

## WRITER

The inspired writer of this letter is Peter, the apostle. Peter's original name in Hebrew was Simeon (Jn 21:15-17; At 15:14; 2 Pt 1:1). His father's name was Jonah (Mt 16:17) and his brother's name was Andrew (Jn 1:35-42). He was married (Mt 8:14,15; Mk 1:30) and his wife went with him as he moved from one place to another throughout his life (1 Co 9:5). Since he was designated as a shepherd of God's people in his latter years, he also had children according to the qualifications of elders (5:1,13; Ti 1:6). Peter was born in Bethsaida (Jn 1:44). However, he was living in Capernaum in Galilee at the time he was called into apostleship (Mk 1:21ff). He was in a fishing business with James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Jn 1:40ff). When Peter was called to be an apostle, Jesus changed his name from Simeon to Cephas, which name means "rock" (Jn 1:42; Mt 16:17).

## DATE

In 1:7 Peter speaks of the fiery trials that would come upon his readers. In 4:7 he says that the end of all things was at hand at the time of writing. If his reference to the fiery trials of persecution of the church was that which Nero carried out in the middle 60s, then the date of writing would be around A.D. 65. If the end of all things refers to the termination of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the date would be about the same. Most Bible students, therefore, place the writing of the letter somewhere between A.D. 63 and 66. This would be at the end of Nero's persecution since Nero committed suicide in A.D. 68. It would also be at the beginning of the great social turmoil that would occur throughout the Jewish world leading up to Rome's termination of national Israel through the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

## THEME

The verse that would best explain the theme of this letter would be 5:12. *"I have written briefly, exhorting and*

testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.” Peter reminds us that the gospel of grace is the foundation of our hope. Without grace there is no hope simply because we cannot keep any law perfectly.

### **PURPOSE**

Since Peter was writing in view of the destruction of Jerusalem that would come in only a few years after he finished writing this epistle (4:7), he sought to encourage his readers. He wrote in order to encourage his readers by reassuring them that they stand in the grace of God. Though tested and tried by the hostile environment in which they lived, they must remain confident that they are the royal priesthood of God (2:5,9). Since they are the holy priesthood of God, they must maintain the virtues of Christian conduct in an environment that was hostile to their beliefs (4:12-16). Since they had obtained the mercy of God (2:10), they must behave in a manner that manifests the mercy that was extended to them through the grace of God. Since they have been redeemed because of the suffering of Christ on the cross, they must not seek retaliation against those who unjustly persecute them (2:21-25; 3:13-18). In general, the epistle is an exhortation to maintain Christian integrity in a time when the world of the Jews was changing. In all that was about to transpire in the political world, the Christian must maintain his or her faith, and thus endure the times that were coming.

#### **Destiny of the Christian**

(1:1 – 2:10)

**Outline:** (1) Introduction (1:1,2), (2) Our salvation of hope (1:3-12), (3) Exhortation to live godly lives (1:13 – 2:3), (4) Ownership by God (2:4-10)

### **Chapter 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**1:1 Peter:** Peter identifies himself as the Christ-sent apostle who was personally sent forth by Jesus with the other apostles (2 Pt 2:1). He does not identify himself as any special apostle of Jesus. He simply states that he is one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Though Peter had

the privilege of making the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus in Acts 2, he did not consider that this privilege in some way made him to be pre-eminent among the apostles. Jesus had promised that Peter would unlock His kingdom reign by making the first official announcement that Jesus was reigning in heaven on David's throne (See comments Mt 16:18,19). However, neither Peter, nor any of the other apostles, assumed that Jesus meant that he would be head over the other apostles. **Sojourners of the Dispersion:** The Dispersion (*diaspora*) was a Jewish teaching that referred to the Jews who had been scattered throughout the nations by the Assyrian (722/21 B.C.) and Babylonian (586 B.C.) captivities (Js 1:1). Peter was writing to Christians who were the new Israel of God. He thus may be using this Jewish term "dispersion" that first referred to the scattering of national Israel to refer to the new spiritual Israel, the church of Christ that was scattered throughout the world (See At 8:4). He writes to Jewish and Gentile Christians who have been scattered into the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

**1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God:** Before the creation of the world the plan of God's redemption for man was determined (See comments Rm 8:29,30; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 1:4-6). It was executed in the mind of God in that Jesus was predestined to the cross for the redemption of those who would voluntarily respond to the grace of God (Rv 13:8). In God's foreknowledge, therefore, He planned that He would elect out of the world for eternal salvation all those who would respond to the gospel of the cross by immersion into Christ (2 Th 2:13,14; See Rm 6:3-6). This election, however, would happen at the end of time. Therefore, the church is the group of those whom God will elect for eternal dwelling when Jesus comes again. The church is thus the community of the elect, though according to our calendar, the actual electing has not yet taken place (See 2:9; 5:13; Ti 1:1). Peter's audience, as well as all Christians, will be chosen out of the world for eternal salvation at the final judgment because they have made a free-moral choice to become a part of the elect (See At 2:23; Rm 8:29; 11:2). God foreordained that

the church would be the group of the saved. Therefore, all those who have free-morally chosen to become members of the church are referred to in the New Testament as the elect and chosen. **Sanctification of the Spirit:** The elect are sanctified because of their individual choice to become a part of the church which is destined for eternity. The members have fulfilled their individual part of God's plan of salvation. God's part is the sanctification of those who have chosen to become a part of the elect. Therefore, when one makes a free-moral choice to become a member of the elect, he is cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Ep 1:7). He is born again (1:23; Jn 3:3-5) because he is washed of sin (At 22:15). He is thus set apart from the world as God's son (1 Co 1:2; 6:11). **To obedience:** The word "to" is from *eis*. Therefore, in one's response to the gospel by baptism, he is set apart from the world in order to be delivered unto God as an obedient son (Ep 2:10). Acceptable obedience begins when one responds to the gospel by immersion for remission of sins (See comments Rm 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:10). One thus walks in the light because he has allowed the light of God to move him to obedience (1 Jn 1:5-10). **Sprinkling of the blood:** The Old Testament covenant that God established with Israel was inaugurated by the sprinkling of the blood of animals (Ex 24:7,8; see Is 52:15). All Israel was brought into a covenant relationship with God when the blood of the sacrificed animal was sprinkled on the people. The covenant that God has now established with the obedient has been inaugurated by the blood of Jesus (Mt 26:28; Hb 12:24). **Grace ... peace:** God's grace results in peace between God and man in reference to God's forgiveness of our sin. His grace also results in peace in reference to inner peace that comes from knowing that one is right with God because he has been saved by God's grace. This common greeting of "grace and peace" to Christians in the New Testament is the result of the plan of God's grace that has been revealed (See Rm 1:7; 1 Co 1:3; Gl 1:3; Ep 1:2; Ph 1:2).

### OUR SALVATION OF HOPE

**1:3 Begotten us again to a living hope:** Before the crucifixion, the disciples had hoped that Jesus was the one for

whom they had been waiting to be the redeemer of Israel (Lk 23:21). However, because they did not understand at the time, the crucifixion brought disappointment and disillusionment. Three days after the crucifixion, the resurrection of Jesus from the grave restored their hope. Peter here states that they again have hope by the resurrection of Jesus (See 3:21; 1 Co 15:12-20; Ep 1:17-20). Every Christian now has hope of eternal dwelling because of the resurrection of Jesus (At 24:15; Hb 2:14,15).

**1:4 An inheritance:** Since Christians have been raised with Jesus from the grave of baptism, they have hope of an inheritance in eternal dwelling with God (Rm 6:4,5). There is a crown of glory awaiting all those who remain faithful to their calling (2 Tm 4:8; see Ep 1:14; Cl 3:24). Peter does not use the Greek word *aionios* (eternal) to explain the unending nature of this dwelling because *aionios* sometimes refers to that which has an end (See the Old Testament Septuagint use of *aionios* in reference to many ordinances of the law – Ex 12:24; 29:9; 40:15; Lv 24:8; Nm 25:13; Jr 32:40; Ez 16:60). In order that his readers not misunderstand the unending nature of heaven to come, Peter uses four words to explain their future inheritance. ***This inheritance will be the following:*** (1) ***Imperishable:*** As opposed to that which is material, the inheritance will be imperishable (Mt 6:19,20). It will not decay away. (2) ***Undefiled:*** Nothing unclean will enter therein (1 Jn 1:7; compare Rv 21:8,27). All those who would come into the inheritance would be cleansed of sin and sanctified by God. (3) ***Does not fade away:*** Material things pass away with their using. However, the inheritance for which Christians wait will not pass away as we see the world around us passing away. Christians will be in the presence of God, and thus, their existence will continue without end. Since eternity is centered around the eternal God, the saved will be in the presence of God who will continue their existence without end (See comments 2 Th 1:6-9). (4) ***Reserved:*** Our inheritance is secured by God (Mt 5:10-12; Cl 1:5). It is not something that will go away, and thus, all Christians can be assured that it will be awaiting those who through faith persevere in this world.

**1:5 Kept by the power of God:** The Greek verb here refers to being guarded. It is a military term that refers to one being protected. Peter uses the Greek present tense wherein he is emphasizing the continuous action of the verb. Christians are now continually protected by God for the inheritance that is yet to come (Jn 10:28; see Ph 4:7). However, if one's faithful obedience stops, then the guarding stops (See comments Lk 22:31,32; 1 Co 15:1,2; 1 Jn 1:5-10; Rv 2:10).

**1:6 Distressed by many trials:** That which might bring despair in the lives of the obedient would be the trials through which they must go in this life. All Christians have reason to rejoice in the hope they have of unending existence in the presence of God. It is this hope that takes them through the trials of this life (Js 1:2,3; see Mt 5:11,12; At 14:22; 20:19; Rv 3:10). The Christians to whom Peter wrote were headed for a great testing that would last for "a little while." This would probably refer to the indirect suffering they would experience as Rome brought down judgment upon the insurrectionist Jews of national Israel in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). Christians would have to undergo the Roman-Jewish wars that would take place around this date. We must also keep in mind that Nero was leading a personal vendetta against Christians in Rome, which persecution spread to other areas of the Roman Empire. The persecution of Nero would end in A.D. 68 when Nero committed suicide. The indirect persecution that resulted from the Roman campaign to put down national Israel ended in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. Through all this turmoil, Christians would have to endure great suffering.

**1:7 The proof of your faith:** It would be the trials that would determine the sincerity of their faith (Compare Mk 8:31-38). It often takes hard times to determine if one has a genuine faith. As gold is refined by fire in order to remove impurities, so the impurities of one's faith are removed by the fires of trial (Jb 23:10; see Rm 2:7). It is for this reason that Christians count it with joy when they fall into various trials (Js 1:2,3). They count it with joy because they understand the good that comes from such trials (Rm 8:28).

