



# I Peter

*A COMMENTARY OUTLINE*

COMFORT IN  
SUFFERING

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Outline - A Bird's Eye View of I Peter .....	<i>i</i>
Introduction.....	1
The Believer: His Salvation 1:1-2:10 .....	3
The Believer: His Duty 2:11-3:12 .....	17
The Believer: His Discipline 3:13-5:11.....	29
Conclusion of the Book 5:12-14 .....	45



# Outline

*or “A Bird’s Eye View of I Peter”*

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE BELIEVER: HIS SALVATION 1:1-2:10

- A. God’s Plan of Salvation 1:1-12
  - 1. The Complete Summary of Salvation 1:1-5
    - a. A Word of Greeting 1:1
    - b. Salvation Is a Matter of Divine Provision 1:2
    - c. Three Specific Results of This Salvation 1:3-5
  - 2. The Believer’s Present Life 1:6-9
    - a. The Character of All Tests 1:6
    - b. The Purpose of All Tests 1:7
    - c. The Proper Attitude in Tests 1:8
    - d. The Ultimate End of Tests 1:9
  - 3. The Greatness of Our Salvation 1:10-12
    - a. The Fact of Their Research 1:10
    - b. The Direction of Their Research 1:11
    - c. The Results of Their Research 1:12
- B. The Products of Our Salvation 1:13-25
  - 1. The Exhortation to Holiness 1:13-16
    - a. The Mental Attitude Aspect 1:13
    - b. The Conduct Aspect 1:14-16
  - 2. Life of Reverence 1:17-21
    - a. An Exhortation to Fear 1:17
    - b. The Motive for Respect for God: Doctrine of Redemption 1:18-21
  - 3. The Life of Love 1:22-25
    - a. The Pre-requisite for Love 1:22a

- b. The Command to Love 1:22b
- c. The Reason for this Love 1:23
- C. The Purpose of Our Salvation 2:1-10
  - 1. God's Purpose: the Believer's Growth 2:1-3
    - a. Negative Action Is Required 2:1
    - b. Positive Action Is Required 2:2-3
  - 2. God's Purpose: the Believer's Sacrifice 2:4-8
    - a. The Place of Jesus Christ 2:4
    - b. The Place of Believers 2:5
    - c. A House Must Have a Foundation 2:6-8
  - 2. God's Purpose: the Believer's Witness 2:9-10
    - a. Our Position: "chosen race" 2:9a
    - b. Our Purpose 2:9b
    - c. Our Past 2:9c-10

#### THE BELIEVER: HIS DUTY 2:11-3:12

- A. Submission in the State 2:11-17
  - 1. The Root of Submission 2:11-12
    - a. Inward Personal Holiness 2:11
    - b. Outward Visible Holiness 2:12a
    - c. The Goal of the Believer's Good Life 2:12b
  - 2. The Command to Submission 2:13-14
    - a. The Order to Submit 2:13a
    - b. To Whom and What Do We Submit 2:13b
    - c. The Function of Human Government 2:14
  - 3. The Reason for Submission 2:15-17
    - a. It Rests in the Will of God 2:15
    - b. Submission Does Not Contradict Freedom 2:16
    - c. Freedom May Be Misused 2:16
    - d. Four Summary Commands 2:17
- B. Submission in the Household 2:18-25
  - 1. The Requirement for Servants 2:18
  - 2. The Motivation for Servants 2:19
  - 3. The Reward for the Submissive Servant 2:20
- C. Submission of Our Savior 2:21-25
  - 1. Christ Is the Believer's Pattern in Relation to Suffering 2:21
    - a. The Fact Stated 2:21a
    - b. Two Reasons Why We Can Suffer Patiently 2:21b

2. Peter's Sermon from Isaiah Fifty-three, 2:22-25
  - a. What Christ Did Not Do When He Suffered 2:22-23
  - b. What Christ Did When He Suffered Unjustly 2:23b
  - c. What the Death of Christ Means 2:24-25
- D. Submission in the Family 3:1-7
  1. Responsibility of the Wife 3:1-6
    - a. The Order to Subjection 3:1a
    - b. The Limits of the Subjection
    - c. The Goal of this Subjection 3:1b
    - d. The Details of the Subjection 3:2-4
    - e. The Pattern for the Subjection 3:5-6
  2. Responsibility of the Husband 3:7
- E. Six Qualities for All Believers 3:8-12
  1. The List of Qualities 3:8-9
  2. The Application of Psalm Thirty-four, 3:10-12
    - a. The Ones Addressed 3:10
    - b. The Formula for Learning to Love Life 3:11
    - c. The Basis for this Action 3:12

#### THE BELIEVER: HIS DISCIPLINE 3:13-5:11

- A. Suffering for Righteousness 3:13-4:6
  1. The Benefits of Suffering 3:13-17
    - a. A Divine Axiom: A believer zealous for good cannot be hurt 3:13
    - b. The Blessing of Suffering 3:14
    - c. The Preparations for Suffering 3:15-17
  2. The Perfect Example of Undeserved Suffering 3:18-22
    - a. The Death of Jesus Christ 3:18
    - b. The Activity of Christ's Spirit While His Body Was in the Grave 3:19-20
    - c. Baptism Is an Antitype 3:21
    - d. Suffering Always Eventuates in Glory 3:22
  4. The Proper Attitude in Suffering 4:1-6
    - a. A Command to a Right Attitude 4:1
    - b. The Purpose of this Right Attitude 4:2
    - c. The Reason for this Right Attitude 4:3-6
- B. The Believer's Suffering with Christ 4:7-19
  1. Living in the Light of the Transiency of Life 4:7-11
    - a. The Basic Statement of Fact 4:7a

- b. How to Live in Light of the Lord's Return 4:7b-11
- 2. Three Areas of Emphasis in Regard to Suffering 4:12-19
  - a. The Facts of Suffering 4:12-16
  - b. The Application of Suffering 4:17-18
  - c. The Conclusion of Suffering 4:19
- C. Suffering in Service 5:1-11
  - 1. The Leader of the Body of Local Believers 5:1-4
    - a. I Peter 5:1 Connects to Chapter 4
    - b. Instructions for the Elders 5:1-4
  - 2. A Set of Five Relationships 5:5-9
    - a. Relationship to the Pastor-Teacher 5:5a
    - b. Relationship to Others 5:5b
    - c. A Relationship to God 5:6
    - d. Relationship to Pressure 5:7
    - e. Relationship to Satan 5:8-9
  - 3. The Purpose of Life 5:10a
  - 4. God's Product in Time 5:10b-11
  - 5. Summary

#### CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK 5:12-14



# **I**ntroduction to I Peter

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When this epistle was written, believers were in a time of severe physical persecution. Christianity was regarded a menace in the Roman Empire, and Nero had brought great pressure to bear on all Christians. As a result, they were scattered “throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia...” (I Peter 1:1).

As a result of this, Peter writes to the saints along the following lines:

The Believer: His Salvation 1:1-2:10 (Notice the word *salvation* occurs in 1:5, 9, 10, and 2:2)

The Believer: His Responsibility 2:11-3:12 (Notice the word *submit* or some form of it in 2:13, 18, and 3:1)

The Believer: His Discipline 3:13-5:11 (Notice the word *suffer* or some form of it in 3:14, 17; 4:1, 13, 15, and 5:10)

NOTES

# **T**he Believer: His Salvation

I Peter 1:1-2:10

## **GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION 1:1-12**

### **THE COMPLETE SUMMARY OF SALVATION 1:1-5**

*“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen <sup>2</sup>according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. <sup>3</sup>Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to [obtain] an inheritance [which is] imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

### **A Word of Greeting 1:1**

The author is Peter who was a Jew with a Greek name that means *stone or boulder*. He was one designated by God to deliver divine revelation. This is expressed by the word *apostle*. Peter is writing to believers who are called *aliens (parepidamos)*, a word used to designate a person residing in a place of which he is not a citizen.

### **Salvation Is a Matter of Divine Provision 1:2**

This salvation starts with God the Father. By what standard did God choose us? The answer is found in the phrase “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” The word *according to* is *kata*, a preposition used to introduce a norm or standard. The standard by which God chooses us is His *foreknowledge*. Several things should be understood about this word. First, it is never used of what God knows *we* will do but always of what *He* does. Second, it is not used of *what* He knows but *whom* He knows. Third, it involves more than a knowledge of facts; it carries the idea of

loving selection. (Look at II Timothy 2:19 where knowing involves much more than grasping facts.)

This salvation is applied by the Holy Spirit. The phrase “by the sanctifying work of the Spirit” sets forth this truth. This salvation is directed toward God the Son. The word *sprinkled* (*rhantismos*) is used for the direct application of something. The election of God the Father coupled with the work of the Holy Spirit leads to the direct application of the work of Jesus Christ—His death for our sins.

