternal life now in that we can live now as we shall eternally live, as John's Gospel points out. Matthew tends to put it another way; the parables of the Kingdom refer to life lived now, which is the Kingdom life. The quotation here in 3:10-12 is from Ps. 34:12-16 LXX, but with variations- an example of how inspired writers quote the Old Testament but change various details to be relevant to their theme or audience.

*Let him restrain his tongue from evil and restrain his lips so they speak no lies-* But how in practice to "restrain" the tongue? We lack the iron will to do so, in many cases. Iron will, steel in the soul, is surely not the way to spirituality. The same word is used in 4:1: "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind. For he that has suffered in the flesh has *ceased* from sin". The Lord Jesus suffered and died. If we identify with His death, in baptism and an ongoing commitment to let His death be our pattern, then we will be counted as in Him, and will naturally seek to live according to that status. And His Spirit will help our efforts. This is the way to cease or restrain from sin, such

as speaking lies. Note the parallel between "evil" and "lies". Lying is evil. Dishonesty is at the heart of all sin.

3:11 *And let him turn away from evil and do good-* To turn away or "eschew" (AV) evil recalls Job (Job 1:1). It seems that the Jewish brethren had fallen quite seriously; and yet in 2:25 Peter says that they had been going astray, but had now returned. But here in chapter 3 it seems clear that they were still far from having turned back. We conclude therefore that 2:25 is Peter's positive desire that they should turn away from evil and turn back to the Lord Jesus. But he thinks of them as already having done so.

*Let him seek peace and pursue it-* Doing good is for Peter epitomized in seeking peace, both with God and with others. He surely has in mind the Lord's special blessing for "the peacemakers".

3:12 *For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil-* The eyes and ears of the Lord are contrasted to His *face* which is "against them that do evil". Eyes and ears are part of a face. The point may be that the Lord is highly sensitive to the prayers of the righteous; but that deep sensitivity is not for the wicked, but His general 'face' is against them. We cannot always pray, and some cannot verbalize things well. This doesn't mean that their prayers are not heard. The Lord's eyes and ears are paralleled here. He sees their situations as prayers which He hears. Just as He 'heard' the cry of Abel's blood, or the cries of workers who weren't paid for their work in James 5.

3:13 *And who is he that will harm you, if you be zealous for what is good?-* There are many examples of where zeal for good results in being harmed. So Peter is writing here [as in many of the NT epistles] about a particular set of circumstances at a specific time. It would seem that the Jewish Christians were getting in trouble with the law for doing "evil", perhaps because of their desire for money. At that time and place, they need not have feared trouble with the authorities- unless they were doing wrong, which it seems they were.

3:14 *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled-* As with the slaves of chapter 2, we get the impression some were suffering for their sins, and others for their righteousness. The connection with the slave passage in 2:18-20 is significant in that Peter is demonstrating that the same principles apply to all in the church; just as submission of wife to husband in 3:1 is actually to be practiced by all members of the church to one another in 5:5. The practical application of common spiritual principles is what brings unity in practice within the church, whether we are slave or master, male or female, or Jew or Gentile. Note that the same categories are in view when Paul teaches that baptism into Christ eclipses all these category distinctions (Gal. 3:27-29).

3:15 *But sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord-* Knowing and having Christ as Lord of our hearts will practically enable us to overcome tribulation, and will lead to a suitably humble witness in response. Peter began in 1:2 by speaking of how the Spirit sanctifies us; but in our hearts or spirit we must consciously act to have Christ as Lord.

From where do we get the motivation from for loyalty to Christ? I'd suggest that it comes from first of all realizing, on a theological level, the greatness of Christ. He is now Lord of

Heaven and earth, all power has been given unto him, He is the "Prince of the Kings of the earth". Those early brethren who had seen the Lord in His humanity really appreciated this. Thus "Yahweh of hosts, him shall you sanctify" (Is. 8:13 LXX) is applied by Peter to the Lord Jesus, whom we should sanctify (1 Pet. 3:15). Paul speaks about "the Lord" as if we all know who he refers to; *the* Lord, the one and only Lord, the exalted Lord Jesus. This especially comes out in his breaking of bread passage in 1 Cor. 11:23-29. Such is the supremacy of Christ that "We cannot lift Christ too high" as Robert Roberts expressed it. If we appreciate the extent and height of His Lordship and exaltation, we will see the extent to which our minds should be dominated by Him. Our very consciousness should beat with His spirit, His mind. We are told that He should *live in our hearts*; for us, He should be the alpha and omega (Rev. 1:11). The confession of faith before baptism is summarized, in its quintessence, as confessing with the mouth Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9 RV). All the doctrines a candidate must know beforehand are summarized in this.

Because Christ is Lord of all, we must preach Him to all, even if like Peter we would rather not preach to them. This was the motivational power and reality of Christ's universal Lordship for Peter (Acts 10:36). The same link between Christ's Lordship and witness is found in Phil. 2:10 and 1 Pet. 3:15 (which alludes Is. 8:13- Yahweh of Hosts, of many ones, becomes manifest now in the Lord Jesus). The ascended Christ was highly exalted and given the Name above every Name, so that for those who believed this, they would bow in service at the Name of Jesus. Peter preached in and about the name of Jesus- this is emphasized (Acts 2:31,38; 3:6,16; 4:10,12,17,18,30; 5:28,40,41; 10:43). The excellence of knowing Him and His character and the wonder of the exalted Name given on His ascension (Phil. 2:9; Rev. 3:12) lead Peter to witness. Because of His exaltation, we confess Jesus as Lord to men, as we later will to God at judgment (Phil. 2:9). According as we confess Him before men, so our judgment will reflect this. Lifting up Jesus as Lord is to be the basis of giving a witness to every man of the hope that lies within us (1 Pet. 3:15 RSV). The knowledge and experience of His exaltation can only be witnessed to; it can't be kept quiet. 3 Jn. 7 refers to how the great preaching commission was obeyed: "For his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing (material help) from the Gentiles" (Gentile believers). For the excellence of knowing His Name they went forth in witness, and moreover were generous spirited, not taking material help to enable this. The knowledge of the Name of itself should inspire to active service: for the sake of the Lord's Name the Ephesians laboured (Rev. 2:3).

*Always ready to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear-* They were to be ready always to give an answer to those who ask, albeit with fear; exactly what Peter failed to do on the night of the denials. He continually alludes to his own weakness. The hope within is "Christ as Lord" who is sanctified within our hearts. He is our hope (1 Tim. 1:1). Christ within us is our hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Our hope is therefore primarily about eternal relationship with Him; the environment where we shall enjoy that Hope is the Kingdom of God on earth, but the essence is the eternal relationship with Him.