**1:8 *Have not seen Him, you love:*** Christians walk by faith (2 Co 5:7). They are more blessed than the early apostles who walked by sight, having personally experienced Jesus and His miraculous works (See comments Jn 20:24-32). Because we walk by faith, we love by faith. God considers blessed those who love Jesus, and yet, have not seen Him or experienced any miracles that proved He was the Son of God (See Jn 3:2). Since we have faith in the written testimony of the miracles, we are more blessed today than those who first believed (See comments Jn 20:24-31).

**1:9 *Outcome of your faith:*** It is not that one receives a meritorious reward for works that are produced by his faith. It is that faith continues in the love of God. Faith moves us to trust in God to provide the final reward for a walk of faith. Faith moves one to remain in the commandments of the Lord (Js 2:14-26). Therefore, the reward is the result of a faith that moves one to stay close to God (See Rv 2:10). God will reward those who remain faithful to Him.

**1:10 *This salvation:*** It is certain that Peter is discussing here the eternally planned mystery of the cross that will result in our eternal dwelling in heaven. It was this mystery that was concealed from all men by God until its revelation through Jesus (Ti 2:11). Indications of the mystery were revealed to the Old Testament prophets in order to give hope to all men. All men needed hope concerning a solution for man's inability to keep law perfectly in order to justify oneself before God (See Gn 3:15; Is 53; Ps 22). Under the Old Testament dispensation before the cross, God expected men to walk by faith in His promise that a solution for sin was coming (See comments Rm 3:25). But it was not until Jesus came that the mystery of God's plan of salvation was revealed (Ep 3:3-5).

**1:11 *Searching:*** The prophets were not given the privilege of understanding the prophecies that were revealed to them concerning the plan of salvation. They wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 2:12,13; 2 Pt 1:20,21). However, the Holy Spirit did not inspire them to understand what they wrote. Even Satan did not know what

God had in mind concerning the cross. If he had known, then certainly he would not have moved the mob of Jerusalem to have Jesus crucified, which crucifixion led to the downfall of his kingdom of darkness. **Glory that would follow:** Not only did the Old Testament prophets speak of the gospel of salvation, they also prophesied of the glorious church that would be called into heavenly dwelling (Gn 3:15; see comments Gl 3:8).

**1:12 Revealed ... to you:** Though the prophecies concerning the mystery of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit to be written by the prophets, the revelation of the mystery was not known until it took place. The mystery was the good news of the death of Jesus on the cross for man's sin problem. It was His resurrection in order to give all men hope of eternal life (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4,20-22). This gospel event was reported to those to whom Peter wrote by the inspired preachers who proclaimed the same to all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15; see 1 Co 2:12,13; Ep 3:1-5). **Angels desire to look into:** Before the revelation of the gospel to man, no one other than God knew what was to be revealed. Even angels sought to understand the mystery. However, it was not revealed to them or any other being, including Satan (Compare Ep 3:10; Hb 1:14).

### EXHORTATION TO LIVE GODLY LIVES

**1:13 Gird up the loins of your mind:** Loose dress was to be girded when working or running. Peter metaphorically uses the girding up of the dress, or robe, in order to refer to Christians becoming serious about the work in which they are engaged. One must bind up all unholy thought and behavior in order to run the Christian race. Christians must discipline their lives and lay aside sin (Hb 12:1; see 1 Co 9:24; Gl 2:2; Hb 10:39). **Be sober:** Sober means to exercise self-restraint or to be mentally balanced. One who is of a sober mind carefully and sensibly acts after giving great thought to what he will do (4:9; 5:8; 2 Tm 4:5). Whether by themselves among unbelievers, or in their assemblies, sobriety must characterize the demeanor of the disciples of Jesus. Whenever Christians lose their sobriety, they bring disgrace on the



name of Jesus. The Spirit of the Lord brings integrity to the behavior of those who soberly walk according to an emotionally controlled behavior. **Revelation of Jesus Christ:** Reference here is probably to the final coming of Jesus (Hb 6:19; see Rm 8:24,25; 1 Th 5:8; 2 Th 2:16; Ti 2:13). However, in the historical context of the recipients of this letter, the consummation of national Israel was at hand (See comments Mt 24). The prophets had foretold the end of national Israel at the time of the coming of the Messiah. And since the Messiah had come, the end of national Israel had come for national Israel.

**1:14 Obedient children:** All sons of God are obedient to His commandments (Mt 7:21; Ph 2:12; Hb 5:8; compare Rm 1:5; 6:15-18; 16:26). They are sons because they are obedient. **Former lusts:** While they were ignorant of the will of God, they walked in a rebellious behavior against the commandments of God (See At 17:30; Ep 2:1-10; 4:17-19; 1 Th 4:5). However, when they came to a knowledge of the will of God, they obeyed as sons.

**1:15,16 Be holy, for I am holy:** Peter's quotation of Leviticus 11:44,45 emphasizes the fact that the sons of God must lead a life that is separate from the behavior that is typical of the world (See Hb 12:14). He states a command that they be holy. Emphasis is not on the holiness that is made possible by the cleansing blood of Jesus, but on the obedience of the Christian to the will of the Father. Through faith one obediently responds in order to come into contact with the cleansing blood of Jesus. It is the blood of Jesus that justifies one before God (Rm 3:25). However, our response to the cross is necessary in order that we come into contact with the justifying grace of God through the blood of Jesus. The sons of God, therefore, should behave themselves after the nature of God. They must lead godly lives because they have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus, and thus, made holy. Since they have been made spiritually holy, they are obligated to live lives that are separated from the ways of the world.

**1:17 Without respect of persons:** Our judgment by God will not be based on whether we call ourselves sons of God. Judgment will be based on our response to those

works for which we have been created in Christ Jesus (Ep 2:10). Therefore, judgment will be based on our choice to obey, and not by God showing favoritism (At 10:34,35; Rm 2:9-11; Js 2:1,9). **Judges according to each one's work:** Our work is the manifestation of our faith response to God's grace (1 Co 15:10). If our faith is insufficient, then there will be no response. If there is no response, then there is no appreciation for the grace of God, and thus, no application of the grace of God to our problem of sin (See 2 Co 4:15). Since God will judge according to our response to His grace, then the conduct of our lives must be according to His will (See Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2; Rm 2:6; 8:15; 2 Co 5:10; Rv 20:12). We do not have the right to construct a religion after our own desires. Our behavior must be patterned after the will of God.

**1:18,19 Redeemed ... with the precious blood:** Redeem is a metaphor that finds its earthly meaning in one of two sources or both. Israel was redeemed out of the captivity of Egypt (Ex 6:6). The Israelites were redeemed out of a situation from which they could not deliver themselves. In the culture in which Peter's readers lived, slaves could be redeemed out of slavery by a predetermined amount of money that could be paid for their freedom. In this context, Peter wants us to understand that we were bought out of slavery. A price was paid that we could not pay. It was paid, but not with the things of this world that deteriorate away. The price that was paid was the incarnate offering of the Son of God on the cross (1:2; Jn 1:29; At 20:28; Rm 3:25; 1 Co 9:19; Ti 2:14; Hb 2:17; 9:26,27; 1 Jn 2:2; 3:5; 4:10). **Tradition from your fathers:** It is significant that Peter mentions religious traditions in the context of the subject of redemption. The Jews taught a legalistic system of justification. They taught that one could be justified before God through strict obedience to the traditions of the fathers (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Cl 2:20-23). But such efforts to justify oneself are futile attempts to stand before God on the basis of one's own conditions. Traditions originate from man. Therefore, if one seeks to be justified before God on the basis of the religious traditions of men, then he is seeking to be justified by conditions that have originated with man. But

one cannot be justified on his own conditions. Neither can one be redeemed through a combination of honoring religious traditions in conjunction with the word of God. If the traditions are made a condition for salvation, then the redemption by the blood of Jesus is assumed to be insufficient. Religious traditions that are made conditions for salvation, therefore, proclaim that the grace of God is insufficient (See comments Gl 1:6-9; 5:1). **Lamb without blemish:** Under the Old Testament law, only a lamb that was without blemish or spot could be offered as a sacrifice for sin (Ex 12:5). Peter points out here that the sinless Son of God offered Himself as a ransom for our sins (See Is 53:7; Jn 1:29).

**1:20 Foreordained before the foundation of the world:** God had planned the plan of redemption before the creation of the world (Rm 16:26; Ep 3:5; 4:16; Cl 1:26). Jesus was the Lamb that was slain before the existence of those for whom He died (Rv 13:8). The plan of grace had to be in place before creation in order that God be a just God in the creation of fallible, free-moral individuals. When God created man, He knew that man would sin. And thus a plan of faith and grace was in place when Adam took his first breath of life. **In these last times:** Peter had preached on Pentecost that the Spirit had been poured out in the last days (At 2:16,17). He was in the last days when the Spirit came. As he writes this epistle, he was still in the last times. These last times (last days) do not refer to the end of time. Reference was to the last days of national Israel (See comments Mt 24). Jesus was manifested in the last days of national Israel in order to offer all men an escape from sin. Jesus died on the cross in A.D. 30. Forty years later in A.D. 70, national Israel would come to a close. Therefore, the messengers of Jesus went forth into all the Roman Empire during the forty years between the cross and the calamity of Jerusalem in order to call out of Israel those who were children of Abraham by faith.

**1:21 Raised Him:** The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation upon which the hope of the Christian is built (At 3:13; 1 Co 15; Ep 1:20,21; Ph 2:9; Rv 1:17). Not only was Jesus raised as prophesied, He was raised to reign at the

right hand of God (Dn 7:13,14). He is now reigning with all authority over all things (3:22; Ep 1:22,23).

**1:22 Obeying the truth:** The truth of the gospel is the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins and His resurrection to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over all things (See comments Jn 1:17; Gl 2:5,14; compare Mk 4:26-29; Jn 17:17; Js 1:18). It is this truth that one obeys in order to be purified from sin (See comments At 22:16; Rm 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). **Love one another fervently:** It is by love that we are identified as the disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:35; see 2:17; 3:8; Rm 12:9,10; 2 Co 6:6; 1 Th 4:9,10; 1 Tm 1:5; Hb 13:1). The nature of the true church of Christ is manifested by the love that the members have for one another. No church can claim to be the church of Christ if such love is not characteristic of the members.

**1:23 Born again:** Christians have been born again through their obedience to the gospel (See comments Jn 3:3-5). **By the word of God:** Those to whom Peter writes did not experience the gospel event of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. However, through the inspired preaching of the evangelists the report of the event was communicated to them (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). It is through the word of God that men are informed of the gospel. They are thus born again when they obey the gospel of Jesus which is preached to all the world (Mk 16:15,16). **Abides:** The word of God, therefore, abides in the heart of the one who has submitted to the gospel. Obedience to the gospel is the indication that one has allowed the will of God to have free course in his life by submitting to the lordship of Jesus (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21; At 2:36-38). When one submits to the gospel, the word of God is living in the heart of this person (Js 1:21).