### Three Specific Results of this Salvation 1:3-5

Before these are enumerated, a word needs to be said by way of praise to God who has provided such a great salvation. God is therefore called *blessed*. Our translations use the English word *blessed* to translate two distinct words and ideas in Greek. One means to *receive* blessing (*eulogeo*), and the other means to *merit* blessing (*eulogatos*). Ephesians 1:3 uses both together. God the Father is called *blessed*—one who deserves and merits blessing. Believers are called *blessed*—ones who received blessing (though they did not deserve blessing). In the Bible, only God is blessed in the sense of one who merits or deserves praise.

Now, if God is to communicate the blessings of salvation to us, we could well ask, “Why?” These blessings come, we are told, “according to His great mercy.” God was moved by mercy to provide the salvation Peter is about to portray. There is, however, a human side to this salvation. It is not applied to all. It is for those who are *born again*. This introduces the subject of the new birth. *Born again* is made up of the word *ana*, meaning *again or anew*, and *gennao*, meaning *to be born*. We are now ready to see the three specific results of salvation.

Our first blessing is called a *living hope*. In English, we use the word *hope* to speak of something we want to happen in the future. Since men cannot control events, uncertainty always surrounds any prediction relating to the future; and this uncertainty is conveyed by the word *hope*. When we turn to Scripture, however, the word *hope* as applied to the believer’s expectations has a very different meaning. The anticipations of a believer are called *hope*, not because uncertain but because future. Our *living hope* incorporates all the blessings that are certain and guaranteed but that lie in the future.

Our second blessing is called *an inheritance*. The first thought with an inheritance is to determine its content. What does it give us? Inheritances can be of all sizes and amounts, consisting of money, property, or other goods. Notice that our spiritual inheritance is not given a positive description. Its greatness is underscored by telling us what it is *not*. It is *imperishable* (*aphthartos*), a word that refers to something in which the deterioration process does not apply. The inheritance is further said to be *undefiled* (*amiantos*)—it has no spot or stain. It *will not fade away*, which refers to that which does not

change by virtue of age or use. In summary, or inheritance knows no termination, no imperfection, and no change.

Our third blessing may be called double security. The inheritance is secure—"reserved in heaven for you." The word *reserved* (*tareo*) is in perfect tense, meaning a completed action with abiding results. Notice that it is kept in an ideal place—"in heaven." The inheritors are secure—"protected" (1:5). The word *protected* is *phroureo*, a military term for a guard. It is also in present tense, referring to a continuous and unbroken action. God's power is the guard; the guard never rests—this is called eternal security. His guarding power is evidenced through a human response. It is "through faith." This shows that eternal security applies to genuine believers, not merely professing ones. This keeping power also has a goal. It is "for...salvation." Note that this salvation is future (our *hope* of verse 3). I Peter 1:5 is referring to phase three of salvation, or glorification.

### THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT LIFE 1:6-9

*"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the proof of your faith, [being] more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>8</sup>and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup>obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."*

With our hope defined and sure, we now may look at the present pressures on believers. Verse 6 begins with "In this you greatly rejoice...." *In this* is an expression used several times in I Peter. It never has a specific antecedent but refers to the content of the preceding context. Here, it links to the content of verses 3-5. The rejoicing of verse 6 rests on the spiritual possessions of verses 3-5. *You greatly rejoice* (*hagalliao*) is a very strong word and is in present tense. Thus, we should have great and continuous rejoicing.

### The Character of All Tests 1:6

Every trial is temporary. This is expressed in the words "for a little while," showing that tests are temporary. II Corinthians 4:17 is a passage showing the same idea.

Every trial is *necessary* (*deon*), a word for absolute necessity (like John 3:7 "You must be born again"). Every test is necessary for our growth and God's glory.

Every trial involves mental or emotional pain. This is expressed by *distressed*, which means *to grieve*. The aorist tense implies that the grief is transitory, not permanent. II Corinthians 4:8-10 shows that Paul experienced grief, but he never succumbed to grief. It was not a permanent aspect of his life.

Every trial is different. We may expect all kinds of tests—any pressure known to humanity may occur in the life of a believer.

**The Purpose of All Tests 1:7**

Verse 7 is introduced by *that (hina)*, which indicates a purpose clause—the goal and divine purpose is testing.

The word *proof (dokimion)* is an adjective meaning *genuine or without alloy*—thus, the approved part of your faith. Faith must undergo a smelting process. Genuine faith is the part that remains after the fire of testing has been applied. Luke 22:31-34 is a good example of this. Luke 22:33 is a profession of great courage and faith but is untested (though sincere). Verse 34 tells us that the profession is all chaff—it did not stand under the heat of testing. Genuine faith (the kind that has passed the fire test) is said to be “more precious than gold which is perishable.” Why is this true? Because gold is temporary, but tested faith is permanent.

This tested permanent faith is important because a day is coming—“the revelation of Jesus Christ”—when that faith will bring “praise and glory and honor” to Jesus Christ. When Christ returns, He will be glorified when we meet Him with a faith that has passed through the fire of tests and found to be genuine.

**The Proper Attitude in Tests 1:8**

We have two statements of proper attitude. The first is in 1:6, “you greatly rejoice,” which referred to great and continuous rejoicing. It rests on the spiritual possessions of 1:3-5. The second is in 1:8, “you greatly rejoice,” again referring to great and continuous rejoicing. It rests on the basis of seeing Christ.

There are three ways Christ is seen: *eyewitness* (those who observed Him during His earthly life), *faith* (those who live between His Ascension and His return), and *sight* (all those who will see Christ at His return)

	Passages	Time	Position	Basis or Means
<b>Eyewitnesses</b>	Acts 10:39 I John 1:1-2	Past	Earthly life of Christ	Senses
<b>Faith</b>	John 20:29 I Peter 1:8	Present	Session of Christ	Written Word
<b>Sight</b>	I John 3:2	Future	Return & Reign of Christ	Personal Presence

We are not in the eyewitness class; this is past. We are not in the sight class; this is future. We are living in those times when Christ may be known without seeing Him. Proof of this is found in I Peter 1:8, “though you have not seen Him, you love Him...”

How can this occur—how can we love someone we do not see? The answer is found in the text that says, “though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him...”—by faith. Faith must always have a basis. The basis for faith is the written word. Any other road will lead to a Christ of man’s own imagination. The only true God is the God of Scripture. This faith apprehension of Christ has an effect on man’s attitude. It gives us a joy that is *inexpressible (aneklalatos)*, meaning *something that cannot be expressed in language*. This joy is also *full of glory*, a perfect tense meaning *filled with glory with abiding results*.

### The Ultimate End of Tests 1:9

The word *obtaining (komizo)* means *to carry off something*—like a reward. The middle voice means *to carry off for yourself*. *Outcome* refers to the completion of something. *Souls* refers to more than the immaterial part of man; it is used here by Peter for the whole man.

### THE GREATNESS OF OUR SALVATION 1:10-12

*“As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that [would come] to you made careful searches and inquiries,<sup>11</sup> seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.”*

The first twelve verses of chapter one divide into three sections. Each section hovers around the word *salvation*. I Peter 1:3-5 underscores the blessings of salvation. I Peter 1:6-9 revolves about the pressures of salvation. I Peter 1:10-12 now introduces us to the greatness of salvation. It is the classic passage on the Old Testament knowledge of salvation. It revolves about the Old Testament prophets’ research into their own writings.

### The Fact of Their Research 1:10

The attitude of the prophets is defined by the phrase “made careful search and inquiry.” This verse is saying Isaiah studied Isaiah, Jeremiah studied Jeremiah, etc. Old Testament prophets diligently studied their own works.

The Old Testament prophets saw in their own writings “the grace that would come” to us. In writing of the coming Messiah, the prophets knew that a grace salvation was coming. This caused their research to continue along a certain line.

### The Direction of Their Research 1:11

Their research took two directions. First was the time when this grace salvation would come about—"seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating...." In other words, Isaiah read Isaiah 53:6 where we are told "the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him." He could see God's gracious provision of salvation in dealing with the sin problem totally. This is certainly grace. But when will this occur? This Isaiah pondered much.

Second was the circumstances under which this grace salvation would come about. The revelation about the coming of Christ did not come suddenly but was progressive. The term *was indicating* is in imperfect tense, showing a past continuous action—"was *continually* indicating."

A definite sequence is set up for the career of Christ. The first phase of His work is suffering. This is expressed by "the sufferings of Christ." These words are not defining the suffering He experienced but the suffering He was destined to experience. The word *of (eis)* is a preposition pointing the direction something moves. Thus, "the sufferings for or destined for Christ."