In our suffering for righteousness' sake at the hands of the world, we must "give an answer (s.w. 'a defence, clearing of oneself)... a reason (*logos* , cp. Mt. 12:36)... with meekness and fear... having a good conscience... let him not be *ashamed* " (1 Pet. 3:15,16; 4:16). This is all judgment seat language. And yet we must go through this now in our confrontations with the world. The trials of our faith are like fire which purifies us (1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12). And yet this is the language of the last judgment (Mal. 3:1,2). In our response to trials, we have the outcome of our judgment. We must rejoice *now* in our tribulations with the same joy which we will

have when we are accepted by the Lord at the last day (1 Pet. 4:13). Job felt that his calamities were God entering into judgment with him (Job 14:3). If we react properly to trials, we thereby receive now "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:9). Thus the question of the degree to which we now are 'saved' is connected with the fact that to some degree, the judgment process is also going on now.

Because of His exaltation, we confess Jesus as Lord to men, as we later will to God at judgment (Phil. 2:9). According as we confess Him before men, so our judgment will reflect this. Lifting up Jesus as Lord is to be the basis of giving a witness to every man of the hope that lies within us (1 Pet. 3:15 RSV). The knowledge and experience of His exaltation can only be witnessed to; it can't be kept quiet.

3:16- see on 1 Jn. 3:18.

*Having a good conscience, that, when you are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ-* Are slanderers really put to shame now by our good living? The putting to shame of the wicked is at the final judgment. The Greek phrase translated "When" might better be rendered 'In which...' or 'In that which'. At the day of judgment, it will be demonstrated that actually it was the slanderers who were guilty of the things they were accusing the believers of. And they will be put to shame at the last day for that. It is psychologically true and observable that slanderers will often accuse others of doing exactly that which they are doing. That is the principle of transference; they realize their sins, subconsciously, and know they should be punished for them. So they transfer those sins onto others, e.g. by slander, and seek to get them punished for those sins.

3:17 *For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that you suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing-* see on :14. Suffering according to the will of God is an idea picked up again in 4:19. We can take comfort that any suffering is not outside the will of God. There is no satan out there causing it.

3:18- see on 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 2:5; 5:1.

*Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit-* This could well have been written by Peter with a glance back at the way that after his denials, he the unjust went to the crucifixion scene and reflected just this. When in 5:1 he comments that he witnessed the sufferings of Christ, he could be saying that therefore these thoughts were his thoughts as he witnessed it: the just suffering for him the unjust, to bring him back to God.

Do we seek strength to endure unjust treatment and the grace to submit cheerfully to the loss of what we feel is rightfully ours? Be it discrimination in the workplace, persecution from the Government, perceived abuse or degradation by our partner or family...? Let the cross be our endless inspiration: "For it is better, if the will of God be so [a reference to the Lord's struggle in Gethsemane being our struggle], that ye suffer for well doing... *for* Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:17,18). Remember how under persecution, the faithful love not their lives unto death because of their experience of the blood of the lamb shed for them (Rev. 12:11).

Eph. 2:18 speaks of how "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father". This access is not only in the moments of time we designate for prayer. Christ suffered for us and obtained our forgiveness, "that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18), and we are in that position now, all the time, not just when we pray. Being in this position means that our Spirit, the essence of our spirituality, our deepest spiritual desires, are transferred to the Father by the Son.

3:19- see on Acts 3:26; Acts 3:34.

*In which also-* We seek to understand how Christ could preach in his spirit. He was "put to death in the flesh but made alive in [Gk. 'through, on account of'] the spirit". The Lord was raised "according to the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4). Why was Christ resurrected? Because of His sinless life and character, i.e. His "spirit" of a holy life. In this lies the connection between the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and the resurrection of Jesus. He was raised by the Father because of His spirit of holiness, his holy spirit of life. We too will be raised to eternal life on account of our spirit of life which we are now developing: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). This passage shows that the spirit of Christ is the same spirit that is to dwell in us. This doesn't mean we are disembodied spirits, but rather that our way / spirit of life must be that of Jesus. 1 Pet. 4:1 makes the same point – we are to arm ourselves with the same mind / spirit that was in Christ as He suffered on the cross. If our Spirit and that of Christ coincide and are one, then we have the witness that we are truly God's children (Rom. 8:16). It was through *this* same spirit that Christ witnessed to imprisoned humanity, especially at the time of Noah, as Peter shows. The spirit of Christ was in all the prophets, and this was the essence of their witness. "The testimony [preaching] of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" in the sense that the preaching of the prophets was in essence the preaching of Jesus insofar as they had His Spirit in their message.

There is an undoubted theme throughout 1 Peter 3 and 4 of the opposition between the "flesh" (that which is external, the appearance of things) and the "spirit", that which is internal, which is of God.

Being dead to sins	Should live unto righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24)
Not the outward adorning	But the hidden man...a quiet spirit (1 Pet. 3:3,4)
Put to death in the flesh	But quickened by the spirit (1 Pet. 3:18)
Baptism is not a washing of the flesh	But the answer of a good conscience / spirit (1 Pet. 3:21)
Don't live in the flesh	But to the will of God (1 Pet. 4:2)
Judged by men in the flesh [outwardly]	Live to God in the spirit (1 Pet. 4:6)

The spirit by which Jesus was quickened is thus paralleled with our spirit of living to God, a quiet spirit, a life of righteousness, of good conscience etc. His Spirit is to be our spirit – we

are to be of the “same mind / spirit” with Him, sharing the mind which He had especially during His time of dying (1 Pet. 4:1). And this is exactly the point of Phil. 2:5: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” at the time of His death. Notice that the Spirit of Jesus is epitomized by the mindset which He displayed during His death. It is this very mind / spirit which is to be in us. It is therefore in this sense that *through His death* the Lord Jesus preached ‘in spirit’ to those whom He had never met.

In this sense, it was the spiritually minded lifestyle of Noah which was his witness to the world of his day. Peter says in 1 Pet. 3:19 that Christ through His Spirit preached to the people of Noah’s day. In 2 Pet. 2:5 he says that Noah was a preacher of, or [Gk.] ‘by’ righteousness to the people around him. Yet in 1 Pet. 3:19 Peter says that Christ preached to those same people through His Spirit. The resolution surely is that although Noah had never met the Lord Jesus, he lived according to the same Godly spirit as did Jesus; and this was his witness to his world. There is ultimately only one Spirit (Eph. 4:4). The same spirit of holiness which was in Jesus was likewise thus in Noah. “The Spirit”, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are all equated in Rom. 8:9.

*He went-* Firstly, we need to remove any misunderstanding which arises from the phrase “he went”. Contemporary Greek literature often used such expressions in a redundant sense. Eph. 2:17 speaks of the Lord Jesus ‘coming’ and preaching peace to us. But this doesn’t mean that He Himself in person came up to us and preached. Indeed, the language of going, coming or moving is often used in relation to the preaching of a person – e.g. Mt. 9:13: “*but go and learn what that meaneth*”. The Lord didn’t intend that they literally went away somewhere. Likewise Dan. 12:4 and Hab. 2:2 bid those who understand God’s word to “run” – not literally, but in response to the word preached. God Himself is spoken of as coming, descending etc. when He ‘preaches’ to humanity (e.g. Gen. 11:5; Ex. 19:20; Num. 11:25; 2 Sam. 22:10). In Jer. 39:16, the imprisoned Jeremiah is told to “go, tell Ebed-melech...” a word from the Lord about him. Jeremiah couldn’t have literally left prison to do so – but the idea is that a person encountering the Lord’s word has as it were experienced the Lord ‘going’ to him or her. And in this sense the message of the Lord Jesus (in its essence) could ‘go’ to persons without Him physically going anywhere or even existing consciously at the time.