**1:24,25 The word of the Lord endures forever:** Peter quoted Isaiah 40:6-8 to show the contrast between that which is temporary and that which is without end. All that is of the world is temporary. However, the word of God is forever (Mt 24:35; Mk 13:31). It will endure beyond the passing away of the physical world. The eternal existence of God's word reassures the disciples of Jesus that what God has promised, He is able also to bring to pass.

## Chapter 2

**2:1 Laying aside:** The conjunction “therefore” signifies that Peter concludes the preceding comments of 1:23-25 with what one must do to maintain the holy life. The Greek word for “laying aside” (*apothemenoi*) refers to putting something off. In order to be holy as God is holy (1:16) we must put off sin (See Rm 13:12; Ep 4:22,23; Cl 3:8; Hb 12:1,2). **Malice:** Malice is the character of one who seeks to do that which is evil against his fellow man (See Rm 1:29; 1 Co 5:8; 14:20; Ep 4:31). **All deceit:** This is the character of one who seeks to be dishonest toward another in order to accomplish his own purposes or to cause harm to others (Rm 1:29; 2 Co 12:16). **Hypocrisies:** The hypocrite speaks the life of righteousness, but he lives contrary to that which he speaks (Mt 6:24; Js 3:10). **Envious:** The envious character desires to possess what another has or be what another is (Mt 27:18; Mk 15:10; Ti 3:3). His envy, therefore, hinders him from having a correct relationship with those he envies. **Evil speaking:** Slander is wicked lies about another in order to cause one's fellow man to suffer harm in reputation. This is verbal defamation of the character of another (See comments 3 Jn 9,10).

**2:2** If one puts off that which is wicked, he must put on that which is good. The vacuum of his unrighteousness must be filled with that which is good. In order to being filling the vacuum of unrighteousness, one must begin seeking that which God would have him do. This begins with one's study of the word of God. **Newborn babes:** In contrast to the above character, Peter exhorts his readers to yearn for the word of God which is the source of godly direction (Compare At 20:32; Hb 4:12). Newborn babies yearn for and crave the milk that brings sustenance to their lives. In this manner, all Christians should crave the word of God in order that they be spiritually nourished (Compare comments Mt 18:3; 19:14; see 1 Co 14:20). *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled”* (Mt 5:6). **Grow up to salvation:** The word of God is the source of our faith (Rm 10:17). Without it we would know little about the God who is beyond the curtain of nature. Neither would we know anything

about the Son of God who died for our sins. If we did not have the Bible, all ideas concerning what God has done in history would be filled with corrupted legends and myths (See comments Lk 1:1-4). Without a knowledge of the Bible, we would create God after our own image, and develop religious beliefs and practices that conformed to our earthly desires. Therefore, the Christian must seek Bible knowledge in order that he may grow in the holy life (See At 20:32; 1 Th 2:13; 2 Tm 2:15; 2 Pt 3:18). Those who are ignorant of the word of God grow after their own desires, and thus, end up with their own religion that they have created after their own feelings or traditions (See Hs 4:6; Mk 7:1-9; 2 Th 2:10-12).

**2:3 The Lord is gracious:** See Ps 34:8. Peter's readers had experienced the goodness of the Lord. They had experienced the miraculous work of the Spirit. They had witnessed the change in lives as men and women submitted to the lordship of Jesus (See comments Hb 6:3-6). Since they had experienced such, Peter then reasoned that they should follow his instructions to continue as babes who long for the nurture of the word of God.

### OWNERSHIP BY GOD

**2:4 A living stone:** Peter's metaphor is of the Lord who is the rock of our salvation (Ps 62:1,2). The Lord is the one who is the solid foundation of the Christian life. Christians have a living hope (1:3) because of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. They have a living word (1:23) that works in the lives of those who have submitted to the lordship of Jesus. Peter says that they now have a living stone upon which they can base their lives. **Rejected:** Jesus was rejected by those who were of a rebellious nature, and thus, would not submit to His lordship (See Ps 118:22; Jn 1:11).

**2:5 As living stones:** Christians are living stones because the Stone upon which their lives are built is living. They live because Jesus lives. The Old Testament temple was built out of stones of the material world. But the temple of God today is built out of living stones that have responded to the grace of God. The church, therefore, is a spiritual house as opposed to a house of stones (1

Tm 3:15; compare Ep 2:20-22; Hb 3:6). **A holy priesthood:** Under the New Testament law every Christian functions as a priest, and thus, has direct access to God through the high priesthood of Jesus (Rv 1:6; 5:10). The church, therefore, is the priesthood of God that has been separated from the world in order to minister the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). God gave Israel the major trading route of the ancient world. The reason He did this was that Israel teach the one true and living God to the world. The work of Israel as a nation of priests was to minister the word of God to the traders of the nations who passed through Palestine. Their priesthood as a nation, therefore, was to the nations of the world. As the royal priesthood of God, the church is to minister the word of God to the world as they encounter those of the world. The church is not a priesthood to herself. She is a priesthood to the world. **Spiritual sacrifices:** In contrast to the physical animal sacrifices that were offered by the Old Testament priests, the priests of God today offers up spiritual services to God in response to His grace (Rm 12:1; see Ph 4:18; Hb 13:15,16).

**2:6** The Old Testament prophecies directed Israel's attention toward this new dispensation about which Peter here speaks (Is 28:16; see Rm 9:32,33). **Lay in Zion:** On earth, the church was first established in Jerusalem when men and women responded to the first announcement of the death and resurrection of Jesus for the salvation and hope of all men (At 2). The source from which the authority of the word of God proceeds originates in heaven where Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; Hb 8:1). **A chief cornerstone:** The chief cornerstone for building a house in ancient times was the first stone laid by the builders in order to determine the positioning of the house. It was the stone from which measurements were made in order to build the house. Jesus is the chief cornerstone from which the church is built (See Mt 16:18,19; Ep 2:20). Any church that does not focus on Jesus as the authority from which all direction must come, is not the church of Christ (See Jn 12:48). Therefore, we must continually look to Jesus for direction in building ourselves together as the body

of Christ (Hb 1:1,2; 5:9). It is for this reason that the disciples of Jesus preach Jesus, not church, for churches are often doctrinally and behaviorally twisted in reference to their faithfulness to the word of Christ. **Not be disappointed:** Since the authority of the word of God proceeds from heaven where Jesus continues to function as the chief cornerstone, no Christian should be ashamed (See Rm 1:16; 5:5; 2 Tm 1:8). One should never be ashamed of believing and obeying that which is of heavenly origin (Rm 1:16).

**2:7,8** Peter here contrasts the attitude of all men with Jesus. **Precious:** Jesus is precious in the hearts of those who have accepted Him as the Lord of their lives. He is precious because He has changed their worldly behavior into a holy manner of life (vss 1-3). **Stone of stumbling:** The Jewish leadership of Jerusalem rejected Jesus (Jn 1:11), and thus, He became the stone over which they stumbled. Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 (vs 7) and Isaiah 8:14 (vs 8) in order to let his readers know that God knew there would be a rejection of His Son. Because of their unbelief in Jesus as the Son of God, they rejected Him both as the Messiah of Israel and Son of God (Rm 9:32,33). The rejection of Jesus, therefore, was not previously unknown by God (See Rm 9:22). God knew that prejudiced and prideful people would not accept the Messiah who would come out of Nazareth. He knew that the people would reject His work, and thus, become disobedient (See 1 Co 1:23; Gl 5:11). Jesus, therefore, was crucified before the creation of the world (Rv 13:8).

**2:9** In contrast to those who did not believe, as the Israel of the Old Testament, Peter says that Christians are four things: **(1) A chosen generation:** They are the new Israel of God (Gl 6:16). They are the family of God with whom God has established a covenant relationship (See Mt 26:26-29). **(2) A royal priesthood:** Christians are now priests of God. They offer up spiritual sacrifices and the service of their lives in service to the world (Rm 12:1). The church is God's royal priesthood to minister to the world of unbelievers. **(3) A holy nation:** The church of God's people has been separated from the world because of the member's voluntary submission to King Jesus. The



church is in the world, but not of the world. **(4) Special people:** As the nation of Israel was chosen out of the nations of the world, the church is the group of chosen who will eventually be called into heavenly glory because they have voluntarily chosen to become members of the body of Christ (See Ti 2:14). **So that you may proclaim:** The church of disciples are the preceding four things in order to proclaim the gospel to the world. It is not the work of the priesthood of disciples to preach the praises of God to themselves. They already know God. It is the work of the church to preach the gospel to unbelievers (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). When the church becomes introverted and speaks only to itself, then the church has died. The candlestick is removed because the community in which the disciples live no longer has a witness to the praises of God. The church, therefore, must continually assume her responsibility to be a community of priests to the spiritual needs of the world. **Called ... into ... light:** Christians have been called out of the domain of darkness in sin to the light of the Son of God (Jn 8:12; see Jn 3:19; At 26:18; Rm 2:19; 13:12; 2 Co 4:6; Ep 5:8; 6:12; Cl 1:13; compare Is 9:2; 42:16).

**2:10 Now the people of God:** Under the Old Testament law Israel was the nation of God that had been called out of the world of nations. Peter certainly had such in mind as he referred to the church that is now the special people of God. Members of the church are the possession of God because of their obedience to the gospel (Compare prophecies of Hs 1:6,9,10; 2:23 with Rm 9:25,26). **Have obtained mercy:** The members of the church have responded to the grace of God by obedience to the gospel (Rm 6:2-6). They have therefore reaped the mercy of God who has set aside the punishment that would have been meted out for sin (See comments Ep 2:1-10). Because they have sought for and obtained the mercy of God, their nature is to extend mercy toward others (Js 2:13). The disciples of Christ, therefore, are identified as those who do not seek to judge, but those who seek to have mercy on the faults of others as God had mercy on them.

## Service of the Christian

(2:11 – 3:12)

**Outline:** (1) Live as the people of God (2:11-25), (2) Exhortation for wives (3:1-6), (3) Exhortation for husbands (3:7), (4) Exhortation for the disciples (3:8-12)

## LIVE AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Peter now turns to the conduct of the spiritual nation of God, the church. Since Christians are the people of God, they must behave after a manner of godliness. They must conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of the gospel by which they were called (See Ph 1:27).

**2:11 Sojourners and pilgrims:** Christians are residents of the world. However, their citizenship is not of this world. Their citizenship (membership) is registered in heaven. They are only sojourners in this world (Ep 2:19; Ph 3:20). Because their citizenship is in heaven, they are not to become attached to this world (Mt 6:24; Js 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15; see Ep 2:3; Cl 3:5; 1 Th 4:3; Ti 2:12). The principle that is revealed in the disciples' heavenly citizenship is that each individual disciple has direct registration with God. One's citizenship is not through the church, but direct with God. One's citizenship, therefore, is not affected by the behavior of others. Our citizenship is not dependent on anyone of this world. The church exists on earth, therefore, because individuals have registered their citizenship with God through obedience of the gospel. **War against the soul:** There is a struggle that goes on between our lusts after the things of this world and our focus on heavenly things (See Rm 7:23; Js 4:1). Those things that are of this world seek to divert our focus from our heavenly citizenship. The things of the world seek to keep our thinking on the world and off heavenly dwelling (Gl 5:17; See Rm 8:13; Cl 3:1-3).