The second phase of His work is glory. The word *glory (doxa)* is plural—*glories*. After Christ's death, He experienced a succession of glories—the Resurrection, the Ascension, the seating at the Father's right hand. Notice the suffering and glories come in a definite order. It is the glory that should follow the suffering. Or, as the Greek text reads, "the glories after those things." The disciples on the Emmaus road missed this point (see Luke 24:18-21 and 24:25-27). It is also important for believers. Since Christ suffered first and then entered into glory, what exempts us, His children, from the same path? This fits the context of I Peter. They were suffering believers; some of them thought this was strange. Why should God's children have to suffer? The answer is simple; we must suffer before glory because He did. Notice the truth applied in I Peter 4:12-13.

### The Results of Their Research 1:12

They discovered this grace salvation was to be given to us, not them—"not serving themselves, but you..." the text reads. The fulfillment of their prophecies of Christ's suffering was now seen in the preaching of the apostles—"which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you...." Notice in the book of Acts how Old Testament prophecies are related to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:16 relates the day of Pentecost to the prophet Joel; Acts 2:25 relates Christ to Psalm 16; Acts 2:34 relates Christ to Psalm 110; Acts 3:18 shows Christ as the fulfillment of the prophets; Acts 4:25 relates Christ to Psalm 2; Stephen's entire sermon in Acts 7 is a survey of the Old Testament!



The church age opened with an insight of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

This salvation is so great that angels desire to look into it—"things into which angels long to look." The word *look* (*parakupto*) refers to a careful, intense, long look. It is used in John 20:5, 11 for the look into the empty tomb of Christ. Angels are "on tip toe" to see this salvation. If the prophets searched intently into a salvation not for them but for us, and if angels (for whom Christ did not die) are deeply interested in a salvation they cannot partake of, how much more should we research the Word of God for a salvation designed and destined for us.

## THE PRODUCTS OF OUR SALVATION 1:13-25

### THE EXHORTATION TO HOLINESS 1:13-16

*"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober [in spirit], fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts [which were yours] in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all [your] behavior; <sup>16</sup>because it is written, 'YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.' "*

### The Mental Attitude Aspect 1:13

*Therefore* links this section of verses to the first twelve verses. It introduces the things that should exist in the light of God's provision of salvation (1:1-12). It is an arrow pointing forward to how we should act or think in the light of what has been taught. He has talked about the believer's great salvation and present pressures. Now, here is how we should think and act.

An illustration of right attitude: "prepare your minds" (*anazonnumi*). This is an oriental expression. People wore long flowing robes, making working and walking difficult. The robe had to be bound up or prepared in some way before activity. Exodus 12:11 and John 13:4 are examples of binding up one's robes as preparation for activity. Here is it applied figuratively to the mind—we might say, "Pull yourself together."

A definition of right attitude: "keep sober" (*napho*). This means *to be self-controlled, calm, and collected*. Present tense indicates this is to be a continuous attitude.

A requirement for right attitude: "hope completely." This means *hope unreservedly*. "On the grace" introduces the grounds on which our hope is to rest. "To be brought" is a present tense participle; "that is being brought" is a more accurate translation. The emphasis is not what lies in the future but what is being done for us now.

### The Conduct Aspect 1:14-16

Peter begins by giving us an illustration of right conduct: “as obedient children.” We are to obey in a childlike manner. A child’s obedience is an unquestioning type based on a blood relationship.

Next we move to a definition of conduct. Negatively, we are to “not be conformed to the former lusts.” *Former lusts* refers to pre-salvation desires that are not to be the guiding factor in a believer’s life. *Ignorance* is an idiom for any life that does not know the true God. It may be a life of religion, as in Acts 17:30, or a life of sin, as in Ephesians 4:17-19. On the positive side, *like (kata)* introduces a norm or standard for conduct. *Be (ginomai)* means *to become* and refers to the believer’s growth process. This exhortation is based on the known will of God as expressed in verses 15 and 16.

### LIFE OF REVERENCE 1:17-21

*“If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay [on earth]; <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, [the blood] of Christ. <sup>20</sup>For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup>who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”*

### An Exhortation to Fear 1:17

We are ordered to “conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.” *In fear* is the first word of the command and therefore the emphatic word. Fear carries two meanings in Scripture. It may refer to fright (John 7:13, Hebrews 2:15, Romans 8:15), or it may mean respect toward God (Ephesians 5:21) or man (Ephesians 6:5). In I Peter 1:17, the meaning is *respect*. Life is to be lived with full respect for the Lord’s character. Two facts demand this respect. The first is our position: “If you address as Father....” The *if* in this sentence is a first class condition, meaning the author assumes something to be true. Thus, “if you address as Father, and you do.” Note our relationship to God is a father-son relationship. This type of relationship demands respect. The second is God’s character: “the One who impartially judges....” God does not consider the person, just the facts. Note this in Romans 2:11, Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 3:25, James 2:1, and Acts 10:34. Since God does not view who we are, what we produce is very important.

### The Motive for Respect for God: Doctrine of Redemption 1:18-21

We begin with a knowledge of redemption. Knowledge is the foundation of right conduct (note this link in Romans 5:3; I Corinthians 12:1; I Thessalonians 4:13; James 1:2-3).

Next we see the act of redemption. The word *redeemed* (*lutroo*) means *to purchase or buy*. It refers to the purchase of something (Matthew 13:44, 46) or someone (as in Roman practice and in Leviticus 25:47). Redemption always involves a price; the price may be monetary or non-monetary. In Exodus 6:6 redemption is tied to the exodus of Israel from Egypt. In Exodus 12:13 note that the price was animal blood—a non-monetary redemption. This was redemption in picture form—animal blood could not actually redeem. It could, however, picture what a coming redemption would be. I Peter 1:18 wraps up all money redemptions as perishable things, meaning anything subject to decay. An example of a perishable redemption price would be silver or gold. This will make the value of the price paid in verse 19 all the more striking.

We now move to the freedom of redemption. This is expressed in the phrase “from your futile way of life.” This expression hooks up with the word *redeemed*. We are redeemed from our futile way of life. *From* (*ek*) means *out of*. We are redeemed out of a life that was *futile* (*mataios*), meaning *aimless, powerless, useless, and tradition bound*. Christ died to free us from a life of tradition whose origin is no higher than man.

Peter focuses on the price of redemption in verse 19. *Precious blood* refers to blood that is priceless, the death of Jesus Christ. *Lamb* is an illusion to the Old Testament sacrifice, as in Exodus 12:5.

Finally, a word about the person of redemption. He was *foreknown*—God’s own sovereign choice. He *appeared*—God’s eternal choice of redeemer appeared in time. He was *raised from the dead*—God’s approval of the redemption He brought. He was given *glory*—God’s eternal position granted to the redeemer.

## THE LIFE OF LOVE 1:22-25

*“Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, <sup>23</sup>for you have been born again not of a seed which is perishable but imperishable, [that is], through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup>For, ‘ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, <sup>25</sup>BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.”*

### The Pre-requisite for Love 1:22a

We are those of “purified...souls.” There are two kinds of purification. One is ceremonial, as in John 11:55; and the other is inner, as in James 4:8. I Peter 1:22 refers to inner life free of stain.

The means of a pure inner life: the word *in* (*en*) is used of the instrumentality by which something is accomplished. *The truth* refers to the Word of God, as in John 17:17, 19.

The results of a pure inner life: unhypocritical love, “sincere love of the brethren.” *Sincere* (*anupokritos*) means *not put on*. Two areas are specified by the Word as places where believers are likely to fake it. First is the area of love (see Romans 12:9; II Corinthians 6:6, and I Peter 1:22). Second is the area of faith (see I Timothy 1:5 and II Timothy 1:5).

### The Command to Love 1:22b

As to its nature: “from the heart.” Stress lies on the inwardness of love.

As to its duration: “fervently.” This word means literally *to stretch*. The emphasis is not on the amount of love but on the duration of love.

### The Reason for this Love 1:23-25

It has a starting point: the new birth. In I Peter 1:3 the new birth was the starting point for blessings received. In I Peter 1:23 the new birth is the starting point for blessing given out.

We are now pointed to the means of the new birth: “through the living and enduring word of God.” Human sperm dies after a short time. The Word of God, divine sperm, never dies—it is eternally potent.

The Word of God is permanent (1:24-25). Proof comes from a quotation from Isaiah 40. Israel is on the eve of captivity, and Isaiah is giving them the basis for stability in the midst of suffering and pressure. He offers a two-fold basis for confidence. First is God’s character—He is omnipotent (40:12), omniscient (40:13-14), sovereign (40:15), and infinite (40:18, 25). Second is God’s Word (40:6-8). Believers to whom the book of I Peter is written have this same word as in Isaiah’s time.

## THE PURPOSE OF OUR SALVATION 2:1-10

This section of I Peter shows the three major purposes that God has for us as believers—I Peter 2:1-10 is an outline of God’s plan for every believer’s life. A key idea goes through these verses. It is an emphasis on what we are and what we should do in the light of this.