*And preached to the spirits in prison-* The Lord Himself quoted Is. 61:1 about Himself: He proclaimed liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. But this passage is evidently behind Peter’s assertion that after His resurrection, the Lord Jesus preached to the spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:18,19). His resurrection was the basis of His command to go into all the world and preach the word; and thereby His preachers went out to do and continue the work which He personally had done.

Biblically, a man or woman is identified with their spirit in the sense of their mind or way of life. Heb. 12:23 speaks of the spirits of just men, with whom the believer ought to associate. This means that we ought to identify ourselves with the way of life, the spirit of life, of “just men” of the past. God is “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 16:22; 27:16) in the sense that He is the God of all humanity. So “spirits in prison” can refer to people who, in their spiritual lives, are imprisoned. Immediately the mind goes to Is. 42:2,7, which in speaking of the preaching of Jesus, prophecies that He would release the spiritually imprisoned – not so much by direct didactic teaching, but by the spirit of His personality and example. So the “prison” is simply the prison of the human mind, which the mental example of Jesus can open up.



We obviously ask *why* ordinary people should be described in this passage as “spirits”. The context is speaking of the witness of Jesus to people through His Spirit or way of life as manifested in His people. The *spirit* within His people appeals to the imprisoned *spirit* or heart / mind of their audience. We appeal to the *heart*, the spirit, by our witness – not merely to the intellect. The spirit of Christ within us appeals to the imprisoned spirit within others.

The “spirits in prison” were once [“aforetime”] disobedient (1 Pet. 3:20). The same two Greek words translated “aforetime” and “disobedient” occur in Rom. 11:30 about all of us, who “in times past [s.w. “aforetime”] have not believed [s.w. “disobedient”]. This is surely one of the many times when Peter’s phrasing is so similar to Paul’s that he is surely alluding to him; and thus Peter is making the point that although the witness of the spirit of Christ was, in his context, specifically to Noah’s generation, it is also the witness which we all receive from those with the spirit of Christ at any time. Peter has just spoken of how disobedient [s.w.] people are converted by the witness of a spiritual, Christ-centred way of life (1 Pet. 3:1). Peter is writing against a background of “the last days”, of which Noah’s generation is a clear type. Just as they were witnessed to by the spirit of Christ in Noah, so will the generation of the last days have a like witness. God’s patience “waited” in Noah’s time; the Greek implies to wait *for* something. It is also translated “expect”. God was waiting for and expecting a response from Noah’s witness; and in this we see the essential hopefulness of God. He hoped against hope for response; and none came. The Spirit of Christ and of God has always been His witness to all generations. The question arises as to why Peter chose to especially focus upon the example of Noah out of all the generations. Perhaps this was because Noah’s generation is a type of the last days, in which Peter believed he was living. And therefore this entire study has a great relevance to our day; for the crucial witness of the last days is through the spirit of Christ in us witnessing to an increasingly self-imprisoned world.

3:20- see on Mt. 24:48.

*That previously were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was prepared. Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water-* Peter likens the ark in the time of Noah to Christ, showing that as the ark saved Noah and his family from the judgment that came upon sinners, so baptism into Christ will save believers from eternal death (1 Pet. 3:20,21). Noah entering into the ark is likened to our entering into Christ through baptism. All those outside the ark were destroyed by the flood; standing near the ark or being a friend of Noah was quite irrelevant. The only way of salvation is, and was, to be inside the Christ/ark. It is evident that the second coming, which the flood typified (Lk. 17:26,27), is nearly upon us. Entry into the Christ/ark by baptism is therefore of the utmost urgency. Human words really do fail to convey this sense of urgency; the Biblical type of entry into the ark in Noah’s time is more powerful. Noah's ark was an appropriate symbol for salvation through baptism in that the Hebrew word *teba* ("ark") only occurs elsewhere in reference to the "ark" or "chest" in which the baby Moses, condemned to death, came through water to a saved life. And "a similar root in Egyptian means chest or coffin"- connecting with the idea that baptism is a burial with Christ in water, as it were entering a coffin with Him, to emerge into new life. Indeed the dimensions of Noah's ark are in proportion similar to those of a coffin.

Peter reasons in 1 Pet. 3 that the ark represents two things- being in Christ by baptism, and being saved from the tribulations to come on the world of the last days. These are typified respectively by the first and second entries of Noah into the ark. If our baptism is like that first entering in, then Noah's tense, earnest waiting for the rain in the next 7 days should typify our feelings towards the second coming (cp. the rain). We should live our whole lives after baptism as if we know for certain that the second coming is but a week away.

Knowing the destruction that would come on all except Noah, God waited in the hope that more would be saved. He as it were hoped against His own foreknowledge that more would be saved.

The flood was brought about by God's wisdom, not because a deity lost his patience and temper with mankind. God destroyed mankind because of His *grief* (Gen. 6:6)- and He did so because He planned on saving the world through water. Noah and the faithful were saved from corruption and the faith being lost by the world that threatened to destroy them (spiritually) being itself destroyed.

3:21- see on Gal. 3:27; Heb. 10:17,22.

*Which is also a true likeness of how baptism does now save you: not the washing away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God-* Can we know that we have the spirit of Jesus, and that we are living the eternal life, to the point we are confident that "we will be there"? John addresses this question head on. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him... if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 Jn. 3:19-22). The answer of our conscience is therefore highly significant. Now living in societies as we do, based around shame and guilt, we can condemn ourselves more harshly than God does. Baptism is "the answer (RVmg. 'appeal') of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3:18). Note how the phrase "toward God" occurs in both passages. We need to reflect more deeply upon what baptism really meant. Just as Romans 6, the classic baptism chapter, is asking the Romans to think back and remember what their baptisms really did for them before God. There we were counted as being 'in Christ'. God now looks upon us as if we are in Christ, covered with His righteousness. In the court of Divine justice, the fact we have been baptized and had our conscience cleansed is our appeal for justification. And it will be heard. We condemn ourselves for our failures, yes. But on the other hand, do we believe that we really are baptized into Christ, with all that means in terms of how God now sees us? Do we believe rather than merely know... the most basic elements and realities of our Christian faith? I believe we do underneath, but we need to think deeply about all this.

*Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ-* The resurrection of Christ thus "interrogates our conscience" in all areas of life (1 Pet. 3:21 RVmg.). We can't be passive to it; it's not painless to believe.