**2:12 Behavior honest among the Gentiles:** Christians must behave with integrity among the unbelievers in whose presence they live. They must behave in a way that presents hope to others (Mt 5:16; see vs 15; 3:16; Mt 9:8; 2 Co 8:21; Gl 6:10; Ph 2:15; Ti 2:8). In doing this, they influence others for good (1 Th 4:12; 1 Tm 3:7). They also bring glory to God. **Day of visitation:** In Old Testament prophecy, the day of visitation referred to God's judg-

ment upon apostate Israel and those who persecuted Israel. In view of the date Peter wrote, reference here could possibly be to the coming visitation of God upon national Israel. In only a few years from the time of his writing, the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed in A.D. 70. Christians would be vindicated as the people of God, and thus, they would shine forth in the kingdom of God (Mt 13:43; Ph 2:15).

**2:13,14 Submit yourselves:** Insofar as the ordinances of men conform to the principles of God's law, Christians must be good citizens by being obedient to the governments of the world (See comments At 4:19,20; 5:29; Ti 3:1; see comments Rm 13:1-7). At the time Peter wrote, Nero was persecuting Christians. There were some Christians who would possibly like to have taken up arms to make war against Nero. But Peter here exhorts Christians to submit to the laws of the Roman Empire. Nero's persecution of Christians was a personal vendetta against Christians. At this time in history, it was not a sanctioned persecution by the Roman state. Roman persecution would come later in the days of Domitian (See comments Rv 13; 17:7-18). **Sent by Him:** God has ordained that civil government exist in order that anarchy not occur. God does not work today as He did with Israel. Israel was a theocratic government, that is, God's moral and civil laws were as one law given to Israel to maintain order. The civil and moral laws were given directly by God to a nation that was to be obedient to all law that originated directly from God. The Christian is under the law of God, but God has not specifically ordained the laws of governments. The civil laws of government are devised by men. The law of Christ has been revealed from heaven through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, man's devised laws of government can sometimes come into conflict with the law of Christ that has been revealed from heaven. In cases as this, Christians must first submit to the law of Christ. However, God has ordained that governments exist, and thus, Christians as citizens of governments of the world must submit to the laws of government insofar as those laws do not contradict the laws of God that have been given directly from God.

**2:15 By doing right:** When Christians do that which is right, they silence those who make accusations against them. They should answer accusations by doing good to their enemies (Mt 5:43,44). By doing this, they proclaim the ignorance and foolishness of those who accuse them. In other words, those who would accuse the one who is doing good according to the will of God are ignorant and foolish because their values and behavior are not based on the one true God.

**2:16 As free:** Christians are free from the necessity of having to keep God's law perfectly in order to meritoriously save themselves (Rm 6:14,20,22; 1 Co 7:22; see comments Gl 2:16; 5:1,13). However, their freedom does not give them the liberty to violate either civil law or God's law (See comments Rm 3:31). Their freedom gives them the right to obey. Their obedience is not out of constraint, but willingly. They obey because of their response to the love and grace of God (See 2 Co 4:15; 1 Jn 4:19). As slaves of God, they seek to do that which their Master desires. Therefore, they are obedient to civil law as the result of their submission to the lordship of Jesus in their lives.

**2:17** Peter makes four concluding imperative commands concerning the conduct of the disciples of Jesus. **(1) Honor all:** Christians are to give honor to whom honor is due (See Gn 5:1; 9:6; Ps 8:4,5; Pv 14:31; Rm 13:7; 1 Tm 1:17; Js 2:1-9; 4:11,22). **(2) Love the brotherhood:** Those who have come into the Christian community must love those who have also done the same. It is by brotherly love that the church of Christ is known to belong to Christ (Jn 13:34,35; Gl 6:10; Hb 13:1; 1 Jn 2:10; 4:11,12,19). **(3) Fear God:** It is our awareness of the greatness and power of God that moves us to obedience (1:17; Gn 42:18; Jb 1:9; Ps 19:9; 34:9; 111:10; Ec 12:13; Mt 10:28). In this context, the fear of God means one's obedience to God. **(4) Honor the king:** This would certainly have been a difficult attitude to maintain in view of the fact that Nero was, at the time of this writing, persecuting Christians. Regardless of wicked kings that behave in an ungodly manner, Peter's emphasis here is to honor the position of kingship in civil government (See comments Rm 13:1-7).

**2:18,19 Bondservants:** Reference here is to slaves. They must be obedient to their masters regardless of whether their masters are good or evil (See comments Ep 6:5-8; Cl 3:22-25; see 1 Tm 6:1,2; Ti 2:9,10). **Suffering wrongfully:** Peter exhorts those slaves who are Christians not to rebel against unjust masters. Christians must keep their emotions under control. They must endure their hardships even if they are treated wrongfully (See 4:16; Mt 5:10-12,39-48; Lk 6:32-34).

**2:20,21 Take it patiently:** There is no glory given to God when one is justly punished for something that he did wrong. But if one behaves in a Christian manner, and yet is punished, then glory is given to God because he patiently endured being treated wrong when he was in the right. **Follow His steps:** Jesus was innocent. However, when He was beaten He did not retaliate, nor did He accuse His persecutors. He thus left us an example of patiently suffering wrong from others (See Jn 13:15; 15:18,19; 1 Jn 2:6).

**2:22-24 He did no sin:** In His humanity, Jesus was tempted as all men, and yet, He did not sin (Hb 4:15; see Is 53:9; Mt 26:59,60; Lk 23:41; Jn 8:46; 18:38; 19:4-6; 2 Co 5:21). Though wicked men spoke harshly against Jesus, He did not retaliate with evil (See Mt 26:61-63,66-68; 27:12-14,28-31,39-44). **Bore our sins:** Jesus took the burden of our sin problem to the cross (Is 53:12; Hb 9:28). He was the sacrificial lamb who took away our sins, and thus, He delivered us from condemnation (Mt 26:28; Rm 5:6; 1 Co 11:24; 15:3; 2 Co 5:14; Hb 2:9; 9:26; 10:10). Peter began this context by exhorting bondservants to endure patiently when they were wrongfully beaten (vss 18,19). He has now turned to Jesus who was wrongfully crucified for our sins. If Jesus had retaliated, there would have been no crucifixion, and thus, no redemption. He submitted to being wrongfully treated in order to accomplish the work of the cross. Those who would follow after His example, therefore, should walk in His steps. When one sees that Jesus went to the cross as an innocent victim who was offered for our sins, he should be moved to obediently follow Jesus. He should willingly become a slave of righteousness because Jesus willingly

offered Himself for our sins (See comments Rm 6; see 2 Co 5:21; Cl 3:1,2).

**2:25 Sheep going astray:** See comments Ep 2:1-3. **Shepherd and Overseer:** Those who understand the grace of God that was manifested on the cross will be moved to respond to the One who can guide them to salvation and watch over their souls (See Jn 10:2-5,11-18; 2 Co 4:15; Hb 13:20; Rv 7:17). Those who do not allow Jesus to be their shepherd are hardened and rebellious. They do not have the spirit of a sheep who seeks to be led in the direction of righteousness.

### Chapter 3

#### EXHORTATION FOR WIVES

**3:1 Likewise:** This word refers us to Peter's instructions concerning citizens of government and slaves (2:13-25). Citizens are to be submissive to government (2:13). Slaves are to be submissive to their masters (2:18). Wives are to be in submission to their own husbands for the sake of establishing an environment in which to bring up children who respect authority (See comments Ep 5:22-24; Cl 3:18,19; Ti 2:5). **Without the word, may be won:** After verbal communication of the gospel fails to win the unbelieving husband, the believing wife should resort to the patient example of a godly life (See comments 1 Co 7). The good behavior of a Christian wife has great influence over those husbands who need to see the example of a Christian life (Mt 18:15; see vs 15). Paul uses the word "may" to indicate that the Christian conduct of the wife is not a guarantee that the unbelieving husband will be won to Christ. But when words fail, the only hope one may have in winning an unbelieving mate to Jesus is through godly behavior.

**3:2 Pure behavior:** Herein is the nature of the Christian wife. Her godly behavior is the result of a reverential attitude toward God (2:12). This is conduct that is observed, not heard. Her behavior exemplifies the embodiment of Christ who is the light of the world and the Lord of her life. In her submission, the light shines (Mt 5:16). The manifestation of one's light before the world is possible because of the light of Jesus who abides in us (Jn 8:12).

**3:3,4** In these two verses Peter contrasts the demeanor of the worldly minded woman with the Christian woman who has embraced the principles of godly living. The worldly minded woman focuses on the outward person. She seeks to cover up the inner person by outward dress (See Is 3:16-24). She seeks to draw attention to herself by her adornment and not by her inner spirit. Through elaborate braiding of the hair and lavish wearing of gold and silver, she seeks to draw other's attention to herself. In contrast to such outward adornment and behavior, godly women must "*dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and sobriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but rather that which manifests women professing godliness through good works*" (1 Tm 2:9,10). The Holy Spirit does not condemn the wearing of gold or silver. What He does warn against is wearing lavish ornaments and clothes in order to draw attention to one's outward appearance in order to distract others from one's inner self. The focus of the Christian woman should be on dressing the inner person with Christ in a manner that presents a meek and quiet spirit before others (See Rm 7:22; 2 Co 4:16). Christian women must focus on being clothed with Christ. It is this spirit that will draw others to focus on the cross to which the humble heart is submitted. It is this character of the person that is precious in the sight of God.

**3:5 Holy women:** Peter takes our minds to the holy women of the Old Testament who manifested in their lives the example of godly behavior. Because they trusted in God, they submitted to their husbands (See 1:15,16; 2:9). Their submissiveness to their husbands created an atmosphere in the home wherein children could grow up in the security of the father's loving headship. Her submissiveness gave children a model for respect of authority and honor of God.

**3:6 Sarah obeyed Abraham:** Sarah respected the headship of her husband. She thus encouraged his leadership in the family by her own submissiveness (See Gn 18:12). His headship of the family existed because of her submission. She did not steal away his headship by behaving in a rebellious manner. Because of her relationship

with God, she maintained her God-ordained function as a holy wife in keeping the home (See comments 1 Tm 2:12-15; Ti 2:4,5). **Children you are:** Those women who conduct their lives after the demeanor of holy women in the Old Testament are daughters of Sarah. If they conduct themselves in a manner as Sarah conducted herself, they need not fear the retaliation of an unbelieving husband. The Christian wife, therefore, must manifest in her life that her behavior is motivated by her fear of God. She must fear God more than she would fear an unbelieving husband (Pv 3:25). Her conduct must be motivated by God above any motivation that might come from an unbelieving husband who has no respect for God. However, when both mates are servants of the same God, then a great spiritual atmosphere is created in which children can be nurtured to focus on eternal values. Sarah's behavior was complemented by the godly behavior of her husband who also feared God.