### GOD’S PURPOSE: THE BELIEVER’S GROWTH 2:1-3

“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, <sup>2</sup>like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, <sup>3</sup>if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.”

### Negative Action Is Required 2:1

*Therefore (oun)* shows the action of verse 1 is motivated by the preceding context. In 1:23-25 the subject was the permanency of the Word. The word *therefore* is saying that since the Word is permanent, anything that hinders growth must be laid aside. *Putting aside (apotithami)* is an aorist participle whose action precedes that of the main verb. The *putting aside* of verse 1 precedes the *longing* of verse 2. Sin must be handled before the Word will be desired. This same concept is found in I Corinthians 3:1-3 where the intake of God's Word was hindered by carnality.

There are some special items that must be dealt with. They are *malice (kakia)*, which refers to any kind of vice; *deceit (dolos)*, which means *to catch with bait*; *hypocrisy (hupokrisis)*, meaning *to pretend* (according to Matthew 15:7-9, hypocrisy is orthodox performance and elevation of tradition); *envy (phthonos)*, defined by Matthew 27:15-18 and Acts 7:9; *slander (katalalia)*, which means *to speak down* or, in English idiom, *to run down*.

### Positive Action Is Required 2:2-3

Peter gives us an illustration of the action in verse 2. *Like* introduces a simile. Here a believer is to bear a resemblance to a newborn babe. The point of comparison is the baby's appetite. It is frequent—even more than daily! A believer is to have an insatiable appetite for the Word. This desire for food is to be met by the pastor-teacher (see I Peter 5:2).

The text follows with a command regarding Bible study: "long for the pure milk of the word." *Long (epipotheo)* is a verb in the imperative mood—a command. It is used of intense desire, such as longing to see a close friend (Philippians 2:26). *Pure (adolos)* means *unadulterated or unmixed*. This hints at a danger. The Word of God can be mixed with other things, such as a teacher's opinion. This is why exegetical, expository preaching is the only legitimate way to deliver God's Word. Its aim is thoroughness and accuracy.

The purpose of intake of God's Word is "that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." *By it* indicates that the Word is the means of growth.

### GOD'S PURPOSE: THE BELIEVER'S SACRIFICE 2:4-8

*"And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, <sup>5</sup>you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For [this] is contained in Scripture: 'BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER [stone], AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.' <sup>7</sup>This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER [stone],'<sup>8</sup>and, 'A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF*

OFFENSE'; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this [doom] they were also appointed."

### The Place of Jesus Christ 2:4

His place is stated first in relation to the believer: "coming to Him as to a living stone." The words give a description of a believer. He is one *coming* (*proserchomai*), present tense describing habitual action. Note the Father's selection, man's response, the Son's reception. Relationship to Christ is the key feature defining a Christian.

We also have a description of Christ: "a living stone." *Stone* (*lithos*) means *a worked stone like a gem or a stone cut for a building*. Why is Christ called a *stone*? Because He fulfills Psalm 118:22. He is *living*. This is a favorite theme of Peter. Our hope is living (1:3); the Word is living (1:23); our Savior is living (2:4).

His place is now stated in relation to the unbeliever (2:4b): "rejected by men." *Rejected* (*apodokimazo*) means *to repudiate after a test*. The history of this rejection is found in Luke 9:22. Perfect tense indicates the verdict still stands. *By men* takes in all humanity.

### The Place of Believers 2:5

First, we are told our position: "living stones," the same title as applied to Christ. This shows union and participation with Him. We are a "spiritual house." *House* refers to the whole body of Christ (the house is made up of believers scattered everywhere—see I Peter 1:1). "Are being built up" (*oikodomeo*) is the same word used in Matthew 16:18 and refers to a continuous process.

Second, we are told our purpose: "for a holy priesthood." The word *for* (*eis*) shows direction and purpose. God's plan is for believers to act as priests. The priesthood of believers is referred to in Revelation 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6. Note that in these passages we are king-priests. A believer could not be merely a priest. The reason is found in the book of Hebrews. Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek who was king and priest. Those connected with Christ are therefore king-priests.

Third, we are pointed to our service: "to offer up." The word *offer* (*anaphero*) means *to carry up* and is used in the Septuagint of the act of the priest in carrying the sacrifice up to the brazen altar. The altar was about four and one-half feet high and was approached by an incline up which the priest carried the sacrificial animal. A believer is to engage in making sacrifices. The sacrifices are not animal but spiritual. Three are given in the New Testament: sacrifice of bodies (Romans 12:1), sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15), and sacrifice of money (Philippians 4:18). The basis of acceptance is "through Jesus Christ."

### A House Must Have a Foundation 2:6-8

This foundation is stated by Scripture (2:6). Christ is the *cornerstone*, as stated by Isaiah 28:16. To the English mind, *cornerstone* (*akrogoniaios*) could convey only the idea of ornamentation. The word, however, referred to the keystone, the one that controlled the design of the building.

There are two distinct concepts of the foundation stone. The first is divine selection—*choice* and *precious* emphasizing God's choice and evaluation. The second is definite blessing. This receives triple stress in the New Testament (Romans 9:33, 10:11; I Peter 2:6). *Disappointed* often refers to embarrassment coming from being deceived in a hope.

The foundation as seen by man is found in I Peter 2:7-8: "you who believe." Note: A believer is simply a person who takes God's viewpoint as his own (God calls Christ precious, and we call Christ precious).

The unbeliever also has a viewpoint: "those who disbelieve." This refers to those who are unpersuaded or the followers of those who formally rejected Christ. The *builders* are the religious leaders who rejected Christ (see Acts 4:8-11).

Christ is pictured as the stone. The Bible makes six applications of the word stone as applied to Christ.

- The type application (Exodus 17:6; I Corinthians 10:4)
- The foundation application (I Corinthians 3:11)
- The stumbling application (Romans 9:32-33 where human righteousness is built instead of divine righteousness)
- The Messianic application (of Jesus' first coming, I Corinthians 1:23; of His second coming, Zechariah 4:7)
- The sovereignty application (Daniel 2:34)
- The judgment application (Matthew 21:44)

### GOD'S PURPOSE: THE BELIEVER'S WITNESS 2:9-10

*"But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR [God's] OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup>for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."*

### Our Position: "chosen race" 2:9a

The four descriptions of believers are derived from Exodus 19:5-6. God's purpose for the church bears similarity to God's purpose for Israel. God, at all times, has desired to have a people on earth that represent Him and honor Him. *Race* (*genos*) refers to a group with a common origin (the new birth as in I Peter 1:3 and 1:23). *Chosen* (*eklektos*) shows the distinctness of the believer. *Royal priesthood*—the main idea of priest is access; the main emphasis of king is

authority. *Holy nation*—God’s purpose for Israel and the church has a similar point—king priests. Israel and the church should also bear the same characteristic of holiness. We are God’s very own special people, “a people for God’s own possession.”

### **Our Purpose 2:9b**

It is common opinion that Matthew 28:19-20 contains the summary commission given to all believers of all times. This is not so. The context of the verses, apart from other considerations, forbids this. These verses were directed to the eleven apostles who were to have a special ministry. I Peter 2:9 is the “great commission.” It is specifically addressed to the entire body of believers. It sets forth God’s universal purpose for all believers—God has only one will and one purpose for every Christian—it is the same for all! We are all to “proclaim the excellencies of Him.” *Excellencies (areta)* means *one of noble character and noble acts*. A believer is to proclaim the noble character of God and the noble acts of God. This alone forms the great commission.

### **Our Past 2:9c-10**

We were once “not a people,” a reference to pre-salvation life—no relationship to God. We now have a new calling, “into His marvelous light.” This involves holiness (1:15), steadfastness under pressure (2:19-21), communication of blessing (3:9), and eternal glory (5:10). Our new relationship is stated as the “people of God.”



# The Believer: His Duty

I Peter 2:11-3:12

Peter brings us to the second major part of the epistle. The theme is the duty of the believer. The key expression is the word *submission* in some form. Note this in 2:13, 18, and 3:1. This submission is to exist in three spheres. First, there is to be submission in the state (2:11-17). Second, there is to be submission in the household (2:18-25). Third, there is to be submission in the family (3:1-12).

## SUBMISSION IN THE STATE 2:11-17

### THE ROOT OF SUBMISSION 2:11-12

*“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. <sup>12</sup>Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe [them], glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

### Inward Personal Holiness 2:11

Verse 11 begins by recalling that we are “aliens and strangers.” These two terms are used for someone who dwells in a country of which he is not a citizen and for someone who establishes a temporary residence. This was true of these believers in two senses. First, in a literal sense, as seen in I Peter 1:1. Second, in a spiritual sense, heaven being their real residence (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Another fact needs to be recalled. Every believer is a battleground. Due to the persecution they were undergoing, the tendency would be to think that the major battle in life was with Nero, the Roman emperor, when in reality the battle revolved about their sin natures. Remember, therefore, that we are to “abstain from fleshly lusts.” The word *flesh* is used many ways in the New Testament. The particular use here refers to the seat of sinful desire. Galatians 5:16-17 is an important passage on this same point.