3:22 *Who is the one at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, Angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him-* There are repeated hints in this chapter that the believers were getting in trouble with the local authorities. They are urged to submit to those authorities, as unto Christ. And here we are reminded how that is possible- those authorities are subject to Him. Perhaps each of those powers had a representative Angel in the

court of Heaven; and they too were subject to Christ. There may also be a swipe at the Jewish theories about Angels and the wrong idea that there are sinful Angels; the Christian should focus instead upon Christ, for in any case, all Angels are subject to Him.

## CHAPTER 4

4:1- see on Phil. 2:9.

*Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh-* That He suffered “in the flesh” could be seen as stating the obvious until it is realized that Peter is referring to the way in which he actually saw the flesh of Christ really suffering.

*Arm yourselves also with the same mind-* The height of this calling is colossal. To think and feel as He did as He hung upon the cross. The very extremity of the calling is what binds us together; we who at least attempt to rise up to it. The appeal is just as in Phil. 2:5- to take on the mind of Christ which He had in His time of dying. The principle of being 'of the same mind' should beg the question 'Of whose mind?'. The answer of course is the Lord. The real basis for unity in practice is not an on paper agreement about theological points, but a sober dedication by each person in Christ to take on the mind of the Master. And moreso, His mind whilst impaled on the stake. The mind that propelled Him, braver and more determined than any man has been, to death itself and beyond.

*For he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin-* A dead person doesn't sin. And we are in the dead Christ. See on 3:10 *Let him restrain.*

4:2 *You should no longer live the rest of your time in the flesh-* The idea is "So that you...". Reflection upon the cross must have a distinct mental impact upon us, if we reflect upon it in sincerity and truth. There is what I would call a crucifixion compulsion; a transforming power in the cross. His sacrifice *must* have an effect upon those who believe it: “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves *with the same mind...* that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet. 4:1,2). So often the will of God is associated with the Lord's death (e.g. Acts 2:23; Lk. 22:22; Mt. 26:42; Jn. 4:34; 5:30; Heb. 10:9,10; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pet. 3:17,18). As the Lord's life and death was devoted to the fulfilment of God's will and not His own, so we too will have that stamp upon us "forasmuch..." as our Lord did and died as He did.

*To the lusts of men, but to the will of God-* Lusts and will are effectively parallel in :3 and also in Eph. 2:3 and 1 Jn. 2:17. If we don't do the will of God, we are doing the will of men. And we all like to think that we are somehow different from "men" generally. But we are actually controlled by their will and lusts, unless we do God's will. There is no other choice; we are slaves either to God or men. Paul plays on this logic strongly in Romans 6, presenting baptism as a change of master, just as Israel's Red Sea baptism was a change of master from men to God.

4:3 *For we have spent enough of our past lifetime doing the will of the Gentiles-* Peter, himself a Jew, was writing to believers who had once been very religious Jews, whom he had baptized at Pentecost. He says that their life before conversion to Christ was living as Gentiles do. Indeed, the life of legalism was associated with serious immorality and moral failure. The connection between serious moral failure and legalistic obedience is true to life; we can probably think of many such examples in our own experience. Paul likewise admits to a life of lust before conversion to Christ. See on Tit. 3:3.

*When we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties and abominable idolatries-* It's possible that sometimes "fornication" refers to a way of life and thinking rather than just the specific physical actions. Thus 1 Pet. 4:3 speaks of how before conversion "we walked (lived day by day) *in* lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine...". It doesn't mean that all day every day Peter and those brethren had committed fornication; but it was a way of life that got a grip on their personality. And so it is today, although made much worse by the ingenuity of man. That sexual impurity is a state of mind was of course taught by the Lord Himself (Mt. 5:28). Here Peter, in a rare autobiographical comment on his life before conversion, admits that he "walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine... running with them (the Gentiles) to the same excess of riot" (1 Peter 4:3,4). He uses the same Greek word as in Lk. 15:13 regarding the riotous behaviour of the prodigal. He saw himself in that younger son, rejected by the Judaistic elder brother, who would not sit at meat in table fellowship with him. According to other NT allusion, we are to see the prodigal as a symbol of all of us who will ultimately sit at meat with the Father in His house. And yet Peter makes the link plain for all to see.

*4:4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, and so speak evil of you- you-* The slanderers accused the Christians of doing exactly what they were doing. A Christian didn't join in some perversion- and those who did then falsely claimed that the Christian had done it. This is psychologically understandable. They wanted others to commit their sins so that they would feel better about them. And when the Christians refused, they still tried to bring them down to their level by falsely stating that in fact, they had done them. And from elsewhere in the letter we know that they were seeking to then get the Christians legally punished for doing the things which they themselves did. This is a psychological classic- transference of guilt from a guilty person to another through slander, realizing that the sin deserves punishment, and therefore demanding that the slandered person be heavily punished.

4:5- see on Lk. 20:25.

*Who shall give account-* The same term is used of our giving a *logos*, an expression of our innermost intentions, at judgment day (Mt. 12:36; Lk. 16:2; Heb. 13:17). This is enough emphasis for us to conclude that we will indeed say something at judgment. The purpose of judgment is not for the Lord's benefit, but for the sake of our own self knowledge. And our memories will surely be empowered to be able to remember...

*To him that is ready to judge the living and the dead-* Again Peter implies he expects the Lord's imminent return. The living would be those who are alive at His coming; and the dead would be those responsible to judgment who shall be raised to give an account. Those who urge us to sin are unaware, or forget, that we are not judged by them, but by God at the last day.

*4:6 For to this end was the gospel preached to those now dead-* The dead are those in :5; those who died and will be resurrected to judgment. Several times Peter appeals to the example of those who had gone before and were now dead; Noah, Lot, Abraham, Sarah, the prophets. They were all judged by men as foolish because they refused to act as they did, or slandered them.

*That they might be judged according to men in the flesh-* The context is of the men of :3 judging the believers who refused to sin along with them. They judged them by slandering

them and trying to get them in trouble with the law- for doing the very things they themselves were doing. This happened to the believers of old time.

*But live according to God in the spirit-* They were judged as good as dead by their contemporaries, who were angry that they refused to sin along with them. But they were spiritually alive to God. And Peter wishes his slandered brethren to realize they were simply going through the experience of so many.

4:7 *But the end of all things is at hand-* Again we see Peter's expectation of the Lord's coming in his generation. The fact this expectation has been preserved by the inspiration process is perhaps to teach us to likewise live in the expectation of the Lord's imminent return; this is indeed part of the Christian faith, to continually live in expectation of His soon coming.

*Therefore, be of sound mind and sober in prayer-* Literally, 'watching in prayer'. Passover night was to be "a night of watching" (Ex. 12:42 RV mg.), strongly suggesting "watching in prayer" (Eph. 6:18; 1 Pet. 4:7; 2 Cor. 11:27?). Similarly those who are found "watching" at the Lord's midnight coming (cp. that of the Passover angel) will be found acceptable (Lk. 12:37).

4:8 *Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves-* Love within the Christian community is what is most urgently called for by an awareness that the Lord could come at any time. Why love? Surely because this will be the prime issue which will factor in the outcome of our judgment.