### EXHORTATION FOR HUSBANDS

**3:7** The instructions that Peter gives to husbands must also be shown even if the wife is not a Christian. He must manifest this demeanor of life in order to win her to be obedient to the one true God and His directives for Christian families. **With understanding:** As Abraham spiritually led Sarah, so should Christian husbands lead their wives. Christian husbands should seek to be gentle toward their wives. They must recognize their wives' gentle and meek character by which they too must manifest their Christian demeanor toward their wives. A harsh and unloving husband brings great sadness into the life of a wife who is seeking to maintain a Christian attitude in the husband-wife relationship (See comments Ep 5:25-29). Husbands, therefore, must love their wives in order to encourage their wives to submit to their care. A husband who truly loves his wife will draw submission from her behavior. **Giving honor:** The husband who honors his wife encourages her to maintain her living a godly life. Wives who are honored will be encouraged to submit to the care of their husbands. **Weaker vessel:** It is not that she is intellectually or spiritually weaker. The woman is



physically weaker. Her emotional nature is more tender, and thus, a husband should seek to protect his wife (1 Co 7:3; Cl 3:19). The husband who recognizes the weaker nature of his wife will guard himself against being harsh to her. He will guard her from the harshness of life. In the husband-wife relationship, the wife should find in her husband protection from the harshness of the unbelieving world. **The grace of life:** A Christian husband and wife who realize that they have been saved by God's grace will manifest the same toward one another (Compare 2 Co 4:15). The mercy that God has extended toward the saved should manifest itself in mercy that should exist in a husband-wife relationship (Js 2:13). The forgiveness that God has given should promote forgiveness in the family (See comments Mt 18:22-35). When the family is graced with mercy and forgiveness, then an atmosphere is maintained wherein both husband and wife can freely and comfortably pray. A spiritual environment is maintained wherein children can be nurtured to honor the God who developed such through the reverential obedience of a godly father and mother.

### EXHORTATION FOR THE DISCIPLES

**3:8,9** No one can read these two verses of scripture and in any way justify harshness in his or her relationship with another brother or sister. The relationship between disciples must always be characterized by love and forgiveness (See comments Cl 3:12-14). Every disciples of the Christian community must seek to maintain the fundamental teaching of unity (See 1 Co 1:10; Ph 1:27). Those who would behave in a manner that would contradict the godly nature that is expressed in these verses, certainly do not have the mind of Christ (See comments 1 Tm 6:3-5). As the Christian family provides a spiritual environment in which family members are encouraged to spiritually grow, so a spiritual environment presents encouragement wherein members can spiritually grow. **Inherit a blessing:** If reference here is to the eternal inheritance, then the behavior that is explained in this context is preparatory for eternal dwelling. The fellowship of disciples must be carried out in a manner

by which individuals have the opportunity to check one another's behavior. The purpose of church, therefore, is to offer the opportunity for individuals to mold their behavior for eternal dwelling. The closer the fellowship of the disciples, the greater they have the opportunity to fine-tune their personalities for eternal dwelling with all who are saved.

**3:10-12 He who would love life:** Those who would have a good life in these times should live according to the instructions of Peter in this context. He should guard his speech so that he not spread false accusations, or deceive others (See comments Js 3:1-12). **Do good:** The purpose of all the instructions herein revealed is to develop strong relationships between disciples, as well as between the Christian and those of the world. A Christian can find no justification for speaking either lies or deceit against any other person. He should work that which is good toward all men (Gl 6:10). In doing good, he is naturally a peacemaker. The immediate result of establishing righteous relationships with one's fellow man is peace and harmony among men. The final result of godly behavior toward one's fellow man is the acceptance of God. God is against the unrighteous. He is for those who seek to behave according to the principles of godliness.

### Discipline of the Christian

(3:13 - 5:14)

**Outline:** (1) The rewards of suffering (3:13-17), (2) Example of Jesus (3:18-22), (3) Living for God (4:1-11), (4) Suffering as a Christian (4:12-19), (5) Shepherds among the flock (5:1-4), (6) Christian attitudes (5:5-14)

### THE REWARDS OF SUFFERING

**3:13,14 Who will harm you:** Peter's rhetorical question here emphasizes the fact that people usually do not harm those who do good. If one conducts himself after the manner of Christ, then people usually respond by returning good for good. **Even if:** Some of Peter's readers were evidently suffering, though they were living the Christian life. But the Christian must not expect that his Christian life will be without persecution. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"

(2 Tm 3:12; see Mt 5:10-12; Jn 15:18,19; At 14:22). **Do not be afraid:** In quoting Isaiah 8:12, Peter seeks to encourage those who are under persecution. They must not fear those who are persecuting them because of their Christian living.

**3:15 Sanctify:** By setting Jesus apart in one's heart, he will keep himself in the fellowship of God. By maintaining Jesus as the Lord of his life, he will keep himself separated from the world (See Ps 110:1; Rm 10:9; 2 Co 4:5; Ph 2:9,10). **Give a defense:** The Greek word that is here translated "defense" (*apologia*) refers to giving a verbal defense for what he believes (See use of the word in At 22:1; 25:16; Ph 1:16; 2 Tm 4:16). Christians must know why they believe. God does not ask us to believe without evidence. Belief without evidence is superstition. Because men seek evidence for their superstitious beliefs, they often invent all sorts of supposed miraculous happenings to validate their faiths (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). God has given witness of Himself and His message to man, and thus, belief in God and His word is not superstition (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). He has given enough evidence to satisfy the hungering and thirsting of those who are searching for truth. In this context, Peter says that every Christian should be able to give a defense for what he believes (See comments Rm 1:20). The Christian is who he is because he has believed evidence that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God (See comments Jn 20:30,31). The foundation of one's faith, therefore, should be based on the evidence for belief that has been provided by God. Though one's faith may first be established on the belief of a mother, father or friend, one must eventually come to the point of believing because of his own conviction that the evidence supports the fact of the sonship of Jesus. This belief should be strong enough that it would stimulate questions in the minds of our neighbors concerning our beliefs.

**3:16,17 Slander you as evil doers:** Living after the manner of Christian principles is not a guarantee that one will avoid accusations from the evil-minded world. Persecution is such because it comes from the mind of those who care nothing for Christian principles. If one

does evil, then what he reaps from his wrongdoing is not persecution. It is reaping what he sows (Gl 6:7,8). However, if one lives righteously, and yet suffers, he is being persecuted. Regardless of persecution, Christians should so live in harmony with the will of God that they will always have a good conscience toward God (See Rm 2:15; 9:1; 2 Co 1:12; 2 Tm 1:3; compare 1 Jn 3:3). **Good behavior in Christ:** Regardless of the environment in which the Christian lives, he must behave according to the principles of Christ (vss 1,2; 1:15; 2:12). Those who would persecute Christians while knowing that they are innocent, are put to shame by the good behavior of Christians. **Suffer for doing right:** If a Christian does suffer for doing right, then he should remember the innocence of Jesus (1:19; 2:21ff). Jesus suffered on the cross, though He was innocent of all wrong. Therefore, the Christian should not have a spirit of retaliation. He should maintain his principles of Christian behavior in the face of unjust persecution.

### EXAMPLE OF JESUS

**3:18,19 The just for the unjust:** The suffering of Jesus was not a suffering that was earned by the righteousness of men. Jesus went to the cross on behalf of those who did not deserve the result of His suffering (See comments Rm 5:8; see Jn 3:16). **Made alive by the Spirit:** Wicked men killed Jesus on the cross (At 2:23). Though He was physically put to death on the cross, He was resurrected by the power of God working through the Holy Spirit. **In which:** The Father, Son and Holy Spirit work as the one true God. Though the manifestation of God is three, and their work is manifested as three, God is one in being, work, nature, goal and character. In this context Peter wants us to understand that it was in spirit that Jesus went and announced to the spirits in prison the completion of the mystery of God. **Proclaimed:** We must not assume that this is a sermon that concluded with an invitation to repent. The Greek word here should be translated in this context "proclaim" or "announce." It was not, therefore, as if Jesus was offering an invitation for repentance, and thus, a second chance for salvation.

He simply announced the revelation of the mystery of God's eternal plan of salvation (See comments Ep 3:3-5). **Spirits in prison:** One could assume that these were those confined in torments in the hadean world of torments. After His death, Jesus went to Paradise (Lk 23:43) in the hadean realm of existence (At 2:27). We could assume that He did not kept silent in this realm of the dead. After the cross, He surely announced to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the host of departed saints that the gospel plan of salvation had been accomplished. The mystery of God for which all the righteous dead had waited for centuries had finally taken place. Their faith had paid off in that they would now reap the results of the blood of Jesus for their faithfulness to the promises of God (See comments 1:10-12; Ep 3:1-13). At the same time, He proclaimed to those who were reserved in torments of the hadean world what they had lost because of their unfaithfulness while alive (See 2 Pt 2:4; Jd 6; Rv 20:7). The announcement of the offering of the sacrificial Lamb of God surely added to the agony of their torment. The reality of their doom was only intensified when they were informed of the eternal life they had lost as a result of unbelief and disobedience.

**3:20 The days of Noah:** Peter identifies the specific group to whom Jesus went in the spirit to proclaim the fulfillment of the mystery of God. These were those who were disobedient during the days of Noah when Noah was building the ark. We must also keep in mind a second interpretation of what is being said here which also happened. As Jesus "came and preached" to the inhabitants of Ephesus through the personal preaching of Paul (Ep 2:17), so He through Noah went and preached through righteous Noah who was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pt 2:5). During the one hundred years while he was building the ark, Noah preached concerning the right ways of God and the coming doom of sinners (See Gn 5:32; 6:12-18; 7:6). He proclaimed God's laws to a wicked generation that was dead in sin. His generation was dead in sin when the preaching was done. At the time Jesus died on the cross, those of his generation were physically dead and their spirits were in the hadean realm of ex-

istence until the day of resurrection and judgment (Jn 5:28,29). It was to this group that Jesus in the spirit of Noah preached during the preparation of the ark. Such preaching would have been for the purpose of stimulating repentance. If Peter's emphasis in this context is on Jesus personally announcing between the time of His death on the cross and His resurrection, the event of the cross to those who were in hadean existence, then the proclaiming was simply to state the fulfillment of the mystery of the gospel. There was no call to repentance because all who are presently in the hadean realm of existence in a disembodied state have received their final judgment (Hb 9:27; see comments Lk 16:19-31). **Eight souls were saved:** Out of all the population of the world, only Noah, his wife and their three sons and their wives, were saved by the ark when God brought a great flood that covered all the world. The event illustrated that God is not interested in numbers, but in quality. Satan had ravaged the world with wickedness to the point that the imagination of men's minds was only evil (Gn 6:5). Therefore, God determined to start again the population of the world in order to preserve the seedline of woman. He started again through righteous Noah and his family. **Saved by water:** God used the universal flood of Noah's day to purify the earth of wickedness (See comments Jd 14,15). The wicked were thus destroyed in order to preserve the righteous (Gn 7:13).