### Outward Visible Holiness 2:12a

The verse begins by defining the evidence that believers should set in front of unbelievers—"Keep (present tense referring to continuous activity) your behavior excellent." We are to habitually exhibit a beautiful life in front of unbelievers. This has a goal in mind.

### The Goal of the Believer's Good Life 2:12b

The word *that* in verse 12 introduces a purpose clause. Notice, however, that it is interrupted by the words "they slander you as evildoers." The word *evildoer* (*kakopoios*) often refers to a criminal. Believers were frequently slandered and called everything from pests to habitual criminals. We will study the nature of the persecution leveled at Christians when we come to the last part of the book.

Having inserted a word about the opposition, Peter now continues to express the goal of a believer's good works. Good works are to cause the unbeliever to "glorify God in the day of visitation." *Day of visitation* is literally *day of overseeing*. This term is always used in the New Testament of times when God visits in mercy and grace. (Note its use in Luke 1:68, 78; 7:16.) The expression refers to the time when those who see the believer's good works will be saved—visited by God's mercy and grace. This salvation comes about as a result of observing the believer's good works. Here is evangelism by life. This concept is also the means for evangelism of an unbelieving husband (see I Peter 3:1).

### THE COMMAND TO SUBMISSION 2:13-14

*"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,<sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right."*

### The Order to Submit 2:13a

*Submit* (*hupotasso*) is the translation of a Greek military term that means *to arrange in military fashion under command of a leader*. There is a definite connotation of a leader with authority coupled with response of subordinates to that authority.

### To Whom and What Do We Submit 2:13b

We are told to submit "to every human institution." The word *institution* translates a Greek word that means *creation*. The Greeks used it for the founding of a city. This can be understood two ways. First, it could mean an institution set up *by* man. Second, it could mean an institution set up *for* man by God. The latter satisfies the whole biblical concept of government. Human government is an institution set up by God for the benefit of man. We are, therefore, to submit to the divine institution of human government.

There are two motivations for submission. The first is divine, “for the Lord’s sake.” Note that submission to *what* (human institution of government) is based on the submission to *whom* (the Lord). The same will be true in chapter three in relation to the wife. She submits to her husband based on her submission to God. The second motivation for submission is human, “to a king as the one in authority; or to governors....” The existence of authority is germane to all order—whether in the family, the church, or society.

**The Function of Human Government 2:14**

First, authorities are sent by God. Second, government authorities have certain basic functions. One is the “punishment of evildoers.” The word translated *punishment* (*ekdikasis*) means *vengeance or punishment*. As noted earlier, *evildoers* is a word for a criminal. Human authorities are responsible for the punishment of criminals. From the standpoint of God’s Word, rehabilitation of criminals is not taught. Punishment is to be based on the concept of justice. Justice demands that the punishment fit the crime. This is why capital punishment is so important. When a life is taken, as in murder, the victim can never be brought back to life. The murderer, therefore, should suffer the same fate. This is based on justice and respect for human life. Deterrence of crime is not the issue—justice is; and justice demands appropriate and adequate punishment. Any human authority who opposes capital punishment is in violation of God’s Word.

On the other side of the issue, he is in authority for “the praise of those who do right.” Law abiding citizens are to be commended and rewarded by those in authority. The following chart shows the doctrine of human government from New Testament passages.

	I PETER 2	ROMANS 13	I TIMOTHY 2	TITUS 3
OUR RELATIONSHIP	Submission	Submission	Prayer	Submission
SOURCE OF GOV'T AUTHORITY	Divine (2:13-15)	Divine (13:1)		
FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT	Neg.-Punish (2:14) Pos.-Praise (2:14)	Neg.-Terrify Criminals (13:3-4) Pos.-Praise		
GOAL OF BELIEVER IN SUBMISSION	Set Example (2:15)			
REQUIREMENT OF SUBMISSION	All (2:2)	All (13:7)	All (2:1-4)	All (3:1-2)

## THE REASON FOR SUBMISSION 2:15-17

“For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. <sup>16</sup>[Act] as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but [use it] as bondslaves of God. <sup>17</sup>Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”

### It Rests in the Will of God 2:15

The word *such* (*houtos*) points back to the word *submit* in verse 13. This is important because it shows that submission does not rest in the good character of the authority but in the will of God.

The submission is to be accompanied with *doing right*. This means that submission is not sullen, slavish obedience but active good works. The object of this is to muzzle the unbeliever. It will “silence (*phimoo -to muzzle*) the ignorance of foolish men.” *Ignorance* is *agnosia*, an idiom for pre-salvation life—any life that does not know God. It may be a life of religion (Acts 17:30) or a life of overt sin (Ephesians 4:17-19). A believer is to live a life of such good works that the unbeliever has no ammunition to use against him.

### Submission Does Not Contradict Freedom 2:16

Verse 16 begins with the two words *as free*. They connect back to verse 13. Tied together we read, “Submit yourselves (2:13)...as free (2:16).” Sounds contradictory, doesn’t it? How can we be free and submit at the same time? The answer lies in understanding what liberty really is.

First, there are three things that liberty is not. It is not freedom to do as one pleases. This is really the worst type of slavery because it enslaves us to ourselves. It is also unrealistic because no one can do as he pleases—our wishes and wants are always greater than what we get. It is not escape from service either. Freedom is always set side by side with service in the New Testament. Romans 6:18 says, “and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” Nor is freedom an escape from authority, as I Peter 2:13 and 16 show us.

Second, freedom in the Bible relates to a change in masters. Instead of our sin nature being king over our lives, Christ becomes king of our lives. This is liberty. It is operation under the sphere of a perfect loving, knowing, wise master. All else is slavery to evil.

Third, the Lord Jesus Christ exercises His authority over us by designating human agents to whom we are to submit. This brings up lots of “what if?” questions. What if the government to whom we are to submit asks us to do what contradicts God’s Word? What if the husband to whom a wife is to submit makes demands directly contrary to God’s will?

Our answer comes by understanding three principles about human authorities. First of all, God alone is the only total authority. This is

called the sovereignty of God. There is “no one greater” than God (Hebrews 6:13). No human authority possesses all authority.

Second, God often designates a limited portion of authority to men. A husband has authority. It is designated—God gave it to him. It is limited—over his own wife. Another area where God designates authority is government.

Third, human authority ceases the moment it exceeds God’s limitation. The husband, for example, is head only of his own wife; if he tries to exercise it beyond this to another woman, she should obviously reject his authority. If government remains within its designated limits, its authority is legitimate and must be obeyed. If it attempts to rule in areas outside its designation, disobedience may be required since this extra authority is not God-given.

How can a legitimate authority overextend his authority? He may overextend, for example, the sphere of his authority. Colossians 3:18-20 uses the word *your* to specify where a woman is to submit—namely, to her own husband. His sphere is limited to his own wife. A legitimate authority may overextend the priority of his authority. Ephesians 5:31 states that in marriage the priority of headship is a woman’s husband, not her parents. Parents had the priority of authority at one time, but marriage rearranges this order. Parents do have God-given authority over their children but overextend their right when it is pursued into the married lives of their children. Human authority is also overextended when it contradicts God’s Word. No government, no parent, no husband ever has a right to ask those over whom they have authority to violate God’s Word.

### **Freedom May Be Misused 2:16**

A warning is now issued that believers are not to use freedom as a cover-up for evil. There are two distinct dangers of liberty. The first is the possibility of losing it, as in Galatians 5:1. The second is the possibility of abusing it, as in Galatians 5:13 where believers are told not to use liberty as a base of operations for the flesh. Properly used, liberty is that which is carefully regulated by the Word of God and places us in the position of servants of God.

### **Four Summary Commands 2:17**

We are to “honor all.” The word *honor* (*timao*) means *to fix or recognize the value of something*. It refers to giving a proper estimate of something or someone. It is used here in verse 17 of *all people and the king*. We are to “love the brotherhood,” which refers to the body of all believers. And finally, “fear (have proper respect for) God.”

## SUBMISSION IN THE HOUSEHOLD 2:18-25

The theme of the next eight verses revolves about two areas of submission—submission of servants (2:18-20) and submission of our Savior (2:21-25).

Both Paul and Peter speak about the relationship of slaves and masters. Two observations are important. First, neither exhort slaves to free themselves. On the contrary, they exhort them to serve well and be submissive. The rule given in regard to social status is to maintain status quo (see I Corinthians 7:20-24). The purpose of the gospel is not social. It is directed to men, regardless of social position, and offers a position of equality in the body of Christ, which constitutes a brotherhood eternal in nature and spiritual in purpose.