*For love covers a multitude of sins-* It cannot really be just that by loving, we get covering for our sins. The letters of James and Peter are clearly connected, and the parallel in James is in James 5:20 [see note there]: "He who turns back a sinner from the error of his way, he shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins". Our love for others can lead to *their* sins being covered. This has huge implications; our efforts for others in this regard should consume our lives if indeed we can play a role, account for a certain percentage, in the final equation of human salvation. The Lord is of course the Saviour and not us, but in His wisdom, He has delegated some elements of His scheme to us and our freewill. Thus the faith of a man's friends led to his forgiveness in Mk. 2:5.

4:9 *Be hospitable to each other without complaining-* Peter speaks of the need to use hospitality *without grudging* (1 Pet. 4:9); he foresaw how brotherly love could be shown physically, but with an underlying grudge that in fact we somehow *must* show such love. This is not the "love unfeigned" of which the Scriptures speak. But the context is of :9, about our efforts for others leading to their forgiveness. The hospitality in view may therefore be more than simply giving folk a bed for the night. And :10 goes on to say that such hospitality is part of using the gifts of God's grace for others.

4:10 *According as each has received a gift-* The parable of the talents is clear that each believer is given a gift or talent to use in the Lord's service. This is part of the gift of the Spirit received at baptism. Church structure often leaves individuals with the impression that they are intended to do no more than attend meetings. But we each called to some form of ministry- ministry is not just for those believers who 'choose to go into ministry'. That phrase and concept is very damaging and unhelpful to the mass of believers.

*Minister it-* We have all been given some gift, and that is to be used in the servanthood / slavery of our Lord Jesus (1 Pet. 4:10). We can mindlessly say that yes, Jesus is Lord, quite forgetting that it implies we are His serving slaves. The magnitude of the 'slave' concept in the ecclesia of Christ is easily overlooked, and it was this which made it so different from others.

*Among yourselves-* The gifts given are specifically intended for usage within the body of Christ. This is why separation from the body is not at all what God intends- for then how can we minister what God has given us "among yourselves". We cannot be true Christians in isolation from others, just internally assenting to the truths of the Gospel.

*As good stewards of the manifold grace of God-* The grace of God is "manifold", using a Greek word which means multi-faceted, many coloured, light split into its various components through a prism (1 Pet. 4:10).

4:11- see on Rom. 9:17.

*If anyone speaks-* We have just been told that each man / person has been given a gift and is to minister it. Now we read "If anyone speaks... if anyone ministers". But we are all called to minister. For we have all been given gifts to minister to others. So I do not read this as meaning that one may be called to speak, and another to minister. We are all called to minister, so we are all called to "speak". But *laleo* means just 'to speak' and is at times used about preaching; it doesn't refer to platform speaking specifically.

*Let him speak as if it were oracles of God-* This is the language of the Old Testament prophets. Those men were not to be looked at as icons from afar, on some level of spirituality far above our own. In all our speaking, which is an integral part of ministering to others with the gifts we have been given (:10), we are to do so as if we are each none less than about prophetic work. This doesn't mean that all that comes from our mouths will be Divinely inspired [hence "*as if it were* oracles of God"], but we are to speak and serve / minister with the same gravity and seriousness the prophets had.

*If anyone ministers-* Verse 10 is clear that we have each been given gifts which we are to minister.

*Let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ-* The supply of the Spirit is to be used; we are not to seek to serve / minister to others in our own strength. This is so that *God* and not us will be glorified- as this verse continues to say explicitly.

*To whom belongs the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen-* A clear allusion to the closing phrases of the Lord's prayer. Those words however are about God, but Peter here applies them to the Lord Jesus; because as he has just written, God is glorified through Christ.

4:12 *Beloved, do not think it strange-* Perhaps some thought that Peter's warning of a coming holocaust, based as it was on Old Testament precedent, was "strange" [Greek: 'foreign, an intrusion']. And how many will react to similar warnings made in our last days in just the same way? The Greek word translated "strange" here often refers to the Gentiles- as if Peter is correcting any feeling they may have had that the tribulation predicted would only affect the Gentiles. 'Think it not *strange*, a Gentile thing only- it will affect both you believers and

the Gentile world at large'. This is a highly relevant warning to those today who state with such dogmatism that believers will not experience any of the tribulations which are to come upon the surrounding world. A suggestion worth testing is that the sufferings of natural Israel have always been matched simultaneously by difficulties for Israel after the spirit.

*Concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange thing happened to you-* Peter initially had in mind the coming persecution under Nero. It seems the Spirit of prophecy informed him about this. He seems to reason in :13 that if the believers would endure that fiery trial, then they would be glorified at the Lord's coming, as if he imagined the second coming as coming immediately once the tribulation had been endured. The Olivet Prophecy speaks similarly. But there was a deferment until our last days. The trial by fire, or literally, by smelting / melting, is referenced in Peter's earlier mention of how faith is like gold tested in fire (1:7). Although the immediate context of Nero's persecution is not ours, we can still take the general principles. Not just in that we too are set to pass through a tribulation of fiery proportions; but in that all our sufferings connect us with the Lord's sufferings, and thereby relate us to His resurrection glory.

4:13 *But inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice!*- The purpose of the tribulations of the last days, as well as all our sufferings in whatever generation, will be to make us truly fellowship our Lord's agonizing, to make us know for ourselves that "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him". It is fair to assume that those who really try to shoulder their Lord's cross now will not need to go through such an experience in the tribulation of the last days. There are many connections between the experiences of the latter day saints, and the sufferings of Christ. Peter's letters were written to strengthen the faithful in the problems of the AD70 'last days', as well as our own. They are full of reference to Christ's sufferings (e.g. 1 Pet.1:11,19,21-24; 3:18; 4:1). "The fiery trial which is to try you (is cause for rejoicing because it makes you) partakers of Christ's sufferings" (4:13). See on Mk. 13:13 for more evidence that the last generation of believers will particularly fellowship the Lord's sufferings through their experiences in the final tribulation.

*That at the revelation of his glory you also may rejoice with exceeding joy-* We have shown that our sufferings in the tribulation will associate us with Christ's sufferings- so that the joy on his return will be "exceeding" ! "The time [AD70] is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" [4:17]. Going through the tribulation will effectively be our judgment seat. "The righteous [will] scarcely be saved" [4:18]- spiritual survival during this time will be by the skin of our teeth; as was our Lord's spiritual survival on the cross which we will then fellowship.

4:14 *If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed-* "Reproach" is the word used for how the Lord on the cross was reproached. He there is us today in our sufferings. He had such a wide range of sufferings so that none of us need ever feel alone, without anyone who understands or has trodden the path before.

This uses 'the name of Christ' as meaning 'living in or preaching the name of Christ'. The two ideas are so closely related. In the course of this witness, men will 'speak evil' of us, and yet in doing so they are speaking evil of the Christ we are so identified with (:4,14). "For his name's sake they went forth" in obedience to the preaching commission (3 Jn. 7). Because we bear the Lord's Name by baptism into it, we are Christ to this world. Likewise, those in



covenant relationship in the Old Testament bore Yahweh's Name, and were therefore in all ways to act appropriately lest their behaviour "profane My holy name" (Lev. 22:32).