**3:21** Peter refers here to the point at which one is saved in baptism by using the illustration of the salvation that was provided by God at the time of the flood of Noah's day. Baptism is the antitype. It is the point when one is saved as the flood was the time when Noah and his family were saved from death. As Noah was delivered by water from a wicked world, so in the waters of baptism Peter's readers were delivered from their own sin by the blood of Jesus (See Mk 16:16; At 2:28; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6). It is not that there is any saving power in the water or in a meritorious act of immersion. The power of sanctification is in the blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). Though men must submit to the action of immersion in order to obey

the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, it is the work of God to forgive sins. It is at the point of one's submission to the gospel in baptism, therefore, that God promises that the remission of sin takes place (At 2:38). One cannot expect God to fulfill the promise of remission if he will not submit to the conditions for remission. It is for this reason that baptism is necessary for salvation. It is necessary, not because it is a work of merit, but because it is a point of reference wherein God has promised that sins are forgiven. It is the point at which God's grace is unleashed in the lives of those who have responded to His grace that was manifested on the cross (Ti 2:11). Therefore, if one is not baptized, there is no contact with the blood of Jesus that is poured forth from the grace of God. **Appeal of a good conscience to God:** Peter wants us to understand that baptism is not for the purpose of any ceremonial cleansing or washing of dirt from the flesh. Baptism is not a meritorious work. Peter wants us to understand that something within the individual is taking place and something within heaven is also taking place. The soul is being sanctified within. It is God from heaven who forgives sin. At the moment of immersion God remembers our sins no more (Hb 8:12). When one fulfills the command of baptism, therefore, he can have a good conscience toward God because he knows that he has obeyed the commandments of God (Mk 16:16; At 2:38). Since he has obeyed, he can trust that God has forgiven him of all sin. Religious people who have corrupted the manner and meaning of baptism can have no good conscience toward God because they have allowed their traditions to change baptism. One must remember that which is most important for man to do in order to be saved is where Satan will do his greatest work to distort the truth. And such he has done with the manner and meaning of baptism in reference to the salvation of men. Baptism is by immersion. And according to what Peter says in this context, it is necessary in order to have a good conscience toward God. No tradition or misguided interpretation of men will change this fact. In order for one to have a good conscience toward God, he must simply submit to what the Bible says on this matter.

**3:22 *Gone into heaven:*** After His resurrection, Jesus ascended into a heavenly realm of existence (At 1:9-11). He is now at the right hand of the Father with all authority over all things (Mt 28:18; Rm 8:34; Ep 1:19-23; Cl 2:10-15; Hb 1:3; 8:1). ***Angels and authorities and powers ... subject to Him:*** The kingdom reign of Jesus extends far beyond the realm of the visible church. All the church is the kingdom of Jesus, but not all the kingdom of Jesus is church. The church is only those of the kingdom of Jesus who have submitted to the lordship of Jesus in their hearts (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21). Peter states clearly in this passage that angels, authorities and powers are all under the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, angels, authorities and powers are not in the church because they have not submitted to the lordship of Jesus by obedience to the gospel. Therefore, it is erroneous to affirm that the kingdom reign of Jesus is limited to the church. When Jesus was given all authority over all things in fulfillment of prophecy, more than the church was both prophesied and fulfilled to be in subjection to Jesus (See Dn 7:13,14). He is now head over all things (See comments Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:9-11; Hb 1:3). He is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). This means that He is now King of all the kings of the world and Lord of all the lords of the world. Though the kings and lords of the world do not recognize Him as their King and Lord, this does not mean that Jesus is not functioning as King of kings and Lord of lords. There have always been insurrectionists in kingdoms of this world. Such is true of the kingdom of Jesus. However, the presence of the insurrectionists does not nullify the reign of the king (See comments Hb 2:8). Jesus is simply allowing the insurrectionists to continue until a time when He will put an end to all rebellion by the open manifestation of His power (See comments 1 Co 15:24-28).

## Chapter 4

### LIVING FOR GOD

**4:1** Jesus suffered in the flesh in order to bring redemption to all men. Those who have responded to the grace of God that was manifested in the sacrificial offer-



ing of Jesus must also be prepared to suffer persecution with Jesus. **Arm yourselves:** It is evident that Peter here envisions a coming persecution or hard times that will come upon the Christians to whom he is writing. In the coming war of Rome on national Israel, there would be hard times for everyone involved (See comments Mt 24). Though Christians were not directly involved in the conflict, they suffered as a result of the turmoil of the war. Beyond the indirect sufferings that would result from the destruction of Jerusalem, there was a greater suffering that was looming in the near future. This would be the direct persecution of the church by the Roman State during the reign of Domitian. This persecution would be directed toward Christians who would not proclaim Caesar as lord. As a result, they would be accused of insurrection, and thus, sentenced to death (See intro. to Rv). **Suffered in the flesh:** See comments 1:6,7 (Js 1:2,3). **Ceased from sin:** Peter's point is not that one can cease from being able to sin. Reference is to those who have stopped living a life of sin (See comments Ep 2:1-3; see Rm 6:7). The one who suffers as Jesus and for Jesus has the mind of Christ. He is thus not living a life of sin (Gl 5:4; see 1 Jn 1:8-10).

**4:2,3 Live ... for the will of God:** See comments Gl 2:20. Those who have ceased from a life of sin have committed themselves to live according to the will of God (Ep 6:6; 1 Th 4:3; 1 Jn 2:17). They were born by the will of God through their obedience to the gospel (Jn 1:13). They therefore live according to the word of God. **Will of the Gentiles:** Peter recounts the time in his life, and the life of those to whom he writes, when precious time was wasted in living according to the flesh (See Ep 2:1-3; 1 Th 4:5; Ti 3:3). All who formerly involved themselves in worldly living, behaved in a manner that led to death (Rm 6:21-23). Listed here are examples of practices in which men involve themselves in order to waste away their lives. **Sensuality:** This would be sensual behavior that would lead to illicit sexual activity. It would include all behavior that encourages sexual lusts (Rm 13:13; 2 Co 12:21; Gl 5:19; Ep 4:19; 2 Pt 2:2,7). **Carousing:** This is merrymaking or revelry that is associated with drunken be-

havior that is out of sensible control (Rm 13:13; Gl 5:21).

**Drinking parties:** These are parties that are designed specifically for the purpose of becoming intoxicated, and thus, the occasion for one to lose his sensibilities.

**Abominable idolatries:** The idolatrous religions of Peter's day were often drunken and adulterous occasions. They were religions that were built around the fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh (See Rm 1:23-25; 1 Co 6:9). Men's inner most base lusts were thus fulfilled in the name of abominable religious practices.

**4:4 They think it strange:** The wicked behavior Peter has just explained in verse 3 had become the accepted behavior of the society. Therefore, when Christians refused to partake of such sinful behavior, they were considered antisocial. Those who determine to live the Christian life will be mocked by those who live after the lusts of the flesh (See Jn 15:18,19). When the normal practice of any society becomes sinful, it is the duty of Christians to take a stand against that which is contrary to the will of God. If they do not, then they have lost their preserving influence in society (See Mt 5:13-15; Ph 2:15).

**4:5 They will give account:** Those who live in the world are often unconcerned about giving account of their behavior before the One who is the head of the body they persecute. Jesus will be the judge of the living at the time He comes again. He will also resurrect the dead whom He will also judge (Jn 5:28,29). Jesus is coming to judge all men (At 10:42; 17:30,31; Rm 14:10; 2 Tm 4:1). Knowing that one will give account of his deeds before God encourages righteous living.

**4:6 The gospel was preached:** Peter is referring to those who were spiritually dead. The gospel was preached to all men, but all did not obey. The gospel went forth from Jerusalem and was preached to the Jews throughout the world (See comments At 2). And since those to whom the gospel was preached had the opportunity to obey, they are without excuse. They will thus give account of themselves before the Judge of all things (See comments 2 Th 1:6-9). **In the flesh ... in the spirit:** At the time Peter wrote, living Christians were alive in Christ. Though in the flesh, they lived according to the will of God (See Rm

8:9,13; Gl 5:25). They were guided by their submission to the word of God in order to live in harmony with the One before whom they would eventually give account. However, those who did not obey the gospel were spiritually dead, though they lived.

**4:7 *The end of all things is at hand:*** Peter's Jewish audience would understand this statement. The prophets had spoken of the consummation of national Israel when the Messiah came. The phrase "at hand" means that something was about to happen at the time of this writing. In the context in which Peter wrote, he must refer to the end of national Israel. "All things" would refer to the end of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). Jesus had been crucified and the church established in A.D. 30. The law of grace and faith had been preached throughout the areas of the Roman world where Jews lived (See Cl 1:23). It was now time to bring down the theocracy of national Israel by the termination of Jerusalem and all that she represented. ***Therefore, be sober:*** In view of the fact that national Israel was coming to a close, it was a time for seriousness and watchfulness (Mt 24:42-44). It was a time when Jewish Christians must not involve themselves in the politics of national Israel. Jesus had prophesied the signs of the time before the destruction. This same message had been delivered to Jewish Christians throughout the Roman Empire. Since Peter was writing primarily to Jewish Christians, they had to be warned concerning Rome's destruction that she would rain down on national Israel. It was thus a time to stay away from Palestine and Jerusalem.

**4:8 *Fervent love among yourselves:*** Love is the bond that would hold the family of God together in times of great turmoil (See Jn 13:34,35; Cl 3:14). The time was coming when they had to exercise great love for one another in order to endure the hardships that were coming. ***Love will cover:*** The one who loves does not seek evil in the life and character of his brother (Compare Pv 10:22; 1 Co 13:4; Js 5:20). He does not go after his brother in search of flaws and evil. Love looks for the best that is in others. Love overlooks those character flaws that

would cause tension between two brothers. It is not that love overlooks sin. Love meekly corrects. It does not consider personality differences and matters of opinion things over which to cause division between brethren. In times of great social stress into which Peter's readers were going, it would be a time when brothers and sisters must walk in love and unity (See comments Mt 24:12).

**4:9 Be hospitable:** During the few years leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem, Jewish Christians were fleeing Judea. It was a time, therefore, when Christians throughout the world should be exhorted to practice hospitality to fleeing Jews. The Greek word used here refers to being friendly to strangers. Christians must be known for their spirit of hospitality to all people (See Rm 12:13; 1 Tm 3:2; 5:10; Ti 1:8; Hb 13:2; 3 Jn 5-8). The test of hospitality and love would be manifested specifically when Gentile disciples accepted into their homes Jews who were fleeing from Rome's destruction of Judea and Jerusalem. **Without grumbling:** True hospitality is not grudgingly given. It comes out of a heart that loves people and loves to help others. In this context, hospitality would be the manifestation of all Christians who would help others through trying times.