Second, a servant was a recognized part of the family household. The word *doulos* is the word used when one looks at slaves as a social class. This is not the word used in I Peter 2:18. The word used here is *oiketas* and views the servant as part of the household—a family member.

Why does I Peter 2:18 single out slaves for special exhortation? An obvious reason can be seen by noting that slaves made up the largest segment of the early church (I Corinthians 1:26). Another reason is derived from the context of the eight verses here in front of us. Slaves had the unique opportunity to be like Christ since their status in life was most similar to His.

### THE REQUIREMENT FOR SERVANTS 2:18

*“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.”*

The word *submissive* (*hupotasso*) is a participle in present tense and expresses continuous activity. The words *with all respect* emphasize the attitude of respect that is required. Respect for authority has been expressed three times so far in I Peter: respect for God’s authority (1:17), respect for government authority (2:13), and respect for master’s authority (2:18). The last half of I Peter 2:18 stresses the point that this submission is to exist in all cases—no loopholes can be found. The submission is to be to the *good and gentle* (*epieikas*), which means *to be reasonable*, and to the *unreasonable* (*skolios*), which means *curved or crooked*.

### THE MOTIVATION FOR SERVANTS 2:19

*“For this [finds] favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.”*

We are told that *this*—a word pointing forward in context to the concept of remaining patient when suffering unjustly—“this [finds] favor.” The word *favor* translates the Greek word *charis*, which is usually translated *grace*. The normal reaction to unjust suffering would be anger. The grace reaction to unjust suffering is patience. Notice why the servant in verse 19 is suffering unjustly and taking it patiently. It is due to “conscience toward God.” In other words,

he submits to his master because his desire is to please God. There are many circumstances in life where a choice must be made between pleasing God or enjoying tranquility. Pleasing God is always to be our choice.

### THE REWARD FOR THE SUBMISSIVE SERVANT 2:20

*“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer [for it] you patiently endure it, this [finds] favor with God.”*

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience....” It is easy to take punishment when we know we have it coming. On the other hand, when we suffer undeservedly and remain patient, “this [finds] favor with God.” This is the reward of submission.

## SUBMISSION OF OUR SAVIOR 2:21-25

### CHRIST IS THE BELIEVER’S PATTERN IN RELATION TO SUFFERING 2:21

*“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,”*

#### The Fact Stated 2:21a

“For you have been called for this purpose....” *This purpose* points to unjust suffering. All believers are called to suffer undeservedly. The reason for this lies in our relationship to Jesus Christ. He suffered unjustly; we are united to Him; how could we expect to avoid the same?

#### Two Reasons Why We Can Suffer Patiently 2:21b

The first is because of His companionship. Notice the words “since Christ also suffered for you.” The word *also* puts us and Him in the same condition. If this companionship is desired enough, we will seek it at all costs.

The second reason is because of His pattern. He has left us *an example*. The word is *hupogrammos* and means literally *to write under*. It was used of words given to children to copy as an exercise or means of teaching. It was also used of an architectural sketch for someone else to copy or fill in with color. It was sometimes used for letters to trace.

### PETER’S SERMON FROM ISAIAH FIFTY-THREE, 2:22-25

*“WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; <sup>23</sup>and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting [Himself] to Him who judges righteously; <sup>24</sup>and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so*

| *that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls."*

### **What Christ Did Not Do When He Suffered 2:22-23**

| First, when sinned against, He *committed no sin*. His suffering was all undeserved. There was nothing ever done by Him that deserved punishment in any way.

| Second, there was no *deceit* in His mouth. None of His suffering could be traced to lack of honesty and straightforwardness.

| Third, when abused He did not retaliate. The word *reviled (loidoreo)* means *to heap abuse on someone*, usually a reference to verbal abuse. None of His suffering was due to retaliation. It was all undeserved.

| Fourth, He never threatened those who inflicted abuse on Him. All these items are placed in front of us to show us the only case in human history of completely undeserved suffering.

### **What Christ Did When He Suffered Unjustly 2:23b**

| Simply stated, He placed Himself in the hands of God the Father and rested in His righteous character. The word *entrusting* is in a tense expressing a continuous action. He made it a habit of life to entrust Himself to God the Father. The reason this could be safely done is due to God's character. He is righteous. God, due to His righteous character, must and will make all wrongs right, punish all evil, and establish perfect justice on earth. This He will do at the return and reign of Christ.

### **What the Death of Christ Means 2:24-25**

| First, what He did in regard to sins—"...He Himself bore our sins...." Christ took the full brunt of the wrath of God brought about by our sins. This is why the gospel is good news. Sin is no issue; He has adequately and completely dealt with it forever.

| Second, what He did in regard to sinners—He made it possible for us to "die to sin." The word *die (apoginomai)* means *to be completely alienated from something*. His death for sin makes sin no issue; it makes us alienated from sin and alive forever in righteousness. Notice that this cross work of Christ is a fulfillment of the words of Isaiah 53:5, which states, "...by His scourging we are healed." The healing work in the passage is in regard to spiritual salvation, not physical healing.

| Third, with regard to believers—our pre-salvation condition is described by the words "continually straying like sheep." We have now turned to the "Shepherd and Guardian of your (our) souls."



## SUBMISSION IN THE FAMILY 3:1-7

We are now ready to study the last part of Peter's teaching on submission. It covers the relationship of husband and wife. The passage will give the responsibilities of the wife in 3:1-6 and those of the husband in 3:7. These verses also incorporate in their teaching a situation where the husband is not a believer and the wife is.

### RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WIFE 3:1-6

*"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any [of them] are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup>as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. <sup>3</sup>Your adornment must not be [merely] external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; <sup>4</sup>but [let it be] the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup>For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; <sup>6</sup>just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."*

#### The Order to Subjection 3:1a

"Be submissive"—as to meaning, the word involves positive response to designated authority. The tense indicates that it is to be continuous, not occasional.

#### The Limits of the Subjection

"To your own husbands" shows that the subject is not male-female relationship but husband-wife relationship. This is based on the premise that every institution must have a head. The headship of the husband is based on God's choice, not male superiority.

#### The Goal of this Subjection 3:1b

The goal of the subjection is introduced by the word *that* (*hina*). The word *if* introduces a first class conditional sentence meaning that the author assumes the condition to be true. Thus, "...if—as is the case—any [of them] are disobedient to the word...." There were women in the church whose husbands were not believers. These women could tend to think that the command to submission did not apply to them. Peter corrects this notion by the word *even* before the word *if*.

The husbands are described as those who are *disobedient* (*apeitheo*), which means *to refuse to be persuaded or to withhold belief*. These men had been exposed to God's Word and had a negative reaction to it. At the same time, they would daily observe their wives (verse 2). Here is where hope comes in. By the behavior of the wife, they may be won (*kerdaino*), which means *to win over to a point of view*, i.e. the

Word. All of this may be done without a word from the wife. This is evangelism by life.

### The Details of the Subjection 3:2-4

The conduct of the believing wife falls into three groupings. First, she is to live a pure life. This is expressed by the word *chaste*. *Chaste* (*hagnos*) means *to excite reverence, to be pure and immaculate*. Behavior is the Greek word *anastrophia* and means *manner of life or behavior*.

Second, she is to possess inner beauty. This is introduced by the words *your adornment*. The word *adornment* is *kosmos* and means *orderly arrangement*. Notice that the orderly arrangement is to be inner life (“hidden person of the heart” 3:4). We are now told where real beauty is not to be found. It is not found in *braiding the hair*. *Braiding* (*emploka*) means *to entangle or to braid*. This needs to be seen in light of the times in which it was written. Roman women went to every extreme in hair style. Juvenal states, “The attendants will vote on the dressing of the hair as if a question of reputation or of life were at stake....” Another author of those times states that women would not even touch their heads, and sleep came “with terror.” Peter is forbidding the extremes that saw beauty as an external matter.

She is further not to be adorned with *wearing gold jewelry*, which referred to the enormous array of jewelry that was considered so important to appearance.

Last, beauty does not lie in *putting on dresses*, referring to clothing. Obviously, Peter is not forbidding the care of hair or wearing jewelry. If this were true, he also forbids wearing clothing—clearly not his point.

Having taught where beauty does not lie, he now turns to elements of inner beauty. It is to be the “hidden person of the heart.” The Holy Spirit animates and fills personalities, not clothing. Clothing wears out; hair must be redone; inner beauty, however, lasts. Two items constitute inner beauty. A *gentle...spirit*—the choice of this word is significant. It is the only word of self-description used by Christ in the Gospels (Matthew 11:29). She is also to possess a *quiet spirit*. *Quiet* (*hasuchios*) means *to be silent*. Real beauty, then, is a gentle, courteous, tranquil, quiet inner being.