The allusion is to the beatitude that we should rejoice and be blessed / happy if we are reproached [s.w.] for Christ's sake (Mt. 5:11). The Lord said that this identified us with the prophets (Mt. 5:12). And Peter has just made the point that we are as those prophets (see on :11 *As oracles of God*).

*Because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests upon you-* We have just read that we shall share the Lord's glory if we suffer with Him (:13). There is only one Spirit; the Spirit of Christ and that of God are all the same Spirit. The present tense suggests that just as the Spirit of glory shall rest upon us at the last day, when the Lord's glorious resurrection becomes ours, so even now it rests upon us. The activity of the Spirit in our lives now is a foretaste of the future glorification by the Spirit at the last day. In this sense Paul argues that the possession of the Spirit is an earnest, a guarantee, of future salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). The 'resting upon us' recalls the cloud of glory resting upon the Israelites after their Red Sea baptism and as they travelled through the wilderness. Its presence was the guarantee that they were being led on a journey which would climax in entry to the promised land. The allusion to the resting of that cloud is appropriate; because Peter's point is that the Spirit which shall glorify us at the last day is active in our lives right now. They were now the true tabernacle; the temple cult was already obsolete.

*4:15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer-* That this needed to be said is an indicator of how seriously low they had fallen- these one time 'righteous' Orthodox Jews, now Christian converts. But as in all the pastoral letters, it is noteworthy that Peter doesn't demand the disfellowship of such persons. Rather he seeks their reformation, and urges the eldership to teach soundly and truly care for the flock.

*Or as a meddler in other men's matters-* We shouldn't suffer as murderers or thieves... nor as meddlers in others' matters. Meddling in others' matters is put on the same level as murder and theft! Time and again, we expect there to be a dichotomy made by the Lord between the sinners and the righteous, the good guys and the bad guys. But before Him, we are all sinners. Thus to the prostitute kneeling before Him, He assures her that her sins are forgiven; but He turns to the 'righteous' Simon and severely rebukes him for a lack of love and for being too judgmental (Lk. 7:36-50).

*4:16 But if anyone suffers as a Christian-* Peter has just spoken of how our sufferings are those of the Lord (:13). The idea is that we suffer as Christ suffered, as one of the Christ people, the people who are focused upon Him, whose lives are bound up in His life.

*Let him not be ashamed-* This is rather like Timothy being told to not let anyone despise his youth. It is we ourselves who control whether or not we are 'successfully' despised or ashamed.

*But let him glorify God in this name-* "This name" is a rather odd construction, until we recall that Peter was told not to "preach in this name" (Acts 4:17; 5:28). Constantly, Peter is making his pastoral appeals based on his own experience of the Lord, both in His life, and also in the way He had worked with Peter after His ascension. We should do likewise, with words and actions shot through with reference to our own personal experience of the Lord Jesus.

4:17 *For the time of judgment begins at the house of God*- Another reference to Peter's persuasion that the Lord's return in judgment was imminent, and was even beginning in the form of the Neronian persecution. See on :12. Peter has earlier laboured the point that the believers are the house / temple of God. He is saying that the AD70 judgments upon the temple are about to come- but the "first" or most important thing to God is *our* judgment, since we are His people and Orthodox Judaism were not.

*And if we are judged first*- The Greek *proton* doesn't have to mean 'first' in a chronological sense. And "first begin" in the AV is wrong; for there is no Greek word here corresponding to "begin". I have just suggested that the emphasis is on the fact that judgment is beginning; not that it begins first with the believers and then with the world. Indeed the Biblical pictures of the time around the Lord's coming would suggest that the world is judged first, and then the believers; with the unworthy being sent back into a world which is then already experiencing judgment. Most importantly, from God's point of view, *proton*, is the judgment of His people; the punishment of the unbelievers is not something He takes pleasure in nor is unduly eager about.

*What shall be the outcome of those that do not obey the gospel of God?*- The word for "obey not" is used nearly all 16 times it occurs of those *Jews* who refused to accept the Gospel. And Peter has used it in this way in 2:7,8. The Jewish temple and the Judaist system associated with it was to be judged, but more important than that, "first", would be God's judgment of His people- the true house of God.

4:18- see on Mt. 14:30; 2 Pet. 3:15.

*And if the righteous are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?*  
- The judgment of their persecutors was not to make these Jewish converts feel that they were justified just because their persecutors were evil. Those who enter the Kingdom will genuinely, from the very depth of their being, feel that they shouldn't be there. Indeed, they shouldn't be. For Christian believers aren't good people. We are saved by grace alone. The righteous are "scarcely saved" (1 Pet. 4:18). The righteous remnant who spoke often to one another about Yahweh will only be "spared" by God's grace (Mal. 3:17). The accepted will feel so certain of this that they will almost argue with the Lord Jesus at the day of judgment that He hasn't made the right decision concerning them (Mt. 25:37-40). It's only a highly convicted man who would dare do that. Thus the Father will have to comfort the faithful in the aftermath of the judgment, wiping away the tears which will *then* (see context) be in our eyes, and give us special help to realize that our sinful past has now finally been overcome (Rev. 21:4). We will be like the labourers in the parable who walk away clutching their penny, thinking "I really shouldn't have this. I didn't work for a day, and this is a day's pay".

Peter is here quoting, liberally and mixing quotation with interpretation, from the LXX of Prov. 11:31. Peter never introduces his quotations as Paul does, with an "It is written...". And he always quotes from the LXX, and often in a rather loose way. Peter was illiterate, and would know the LXX quotations by memory, recollecting how they had been read to him, rather than having read them with his own eyes and memorized them. And this shows in the way he quotes the OT- although the whole process and final product was Divinely inspired.

4:19 *Therefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God*- Peter writes so often of suffering, because he had personally seen the Lord's final sufferings (5:1), and was for ever

under the indelible impression of His death. Those who suffer according to God's will are those who suffer with Christ there (:13). No suffering is outside the will of God; there is no cosmic satan who has some 'will' in our suffering. And this is a great comfort.

*Commit their souls in doing well-* Throughout this letter, Peter alludes to various details of the physical crucifixion. He has alluded to the wheals / "stripes", the lifting up on the tree stake, and other details. Here the allusion is to the Lord's outbreathing His Spirit, His last breath, to the Father; commending His spirit into the Father's hands. And Peter is saying we should do even that, in lives of "doing well".

*To a faithful creator-* Because Yahweh God was Israel's creator, therefore He ought to have been their King (Is. 43:15). If we really believe His creative authority over us, then He will rule in every aspect of our lives. Realizing that God is a "faithful creator" should inspire us to commit the keeping of our lives to Him in time of suffering (1 Pet. 4:19).