**4:10 Each one has received a gift:** The Greek word for gift here is *charisma*. Peter's reference is possibly to the miraculous gifts that were given to all Christians who had come into contact with a Christ-sent apostle (See comments At 18:8; Rm 1:11; 1 Co 12:8-11). Such miraculous gifts were given to the 1st century Christians because they did not have the full written revelation of the New Testament. The gifts were given only as a temporary work in order to aid the establishment of the early church in an environment of great religious confusion (See comments Ep 4:11-16). In the same way, however, the God-given natural gifts that every Christian has must be used for the benefit of others. God has given gifts for our ministry to others. **As good stewards:** It was only by the grace of God that miraculous gifts were given. In Peter's statement here, it is indicated that the one who possessed the gift had power over the exercising of the gift (1 Co 14:32). Therefore, the Holy Spirit did not sub-

ject to His control the one who possessed the gift. Those who possessed the gift were the stewards of the gift, and thus, had the choice of exercising the gift (See comments 2 Tm 1:6). Peter's point is that all gifts are given for the purpose of ministry to others. Gifts were not given for one's own profit. They were given in order to serve the needs of others.

**4:11 *Speak as the oracles of God:*** Since they were not in possession of the written word of God, reference here is first to inspired teaching. They were to teach that which was revealed by the Holy Spirit. They were to shun the philosophies and religions of men (See Jr 23:22; At 7:38; Rm 3:2; Hb 5:12). Peter's exhortation would apply today to all who would profess to be proclaimers of the word of God. Men must teach the Bible. If one would profess to be a teacher, he must teach the word of God, not the theologies and philosophies of men (2 Tm 4:2). ***If anyone ministers:*** Peter's reference here may be generic in reference to all uses of the miraculous gifts (1 Co 12:8-11). God would be glorified because the origin of the gifts would be identified to be from God. The ministry of the gifts from untrained and unskilled people would magnify the power of God working in mere men. All men are blessed by God with natural gifts from birth. Though these gifts are not the same as the Spirit-given gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, they are God-given in the sense that all we are is from God. Some men use their natural gifts for their own self-gratification and profit. However, those who have given themselves in service to the will of God use their natural gifts to the glory of God. They do so by using their gifts in ministry to others.

### SUFFERING AS A CHRISTIAN

**4:12 *The fiery trial:*** Peter speaks of this trial as if it were something that was soon to come upon them. He seems to be writing in view of the fact that his readers are about to endure great trials (See vs 7). Because they are not of the world, nor do they conduct themselves after the lusts of the flesh, Christians should not be surprised that they would endure persecution from those who are of the world (See 1:3-9; Jn 15:18,19; 2 Tm 3:12;

see comments At 14:22). In the historical context of this epistle, the Jewish Christians were about to endure great hardship. Rome was bringing judgment down on the Jews for their insurrectionist actions against the Roman Empire. All Jews, whether Christian or not, would suffer from Rome's judgment. If Christian Jews remained patriotic to Judaism in Jerusalem, they would suffer the vengeance of Rome. If they heeded the warnings of Jesus and the New Testament prophets, they would flee Judea and Jerusalem.

**4:13 Rejoice:** The trials about which Peter here speaks are evidence that they were walking according to the will of God. They were partaking in the sufferings of Jesus who also suffered at the hands of wicked men. It was a time for rejoicing because the trials were evidence of their Christian behavior (Mt 5:11,12; 2 Tm 2:12; Js 1:2,3). **His glory is revealed:** In this context, the glory of Jesus was revealed when His prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem verified Christianity over Judaism (vs 7; see comments Mt 24). When national Israel was destroyed, many Jews came to realize that God was no longer with Israel. They came to understand the prophecies that national Israel was to be brought to an end. **Exceeding joy:** It is not that Christians rejoiced in the calamity of national Israel in A.D. 70. Their joy was in the confirmation that the event gave to the messiahship of Jesus. Jesus' prophecies of Matthew 24 were fulfilled. The church was magnified as the people of God. In this, Christians were joyful. When Jesus comes again at the end of time, they will experience the same joy. It is for this reason that Christians look forward to the coming of Jesus and the end of this environment that brings persecution and hardship (See 2 Pt 3:11,12; Rv 22:20).

**4:14 Reproached for the name of Christ:** Reproach here refers to being slandered, reviled or insulted. Peter encourages his readers by stating that reproach on behalf of Christian belief and behavior is glorification of Jesus. It is evidence that one's beliefs and behavior in the name of Jesus are not of this world (See Mt 19:29; At 5:41; 9:16; 21:13). When one reproaches a Christian for his beliefs and behavior, he is blaspheming God. There

will be no forgiveness for such behavior, because the one who is blaspheming is not repenting of his sin in order to become as the one he blasphemes. **The spirit of glory and of God:** The blasphemy glorifies God in the sense that the obedient life of the Christian manifests the nature of the God after whom the Christian calls himself. The light that the Christian manifests to the world does not originate from within himself. It originates from Jesus who lives within the heart of the one who has submitted to His lordship (Mt 5:16; Jn 8:12).

**4:15** The suffering of Christians does bring glory to God. It brings glory to God because the Christian is living the principles of godliness. Christians must keep in mind that it brings shame on the name of God when they hypocritically live contrary to the beliefs that they proclaim (2:20; 3:14-17; compare 1 Co 6:7). **Busybody:** Reference here is to the one who seeks to meddle and control the affairs of someone else (1 Th 4:11). Reference is not to faithful brethren caring for the spiritual well-being of their brothers (See comments Rm 14; Gl 6:1-5).

**4:16 Christian:** Though this name has often lost its true meaning in a religious world today where most wear the name only without any commitment to Christ, being Christian means living the sacrificial life that glorifies Christ (Rm 12:1). One should never be ashamed of living according to the will of God (At 5:41). However, one should be ashamed of living the worldly life, and at the same time, believe that he will enter eternal glory. But for the Christian who faithfully lives according to godly principles, his persecution for such should be an occasion to glorify God. **Let him not be ashamed:** It is through many tribulations that we will enter the eternal kingdom (At 14:22). In suffering persecutions as a Christian in order to enter the eternal dwelling, one should not be ashamed.

**4:17** In this verse Peter asks a rhetorical question to which he assumes his readers can give the correct answer. In the historical context, a time had come for judgment in time to begin on national Israel. The consummation of national Israel loomed in the near future. It was a time wherein Jesus would come in time in judgment

upon the nation of Israel through the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). Those who had obeyed the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus would escape the destruction because they would believe the prophecies of such that were made by their Lord. But those Jews who had not obeyed the gospel, manifested their unbelief in Jesus. They would suffer the consequences of Jesus' judgment on Jerusalem because of their unbelief. Over one million Jews died in the destruction. Historians report that over eighty thousand Jews were sold into captivity. Therefore, in answer to Peter's question, his readers must respond that there is no hope for the one who does not obey the gospel. The same answer is also true in reference to the final judgment to come at the end of time. Those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus will not be saved when Jesus comes again (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9; see Rm 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). There is no hope for those who do not obey the gospel, for one receives the remission of their sins upon obedience to the gospel (See At 2:38; 22:16).

**4:18 Righteous are scarcely saved:** This statement confirms that Peter has the destruction of Jerusalem in mind when asking the previous question of verse 17. In the final judgment, the righteous are not scarcely saved. They are saved by the all-sufficiency of the grace of God (See 1 Jn 3:21). Those who abide in the word of God will not be ashamed when Jesus comes again (1 Jn 2:28; 4:17; 5:14). However, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, things would be different. Those Christians who lived in Judea during the time of the destruction would scarcely be saved from the destruction even if they believed the prophecies of Jesus concerning such (See comments Mt 24:15-22). **The ungodly:** Peter's second rhetorical question in this context has an obvious answer. If the righteous are scarcely saved throughout the time of wars of Rome against national Israel, then the ungodly Jews who rejected Jesus will not be saved. If one applies what Peter is saying to the end of time and the final judgment, emphasis is still on the fact that the unrighteous have no hope of salvation. Those who do not come to the Father through Jesus cannot be saved (Jn



14:6; At 4:12). It is difficult to apply this passage specifically to the end of time and the salvation of Christians. It will not be that they are scarcely saved, for they are completely saved through the blood of Jesus. The grace of God is entirely sufficient for their salvation. In the final judgment, no one will scarcely be saved or lost, for our judgment will not depend on either meritorious works of law or goods works, but whether one has obediently responded to the grace of God.

**4:19 Entrust their souls:** Those who are being persecuted for righteousness sake must trust in God who will deliver them from destruction. God is faithful and will not allow the faithful Christian against his will to be taken away from his state of salvation (Jn 10:27-29). Since God is faithful toward us through His grace, we should be faithful toward Him through godly living (2 Tm 1:12).

## Chapter 5

### SHEPHERDS AMONG THE FLOCK

**5:1 The elders:** The elders of the church were a group of men who had been designated as spiritual leaders of the flock of God (See comments 1 Tm 3:1-7; Ti 1:7-9). They were designated by the church to shepherd the church (At 14:23). Depending on one's translation, in the New Testament elders are also referred to with the English words "bishops," "shepherds," "pastors" (1 Tm 3:1), "overseers" (At 20:28) and "presbyters" (At 11:30; 15:4,5,22; 20:17; Js 5:14). There were no ceremonies among the early disciples when they designated these men to function as shepherds. Shepherds were simply identified as men who focus their attention on the flock of God. Since shepherds are already doing the work of shepherds, their designation is simply an announcement that the sheep seek their service. There was always a plurality of shepherds designated to pastor the flock of God in every city (At 14:23; Ti 1:5). **Fellow elder:** At the time of the writing of this epistle, Peter had also been designated an elder among the disciples. Though Peter was writing from Babylon (5:13) to those who were a great distance from him (1:1), he was an elder with them in the universal body of Christ. Wherever he was, he con-

tinued to do the work of serving God's people as a fellow elder. He was not, therefore, invested with authority, but with the responsibility to service the needs of others (See comments Mk 10:35-45). **Witness of the sufferings of Christ:** Peter was also a Christ-sent apostle, and thus, a special witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (See comments Lk 24:45; At 1:8; 3:15; 10:39). **Partaker of the glory:** Peter, as well as all disciples, will be partakers of the eternal glory of heaven that is yet to come (Rm 8:18).