### The Pattern for the Subjection 3:5-6

The teaching on submission of the wife is not a new one. It is a permanent principle of God’s Word reading as far back as the holy women of *former times*. Sarah is introduced as an example because she called Abraham *lord*, a term indicating leadership and headship. The last of verse 6 encourages women to follow the pattern “without being frightened by any fear.”

### RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HUSBAND 3:7

*“You husbands in the same way, live with [your wives] in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”*

He is to “live with [your wives] in an understanding way.” The term *live with* (*sunoikeyo*) covers all aspects of domestic relationship—intellectual, emotional, and physical. This relationship is to be “in an understanding way.” It is the responsibility of the husband to have an intelligent understanding of what marriage is about. He must understand her needs, her emotions, her weaknesses and strengths.

He is to “show honor”—*show* (*aponemo*) means *to distribute or portion out something*; *honor* is from *tima*, meaning *to evaluate and treat in accord with worth or value*.

Peter gives a double basis for this action (both introduced by the word *as*). First, “as with someone weaker.” Though there are many exceptions, as a general rule, a woman is weaker in the physical sense. Second, “as a fellow heir of the grace of life.” The term *fellow heir* (*sugklaronomos*) means *joint heir*. This emphasizes that both participate equally in the blessings of life.

Lastly, Peter warns of the consequences of failure of the husband—hindered prayer. Lack of domestic tranquility is a barrier to effective prayer.

### SIX QUALITIES FOR ALL BELIEVERS 3:8-12

These five verses bring the section on submission to an end. These final words expand and apply to all believers. The preceding has singled out servants, wives, and husbands; now a final word to all.

#### THE LIST OF QUALITIES 3:8-9

*“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; <sup>9</sup>not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”*

We are to all be *harmonious* (*homophron*), which refers to having a common outlook, one in which harmony exists. This can be achieved as we all absorb the Word of God.

We are to be *sympathetic* (*sumpathas*), which refers to the ability to feel with someone, either in joy or in sorrow.

We are to be *brotherly* (*philadelphos*), meaning *to be hospitable*.

We are to be *kindhearted* (*eusplagchnos*), meaning *to be compassionate*.

We are to be *humble in spirit* (*tapeinophron*), meaning to be *humble and have a correct opinion of oneself*.

We are not to render *evil for evil or insult for insult*. The word *for* (*anti*) is called a preposition of exchange and should be translated *in exchange for*. The word *insult* (*loidoria*) means *abuse*, usually verbal abuse. Instead of giving “verbal abuse in exchange for verbal abuse,” we are to communicate *blessing* (continuous action tense, “keep on blessing”). This action is the only one that lines up God’s plan for us all as believers.

### THE APPLICATION OF PSALM THIRTY-FOUR, 3:10-12

“For, ‘THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. <sup>11</sup>HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. <sup>12</sup>FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.’ ”

#### The Ones Addressed 3:10

“The one who desires life”—This phrase addresses those who desire to love life

#### The Formula for Learning to Love Life 3:11

First, the speech life must come under control. It is in no way to participate in evil. It is in no way to be deceitful or crafty.

Second, there must be positive orientation toward doing good. “He must turn away from evil”—*ekklino* is a compound word made up of *ek*, meaning *out*, and *klino*, meaning *to lean*. Thus, lean out and away from evil.

Third, he must pursue peace. Peace is always based on the cross work of Christ. He made peace with God, so we can be at peace with God and all other believers in the body of Christ.

#### The Basis for this Action 3:12

First—God is omniscient. This is expressed by saying God has eyes and ears that see and hear all things.

Second—God is holy. To practice evil is to be anti-God.

# The Believer: His Discipline

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I Peter 3:13-5:11

We come now to the final part of I Peter. The theme is suffering, which is mentioned about twelve times. We will see three units. First, suffering for righteousness (3:13-4:6). Second, suffering with Christ (4:7-19). Third, suffering in service (5:1-11). There are many types of suffering in God's Word. There is suffering as discipline (Psalm 32), suffering for glory of God (John 9), suffering to prevent sin (II Corinthians 12:7), suffering to develop us (Romans 5:3), suffering due to identification with Christ, and undeserved suffering, the theme of I Peter.

## SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS 3:13-4:6

I Peter 3:14 makes clear the type of suffering Peter is referring to. It is suffering "for the sake of righteousness." The Greek uses the preposition *dia* before the word *righteousness*, meaning *because of righteousness*.

## The Benefits of Suffering 3:13-17

***A Divine Axiom: A believer zealous for good cannot be hurt 3:13***

*"Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?"*

This axiom has a condition attached to it. You cannot be harmed "if you prove zealous for what is good." The word *if* (*ean*) is used to introduce a third class sentence, which means "maybe this will happen or maybe it will not." The condition, then, depends on our volition. We may or may not choose to be followers of good. The word translated *prove* is *ginomai* and means *to become something*. This implies that those to whom Peter is writing had not always been followers of good. The word *zealous* (*zalotas*) is very strong. It refers to an enthusiast. It is used in Acts 22:3 to describe Paul's zeal as a Jew before his conversion. The word *good* describes all the characteristics the Holy Spirit desires to produce in a Christian's life.

Now, if we become enthusiasts for these good things, we have a promise: we will not be harmed. How is it possible, however, to say that a believer who is suffering (as these were) cannot be hurt? The answer lies back in I Peter 1:6-7. Testing refines faith. Does testing and suffering hurt us or help us, then?

### ***The Blessing of Suffering 3:14***

*"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,"*

Both verse 14 and verse 17 contain the word *if*. Both of these verses use the optative mood in Greek. This is used to introduce something that is possible but not probable. These believers were facing the possibility of suffering for righteousness sake.

If suffering occurs, they are said to be *blessed* (*makarios*). It is used repeatedly in Matthew 5:3-11 to describe those who conform their lives to God's will.

On the negative side of things, when suffering is inflicted on them, they are to "not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled." The word *troubled* (*tarasso*) is used consistently for mental agitation, worry, and turmoil. Luke 12 tells us what to fear and what not to fear. We are not to fear physical harm (Luke 12:4-5), and we are not to fear being alone (Luke 12:6-7).

### ***The Preparations for Suffering 3:15-17***

*"...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; <sup>16</sup>and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong."*

First, we are to *sanctify* the Lord in our hearts. *Sanctify* (*hagiazō*) has a basic meaning of *set apart*. It refers to setting apart something or someone as venerable and honorable and respected. We are, therefore, to give the Lord proper recognition no matter what the external circumstances may be.

Second, we are to be *ready* (*hetoimos*, *to be prepared*) to give a *defense* (*apologia*, *a verbal defense or a speech in defense of a position*) to every man who asks concerning our hope. In many cases, the believer is to initiate an approach to an unbeliever with the Word. Notice that this is not the case here. Here the believer is to respond only when the unbeliever inquires concerning our hope as believers. Since the inquiry could come at any time, we must be "in school" all the time in learning the Word of God. The answer we give is to be accompanied with an attitude of *gentleness* and *reverence*.

Third, we must maintain an inner condition called a *good conscience*. A good conscience is one that does not condemn us. This is possible when we rest completely on the work of Christ done for us on the cross. When we have this inner stability, what people may say about us makes no difference. In this case, these believers may be ones who are *slandered*. This translates the word *katalaleo*, which literally means *to talk down*. We would say to “run someone down” in English idiom. The unbelievers are said to *revile your good behavior*. *Revile* is *epareazo* and means *to insult and treat abusively*, often by telling lies about another person. Some of the ways this was done will be explained later in our study.

Peter concludes by pointing out that it is better to suffer for doing what is right than to suffer for doing what is wrong. Suffering for righteousness is better than suffering as discipline.

### THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF UNDESERVED SUFFERING 3:18-22

Why is Christ and His suffering introduced into the context? There are two definite reasons. First, He is the only person whose suffering was all undeserved. No one ever suffered more and deserved none of it. Second, He proves that suffering brings a sure reward. Compare verse 18 and verse 22. They show the sequence from suffering to the certain result of glory.

Two main lines of teaching occur in I Peter 3:18-22. The key idea in these verses is that suffering is always followed by exaltation. The secondary idea is an account of the activities of Christ between the cross and the resurrection. Both are intertwined in these five verses.

### The Death of Jesus Christ 3:18

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

Notice how 3:18 connects to the preceding context. The word *for* (*hoti*) means *because* and ties to 3:17. Verse 17 has said it is better to suffer for good than evil. Christ offers proof as to why this is so—suffering results in glory. The word *also* links our suffering and Christ’s suffering (notice how 4:13 continues this idea). Verse 18 gives four features of Christ’s death.

First, note the completeness of His death. This is expressed by *once for all* (*hapax*). It is used for a never to be repeated act (see Hebrews 9:25-26 and 28). The emphasis lies on its finality—no need for repetition.