## CHAPTER 5

5:1 *The elders among you I urge (I who am a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ-* Peter was present at the cross. After the denials, knowing his condemnation, where did Peter go after his denials? Probably he could quite easily have also gone and hung himself- for he was of that personality type. But instead he went to the cross- for he was a witness of the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 5:1), and his words and writing consistently reflect the language of Golgotha's awful scene. There, in that personal, hidden observation of the cross, probably disguised in the crowd, not daring to stand with John and the women, his conversion began. Then his love for his Lord became the more focused. Now he could *do* nothing- and his thinking had been so full of *doing* until that point. All he could do was to watch that death and know his own desperation, and somehow believe in grace. "Who his own self bare our sins in his body up on to the tree" (2:24 RVmg.) suggests the watching Peter reflecting, as the Lord's body was lifted up vertical, that his sins of denial and pride were somehow with his Lord, being lifted up by Him. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18) could well have been written by Peter with a glance back at the way that after his denials, he the unjust went to the crucifixion scene and reflected just this. When in 5:1 he comments that he witnessed the sufferings of Christ, he could be saying that therefore these thoughts were his thoughts as he witnessed it: the just suffering for him the unjust, to bring him back to God.

Peter was a "witness" of the sufferings of Christ. The same word is used to characterize his witness of preaching in Acts 1:8; 5:32; 10:39. The Greek word doesn't convey that he simply saw the Lord's sufferings, but that he saw-and-therefore-spoke it. There is something in the cross that cannot be held passively once it has been seen / understood. It *must* be spoken out. Having described the physicalities of the cross, Is. 52:15; 53:1 continue: "*So* shall he sprinkle many nations... for that which had not been [i.e. the like of which had never been] told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard [ever before the like of] shall they consider. Who hath believed our preaching (Heb.)? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" by our preaching? There is an undeniable link between the Lord's sufferings and the preaching of them. They are in themselves an imperative to preach them. *So* shall He sprinkle many nations with His blood of atonement and new covenant, in that His sufferings would provoke a world-wide ("to all nations" cp. "many nations") witness to them by those who knew them. Paul sums it up when he speaks of "the preaching of (Gk. 'which is') the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18). This is how essential the link between preaching and the cross. Peter's witness to men is a living exemplification of this.

*Who is also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed)-* Our eternal future will be about God's glory being revealed in us (Rom. 8:18). And yet we are even now partakers in that glory which shall be revealed through us in the future. In this we see the connection between our present spirit of witness, and the eternal life. We 'have' eternal life in the sense that we live out now the essence of the life we will eternally live. Our eternal future will be all about revealing Christ, who is the glory of God; and this therefore is to be the essence of our lives today. Which is all why 'preaching' isn't an optional extra to the Christian life, something some are into but not others; the essence of revealing / manifesting Christ is to be the essence of our whole existence. And further, the fact we will do this to perfection in God's future Kingdom is seen by Paul as the ultimate encouragement for us, on account of which we can count all the sufferings of this life as nothing (Rom. 8:18).

We have been called to "glory" in possessing Divine nature in the Kingdom (2 Pet.1:3,4). Obviously we do not fully have that now. Yet we are firmly connected with that hope; Peter earlier described himself as "a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" in us. Likewise we have been credited with righteousness now through Christ (Rom. 9:30), yet our reward in the Kingdom will be a "crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8).

*5:2 Tend the flock of God-* The Lord's commission to Peter to "Feed my sheep" is now passed on by Peter to all pastors, whom he pointedly describes as "fellow elders", as if to safeguard against any possible misunderstanding to the effect that he was the senior, special elder. They were *all* to follow his path and thereby achieve the same for others. It is only the typical perversity of the Catholic church which makes them read Peter as the very opposite: as a father figure unapproachable in achievement by any other. The way Peter calls Christ the *petra* of the ecclesia (1 Pet. 2:8) is surely to warn against any view of himself as exclusively the rock.

*Which is among you-* The reminder is that the pastors themselves were amongst the flock, also sheep of the good shepherd. They were among the flock (:1), and the flock among them (:2).

*Not reservedly but willingly, according to the will of God; not for dishonest gain, but eagerly-* God's will for the salvation of all the sheep was and is to be the "will" ["willingly"] of the pastors. We will not therefore care for others only in return for material payment or some other benefit; His constant will for the salvation of His people is to be ours.

*5:3 Neither lord it over those entrusted to you-* This phrase 'Lord it' is surely chosen to remind them that the flock had Jesus as their only Lord. Pastors were to set an example which encouraged them to accept His Lordship- not theirs.

*But make yourselves examples to the flock-* Making ourselves examples doesn't mean posing nor hypocrisy, but rather acting in such a way that consciously sets ourselves up as examples. This was particularly necessary in illiterate communities, where the only real access to the word was to see it made flesh in other Christians. The same word is used in Jn. 20:25 about the "print" of the nails- another perhaps unconscious allusion to Peter's experience of the Lord's sufferings. Elders are not to be domineering but to be examples, *typoi* (1 Pet. 5:3); but we are all *typoi* to each other (1 Thess. 1:7).

*5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested-* A reminder that they themselves were but sheep having a shepherd.

*You shall receive the crown of glory that does not fade away-* The glory of human leadership fades away. They were to serve others with no expectation of reward now, neither materially nor in terms of glory in the eyes of others.

5:5- see on 1 Pet. 3:1.

*Likewise, you younger ones, be subject to the elder men. Yes, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another. For God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble-* James and John had desired the senior places in the Lord's Kingdom. "And when the ten

heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren”, and we can imagine Peter to have been the most indignant. For he had thought then that he loved the Lord more than any of the others (cp. Mt. 26:33; Jn. 21:15). “But (in admonition) Jesus called them unto him” and taught that only in the world did men worry about who was greatest and mind that others were over them, and went on to teach that the true greatness was in humility: “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life...” (Mt. 20:25-28). These words were lived out in epitome at the last supper- and again, Peter had objected to it. He had failed to grasp the Lord’s teaching here. And having learnt the lesson finally, he can teach others that they like their Lord should not ‘lord it’ over their brethren, but rather be clothed with humility after the pattern of the kneeling Lord in the upper room (1 Pet. 5:3,5). “Gird yourselves with humility to serve one another” is a clear reference to the Lord’s humility at the last supper. But it had been Peter who didn’t perceive it. Now, it is as if he pleads with his readers not to be as slow as he had been to perceive the supremacy of humility.

A relationship with a God like ours really ought to humble *us*. He, the Almighty, has asked us to humble ourselves so that we might walk with Him, as if He is so far beneath the petty pride of man (Mic. 6:8 mg.). This really ought to humble us. The whole purpose of the Gospel is to bring down the mountains of human pride and lift up the valleys of those who lack any self-respect (Is. 40:4), thereby making an equality of attitude amongst God’s people. The vision of the Kingdom in Is. 2:2-4 was used as an appeal for *humility* amongst Israel (2:10-12). We have been clothed with God’s righteousness (Is. 61:10; Rev. 3:18), and therefore we should be clothed with humility too, as our response to this (1 Pet. 5:5).