**5:2,3** In this context, Peter gives specific instructions to the shepherds among the disciples. In the historical context, there seems to have already started the apostasy of lordship leadership about which Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders (See comments At 20:29,30). Paul prophesied lordship leadership would come and Peter stated that it had already begun. Any time shepherds make decisions outside the context of the authority of the Scriptures that are bound on the disciples, they are following after the apostasy of lording over the flock. When any man claims authority to bind where God has not bound, he has assumed lordship over the flock of God. Shepherds have the responsibility to shepherd the flock, but not the authority to bind where God has not bound. **Shepherd the flock:** It is the work of shepherds to care for the needs of the flock. Emphasis here is on taking care of the sheep of God. Taking care of the sheep means that elders service the spiritual needs of the members of the body (At 20:28; see Ez 34). Decisions must certainly be made in this work. However, the decisions are about what the shepherds should do, not what is to be bound on the flock. **Flock of God:** Elders must always remember that the sheep belong to God. Those who would call away the sheep after themselves (At 20:29,30) are actually stealing the sheep of God by their dictatorial leadership of the sheep (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). When elders force their opinions on the flock, they are stealing away the submission of the sheep from the only Lord they are to have. Jesus is the one Lord and head of the church. He has all authority (Mt 28:18). He never instituted any individual or group of individuals

who would function with authority among the disciples in order to endanger His lordship and headship over the members of the church (See comments Mk 10:35-45; 3 Jn 9,10). **Serving as overseers:** The authoritarian elder would presume that the word "overseer" is here used in a sense that he must take control of the flock. But this is not the meaning in reference to the word "oversee." The shepherd sees over the flock in order to identify needs to which he can administer service (At 20:28). He is a careful and watchful servant of the disciples who is constantly among the sheep in order to identify needs that must be serviced. Peter gives three negative reasons that are offset by positive reasons for servicing the needs of the flock of God: **(1) Not under compulsion:** The elders should not consider it a burden to be servants to the flock. Neither should they believe that others should be compelled to obey them as lords giving orders. Their service of the needs of the sheep should draw the sheep to follow their service. **Voluntarily:** No one can serve as an elder who does not enjoy serving the needs of others. Therefore, one must first desire to serve before he can be qualified to be designated as a shepherd of the flock (1 Tm 3:1). In this work, he leads by encouraging others to submit voluntarily to his spiritual leadership and service. **(2) Not greedy for money:** Full-time elders, who also ministered in the word, were to be given double pay (1 Tm 5:17). The second salary was the church giving funds to the elder who worked among the needy. The nature of his work and character meant that he would give the needy the second salary. In view of this fact, it would be easy for the greedy person to seek the designation of an elder in order to consume the second salary upon himself (See 1 Tm 3:3,8; Ti 1:7). **Eagerness:** Those who love people and love to serve people will not be considering the money as a primary benefit for their service. Elders who are qualified to be elders are serving people regardless of money. Their eagerness to serve without pay before their designation as full-time elders, indicates the genuineness of their hearts to be the slaves to the needs of others. **(3) Nor as being lords:** Those elders who bind on the disciples decisions that God has not bound, are

stealing the lordship of the church away from the one Lord Jesus Christ. Paul prophesied of some elders who would draw away the sheep after their own desires (At 20:29,30). In order to exercise their desire to lord over their fellow man, lordship elders use the designation as elders to become dictators of God's family. They impose their decisions on a flock that should be looking to Jesus for direction. Those who would assume that they have authority over the flock, will seek to bind on the flock that which God has not bound. **Being examples:** The opposite to lordship leadership is example leadership. Herein is the leadership influence of elders. They are not a delegated committee of lords over the disciples. They function in leadership by living the godly life of service. Their example of Christ-like living, therefore, draws the sheep to follow them. People always go to those who will take care of their needs. Therefore, the elders' leadership is not by handing down decisions out of boardroom meetings. It is in manifesting in their lives a godly example for those who are seeking to follow God and serve the needs of God's flock (Jn 13:15; Ph 3:17; 1 Th 1:7; 2 Th 3:9; 1 Tm 4:12; Ti 2:7).

**5:4 Chief Shepherd:** As shepherds of the flock, elders must always remember that the flock does not belong to them. And since it does not belong to them, they must give account of their shepherding to the One to whom the flock belongs. Therefore, when Jesus, who is the Chief Shepherd (Jn 10:14; Hb 13:20), comes to take His flock home to eternal heaven, elders must give account of how they have serviced the needs of the flock. **Receive a crown of glory:** Those shepherds who have served well in taking care of the needs of the flock of the Chief Shepherd will receive a reward for their service (2:25; 2 Tm 4:8). The crown to which Peter refers is the *stephanos*. This was the crown of victory that was worn by victorious Romans when they returned from battle. Such crowns faded away. However, the crown of victory that the Christian will receive will not fade away in eternal glory (1:4).

## CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

**5:5 *Submit yourselves:*** Peter gives specific instructions here to those who are usually the most rebellious. Younger people are to submit to the spiritual leadership of the elders. ***Submissive to one another:*** This is the general nature of the community of God. All disciples are to submit to the needs of others (See comments Jn 13:1-17; Ep 5:21). The church is a community of slaves who are seeking to service the needs of one another (Mk 10:35-45; Rm 12:10; Cl 3:12-14). ***Clothed with humility:*** Those who are humble will not be too proud to function as a slave to the needs of their brothers. ***God resists the proud:*** God will turn away from the proud because the proud will not submit to His will (See Ps 51:17; Pv 3:34; 18:12; Is 57:15; Mt 5:3; Js 4:6). The proud will not submit to the needs of others.

**5:6,7 *Therefore humble yourselves:*** Since God will resist those who are proud, it is imperative that men submit themselves to the will of God (Js 4:10). When one does submit to God's will, he will be lifted up. However, we must first recognize the sovereignty of God over all things before we will humbly submit to His will (See Ex 7:5; Dt 3:24; 5:15; 1 Kg 8:42; Dn 9:15). The proud person will seek to rule his own life. In thinking that he has his life in control, the proud man usually tries to bear all his burdens without asking for the help of others. He tries to walk alone. The humble man, however, who has cast his burdens on the shoulders of God, will find peace and security in the care of God (See Ps 55:22; 37:5; Mt 6:25-33; Lk 21:18; Hb 13:5).

**5:8 *Sober ... vigilant:*** Disciples must walk with maturity and industry (See Mt 26:40,41; Mk 13:35-37). They must be cautious in their Christian life lest they be tempted to forsake their confession. ***The devil walks about like a roaring lion:*** Satan has no power over the one who voluntarily keeps himself close to Jesus (See comments Jn 10:27-29). However, Satan roams about as a nervous lion looking for his lunch. Those who are ignorant of his warning roars will fall victim to his hunger for the souls of men. Therefore, it is necessary that the Christian learn how the devil seeks to destroy the lives

of men. One must be aware of how he stalks his prey. The sober and vigilant Christian is constantly listening for the roar of the hungry Satan. He can identify how Satan works. However, if he becomes ignorant of God's word, or enticed by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life, he will be ensnared by Satan and consumed (1 Jn 2:15,16). The Christian must remember that Satan cannot voluntarily consume anyone he so chooses. The apostate Christian has simply given himself over to Satan because of his own ignorance of the word of God or willingness to forsake the fellowship of the community of God's people.

**5:9 Resist him:** Peter's admonition is evidence that the Christian has the voluntary power to stay away from the consuming hunger of Satan to devour souls. The context in which one is more apt to fall is when he is under trials and persecution. Therefore, it is in such a state that one must be sober and vigilant to resist Satan. Christians can withstand the temptations that are presented by Satan by exercising faith in God through prayer, Bible study, and good works toward others (See comments 1 Co 10:13; Ep 6:11; Js 4:7). **Brethren who are in the world:** As a Christian, one must first understand that he is a member of a worldwide brotherhood. He does not stand alone. Secondly, one must understand that as a Christian, others have also gone through similar trials that he may be suffering. Since others endured, then certainly the one under similar circumstances of trial can also endure (See comments Hb 12:1,2).

**5:10,11 Called us to His eternal glory:** Christians have been called out of the world through their voluntary obedience to the gospel (1 Co 1:9; 2 Th 2:14). Since they have been called by God through the gospel, they will be guarded by God through all trials. Peter's readers were about to endure great trials. However, these trials would last only for a short time. The calamity of national Israel that was finalized in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, did pass. Those Christians who endured the ordeal of the Jewish wars with Rome would be strengthened by trusting that God had all things in control. Through the environmental trauma of the day, therefore, God perfect-

ed, established, strengthened and confirmed the church (See 1:6,7; Js 1:2,3). Through the shaking of national Israel, the church came forth as the glorious people of God (See comments Hb 12:28). **To Him:** Because God is able to keep those He has called through Jesus, He is to be given all glory and dominion in our lives (See Jn 10:27-28).

**5:12 Through Silvanus:** As did Paul, Peter used someone else to write the words of this epistle as he dictated them. Silvanus is the same name as Silas. He is possibly the same Silas who was Paul's companion (See At 15:22,32,40; 1 Th 1:1; 2 Co 1:19). **The true grace of God in which you stand:** We do not stand on our ability to perfectly keep law, nor on our good works. Christians stand because of and on the grace of God. Their salvation is dependent on God's grace since they are unable to keep law perfectly or to do good works in order to atone for their own sin (See comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16; 3:11,12).

**5:13 She who is in Babylon:** There has always been a debate concerning the reference here to Babylon. The feminine pronoun "she" was possibly a reference to the church. However, to what Babylon Peter refers has always been debated. Some Bible students have affirmed that his reference is metaphorical, and thus, reference was to the Rome of Italy, the great Babylon of Revelation that John says would fall. Though tradition does say that Peter eventually died a martyr in Rome, there is no reason to suppose that at the time he wrote this epistle he was not in the literal city of Babylon. He was on his way into all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15), and thus, we would suppose that he was in the city of Babylon. If the letter was written somewhere between A.D. 63 and 66, then Paul would have already been teaching in Rome, for he was there from A.D. 61 to 63. It seems unreasonable that Peter would also have taken his duties as a Christ-sent apostle to Rome so soon after Paul was there. For this reason, it is probable that Peter was actually writing from the ancient city of Babylon in his efforts to obey the commission of Jesus to go into all the world. **Mark my son:** Many Bible students believe that this was John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas (See At 12:2; 13:5,13; 15:36-41; Ph 2:22; Cl 4:10; 1 Tm 1:1,2; 2 Tm 4:11).

This could possibly be true. However, since Peter refers to this Mark as “my son,” it must be assumed that Peter baptized him. But this is only an assumption. Peter was married (1 Co 9:5). It is probable that this could have been the actual son of Peter. There is no way of knowing exactly who this Mark is, though it is probable that he is the Mark who initially accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey.

**5:14 A kiss of love:** This is one of many times reference is made in the New Testament concerning the holy kiss (Rm 16:16; 1 Co 16:20; 2 Co 13:12; 1 Th 5:26). It is an imperative command here that signifies that its cultural practice among the early Christians meant more than an action of greeting. The holy kiss evidently referred to a signal of true fellowship among brothers in Christ. The affection of fellowship that was manifested in the kiss is something that has certainly been lost in the nature of our fellowship that is seen today in many cultures. **Peace:** Peter's final salutation is a commendation of peace to those who have been baptized into Christ (Rm 6:3-6). They can have peace of mind because of their submission to the will of God. They can be assured of their salvation because of the grace of God in which they now stood, and the gospel to which they responded (Rm 5:1,2; 6:3-6).

Commentary by Roger E. Dickson

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**

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