5:6- see on Mk. 9:35.

*Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time-* God wants to exalt us at the last day, and so His hand, His Spirit or action in our lives, will be humbling us now. And we are to willingly merge with that process, realizing that this life is all about being brought down, so that we might be lifted up to His glory at the last day. The ideas are very similar to what we have in Phil. 2, where we are asked to have the same mind which was in Jesus on the cross, who humbled Himself [s.w. Phil. 2:8] so that He might be exalted. So whilst self humbling is a conscious act, we are confirmed in it by God’s hand. The same Greek words are used in the parallel James 4:10, also written to Jewish believers: “Humble yourselves *in the sight of the Lord* and He shall lift you up” (s.w. “exalt you”). The parallel is between God’s hand, and “the sight of the Lord”. We are assisted in the self humiliation process by recalling that we live life in His sight; the Lord is watching us closely, and a sense of His presence should inspire our self humbling.

5:7- see on Phil. 4:6.

*Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you-* The “anxiety” was related to being refugees in Turkey, worried about money and an uncertain future. Peter is roughly quoting from Ps. 55:22 LXX. Simple faith that “He cares for you” ought to remove anxiety; Peter is clearly alluding to the sermon on the Mount (Mt. 6:25). Just as the illiterate Peter appears to summarize Old Testament quotations as an illiterate person would, so we could take this as his summary of Mt. 6:25. The Greek text makes a seamless connection between

humbling ourselves, and casting anxiety upon God. Much worry about material survival is a result of pride...

*5:8 Be sober, be watchful-* They were to “be watchful” (1 Peter 5:8 RV), watching unto prayer as the end approaches (4:7), as Peter had not been watchful in the garden and had earned the Lord’s rebuke for going to sleep praying (Mt. 26:40,41). They were to learn from his mistake. Their watchfulness was to be because the devil was prowling around, seeking whom he could desire (5:8). This was exactly the case with Peter: Satan desired to have him, he should have prayed for strength but didn’t do so sufficiently (Lk. 22:31). He was warning his brethren that they were in exactly the situation he had been in, a few hours before he went into that fateful High Priest’s house.

*Your adversary the Devil, like a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour-* This fits with Peter's concern that the Jewish Christian exiles are living within a very critical society eager to find fault with them; and the 'devouring' in view would be the fiery trial of the upcoming persecution of Christians by Nero (4:12). Pliny records how Christians were asked to make a threefold denial of Christ (*Epistles* 10.97). It has been suggested that the account of Peter's threefold denials of Christ has been included in the Gospel records as an encouragement to those whose faith failed them that still there was a way back to restoration with the Lord Jesus, just as there had been for Peter. When Peter encourages his persecuted brethren to resist the "roaring lion" of Roman / Jewish persecution, he is therefore to be seen as writing against a background in which he had actually failed the very test which his brethren were facing. Yet he can therefore even more powerfully encouraged them, because he had also experienced the Lord's restoring grace.

It’s maybe significant that the Septuagint translates “going to and fro” in Job 1:7 with the word *peripatei* – and we find the same word in 1 Pet. 5:8 about the adversary of the early Christians ‘going about’ seeking them – a reference to the agents of the Roman and Jewish systems.

*5:9 Stand firm in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brothers-* Strength to endure is given by the encouragement of the example of others. This is exactly why we have the concept of church, of life together- because especially in illiterate society, teaching and encouragement would largely be by direct observation of the example of other believers. See on :3. "Stand firm" is "resist" in James 4:7: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". The idea is that if the Christians resisted the persecution, then it would be removed from them- presumably by the Lord's return. The fact He didn't return in the first century would suggest that the early Christian community did not resist as expected. But we can take the principle- that our sufferings are not as unique as we may feel. The "same sufferings" will be experienced by others; indeed 2 Cor. 1:4-8 seems to argue that suffering does repeat in form amongst believers, exactly so that the believers may minister encouragement to each other.

*Who are in the world-* Throughout the rest of the Roman empire. These Jewish converts were to take encouragement and inspiration from their Gentile brethren, whom they might have been tempted to despise.

*5:10 And the God of all grace-* "Grace" means 'gift, and it is to the gift of the Spirit which Peter now refers.

*Who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while-* Peter opened the letter with a reference to how the calling of God is worked out in our lives through the operation of His Spirit.

*Shall Himself perfect, establish, strengthen you-* These are all internal issues, relating to internal psychological, spiritual strengthening. The words are elsewhere used about the internal strengthening of the Spirit.

*5:11 To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen-* An allusion to the concluding phrase of the Lord's prayer. The point was that they were to allow the Lord to have dominion in their hearts now, because that is effectively living the Kingdom life- for He shall eternally have dominion over us and all things. In this sense we "have eternal life" as John's Gospel expresses it.

*5:12 By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him-* The sheer complexity of human persons means that we cannot ultimately judge them. We see our brother's various personas, sometimes his true, reborn self coming out; and our images of others derive as much from ourselves as from them. It amazes me that we humans succeed in accurately communicating with each other as much as we do. The more one perceives the complexity of the person and the personas whom we meet, the more apparent it is that we cannot claim to be their judge. And the more evident it is that the judgments which human beings constantly make about each other are so superficial and often inevitably false. Further, if we truly believe that we ourselves are in Christ and "impute" His person as being the essence of our real self, then we must likewise impute His righteousness to our brethren. Thus Peter could say that he 'imputed' Silvanus to be a "faithful brother" (1 Pet. 5:12). If only we could consistently live out this truth, then all friction between brethren would be a thing of the past.

*I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it!*- The whole letter has spoken of God's grace / spiritual gift at work in us, seeking to move us onwards towards final salvation. And we are to realize that this is indeed the ultimate truth of life.

*5:13 She that is in Babylon-* If a code name for Rome, then this would indicate Peter was present in Rome at some stage, and this would nicely explain his allusions to Paul's letter to the Romans. But "Babylon" is also a title for Jerusalem in the prophets and later in Revelation. He may be reminding these Jewish Christians, exiled from Jerusalem, that there were still faithful believers in Jerusalem.

*Elect together with you, greets you, and so does Marcus my son-* The letter opens with the point that our election or calling operates through the Spirit, and Peter has urged his readers amongst the Jewish Christian exiles to perceive how the Spirit has continued the salvation process with them through their experiences. But it operates according to how it operated from the beginning, when we were first elected or chosen. But we are not the only ones chosen- Gentile believers in Rome, or perhaps other Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem from where they had fled, were also just as much part of the Spirit's ongoing plan and process of operation. This is the unity of the Spirit- the same Spirit operating in our lives is also operating in those of our brethren from whom we may be somewhat distanced, and whom we may be tempted to despise.



We note that Peter had a believing wife, and here we read that he had a believing son. He was therefore well qualified as an elder.

5:14 *Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all that are in Christ-* Peace was a highly relevant wish for these refugee brethren. But that peace was from the experience of forgiveness and reconciliation with God through Christ.