Second, note the significance of Christ’s death. It is *for sins* and *for the unjust*. *For sins* shows the direction His death took—it was in respect to sins. *For the unjust* uses the preposition *huper*, which means *on behalf of* and carries the idea of substitution. Christ, in His death, became our substitute and settled the sin problem forever. We are therefore the benefactors of His work.

Third, the text states the purpose of Christ's death. The word *that* is *hina*, a word used to introduce a goal or purpose. The purpose of His death was "that He might bring us to God." The word *bring* is *prosago*, a technical term for one who gained audience at court for another. The purpose of His death, then, is to give us an entree to the presence of God.

Fourth, we have a description of Christ's death. Notice the sets of contrasts in 3:18. This also occurred *in the flesh* and *in the spirit*. Christ, we are told, was "put to death in the flesh." What does *in the flesh* mean? *Flesh* can refer to our sin nature as in Galatians 5:17. This is obviously not the meaning here. *Flesh* can also mean *physical body*. This is what the phrase in verse 18 means—"Christ was put to death physically (in the flesh)."

Next we are told He was "made alive in the spirit." KJV has the word *Spirit* capitalized, making it refer to the Holy Spirit (deity). Since there is no punctuation in the original, each context must decide if *spirit* (*pneuma*) means the Holy Spirit or the human spirit. Context shows that he is referring to the human spirit, not the Holy Spirit. Christ was put to death *in the flesh* (human) and *made alive in the spirit* (His human spirit). Notice the NASB recognizes this and translates "in the spirit" (*spirit* not capitalized).

It is important to remember that Christ had a body (Matthew 26:26), a soul (John 12:27), and a spirit (Luke 23:46).

When we are told that His spirit was *made alive*, this presupposes the death of His spirit. This is an often neglected aspect of Christ's death. He died physically, and He also died spiritually.

Death is essentially separation. In Matthew 27:46, Christ cries, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" Notice there was no answer to this cry. Why? To prove that the separation between God the Father and God the Son was real. It occurred when Christ was still physically alive! At the point at which sin was placed on Christ, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit separated from the human spirit of Christ. This is called death.

Following the cry of Matthew 27:46, we are told Christ offered another prayer found in Hebrews 5:7. It was directed to God who was "able to save Him from death." The word *from* is very important. It is the preposition *ek* and means *out of*. The prayer was not to be saved from dying, but rather to be saved out of death, i. e. a prayer for resurrection. I Peter 3:18 tells us this was answered in that He was "made alive in the spirit."

Redemption was primarily provided by the spiritual death of Christ with physical death as a result. Both were absolutely essential in accomplishing God's plan of salvation.



### The Activity of Christ's Spirit While His Body Was in the Grave 3:19-20

“...in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, <sup>20</sup>who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”

This will be seen in three parts. First, Christ's activity is defined in 3:19a. We are told “in which also He went and made proclamation.” The words *in which* (*en ho*) refer to verse 18, meaning *in which state* (between His death and resurrection). Further, in this state, *He went*, a participle that refers to a definite journey. On that specific journey, *He made proclamation* (*karusso*), which means *to proclaim a message*. Notice how an order is established—He died, He went, He proclaimed.

Second, Christ's audience is specified. He preached to the “spirits...in prison.” This cannot refer to human spirits. The word *spirit* without a qualifying word or phrase never refers to departed human spirits. The common usage of the word refers to demonic or angelic spirits (see Hebrews 1:7, 14; Luke 10:20).

Several factors help identify these angelic beings to whom Christ preached. First, they are in prison. II Peter 2:4 gives us the name of the prison—*tartarus*. This word occurs only one time in the Bible; it is the place of confinement of fallen angels.

Second, they sinned in Noah's day (3:20). The word *once* refers to a specific point of time. The word *when* (*hote*) tells the time when that specific point of sinning was. It occurred just prior to the flood.

What was their sin? Genesis 3:15 had promised one would come to crush Satan's head. Genesis 6 was Satan's attempt to defeat the plan by causing intermarriage of angels (“sons of God”) into the human race. I Peter 3:19 tells us Christ made proclamation to these imprisoned spirits.

A note is made that eight persons (Noah and family) were “brought safely through the water.” This does not refer to spiritual salvation but to physical deliverance. The word translated *brought safely* is *diasozo* and means *to escape*.

### Baptism Is an Antitype 3:21

“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...”

*Corresponding* is a translation of *antitupos* and means *antitype* or *illustration*. It agrees with the word *baptism*. Baptism is an illustration or an antitype. Types never saved; they were always given to teach or illustrate. In order to eliminate any confusion on the issue of what baptism accomplishes, Peter adds that it is not for “removal of dirt from the flesh” but the “appeal to God for a good

conscience." The word *appeal* is *eperotama* and is used to mean a *pledge*. Baptism, then, is our pledge. The pledge says we have a good conscience toward God. Note, baptism does not *gain* a good conscience; it is *evidence and proclamation* of a good conscience. The good conscience rests on confidence placed in the cross work of Jesus Christ.

### Suffering Always Eventuates in Glory 3:22

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

The "right hand of God" signifies the place of authority and honor. The word *gone* is the same word as *went* in 3:19, referring to a specific journey where He occupies the place of eternal sovereignty.

## THE PROPER ATTITUDE IN SUFFERING 4:1-6

### A Command to a Right Attitude 4:1

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

First, we are given a pattern for right attitude (4:1a). The word *therefore* is *oun* and is used to introduce something we should do in the light of the foregoing. It refers us back to 3:18 where we are told "Christ...died." In other words, Christ suffered; therefore, we are also destined to suffer.

Second, we are told we have an obligation to "arm yourselves also with the same purpose." The term *arm yourselves* is a single Greek word (*hoplizo*) used by the Greek military for heavily armed troops as against lighter armament. We are to have a "heavily armed attitude" to suffering. The expression *same purpose* (*autos ennoia*) carries the idea of a determined insight into something. We are to have the same determined insight into the purpose and value of suffering that Christ had.

Third, this attitude has a basis found in 4:1c. We are told that "he who has suffered (a present tense denoting continuous suffering) in the flesh (that is, physically) has ceased from sin." Notice first that Peter is speaking of a particular kind of suffering—namely, the physical kind. Some believers face this today; some do not. In I Peter, physical suffering was an inevitable result of being a believer (1:6, 7; 2:18-25; 3:8-17; 4:12-19). These who are experiencing this have "ceased from sin." The word *ceased* (*pauo*) is in perfect tense, referring to a completed work with abiding results. It is also in passive voice, meaning the subject is acted upon. This would translate something like "has gotten release" from sin. The word *sin* refers to the sin nature. Paul is relating to the doctrinal concept of Romans 6 where we are taught that the cross work of Jesus Christ broke the domination and connection that we have with our sin

nature. It does not mean we may not sin; it means we do not have to sin. I Peter 4:2 teaches that suffering aids a believer in realizing freedom from the control of his sin nature. Remember in II Corinthians 12:7 where Paul stated that his “thorn in the flesh” (some kind of physical suffering) kept him from the sin of pride?

### The Purpose of this Right Attitude 4:2

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

This is first stated negatively. The remainder of life is not to be regulated by the “lusts of men.” *Lusts* is *epithumia* and means *desire of any kind*. Life is always lived in harmony with a set of norms and standards and ambitions and desires. Our old sin nature is not to set these desires any more. Positively, life is to be lived “for the will of God,” which finds its exposition in the Bible, God’s Word.

### The Reason for this Right Attitude 4:3-6

“For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. <sup>4</sup>In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; <sup>5</sup>but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.”

First, we have had plenty of time to live according to our own plans (verses 3 and 4). Our past life is defined as one that “carried out the desire of the Gentiles.” *Carried out* is *katergazomai* and means *to perform, accomplish or achieve*. No matter what our age may be at the reading of the book, we have had plenty of years to accomplish purposes contrary to God’s plan. In fact, Paul names a few that had been dominant in many of their lives. They were sensuality (*aselgeia*), which referred to any act that shocked public decency; *lusts* (*epithumia*), which means *desires*—in this context, all those contrary to God’s will; *drunkenness* (*oinophlugia*), a word for a habitual drunkard (note that the early church was composed of some of the outstanding sinners of the Roman Empire who had been saved by God’s grace—see I Corinthians 6:9-11); *carousing* (*komos*), connected often with a drunken parade through town in honor of Bacchus; *drinking parties* (*potos*), refers to a drinking bout; *abominable idolatries* (*athemitos eidolotaria*), something prohibited by law, illegal, or criminal. All of their past life is to be forsaken (4:4). Two facts must be noted here. First, unbelievers will not understand this: “they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation.” *Excesses of dissipation* wraps up two Greek words. One is *asotia* and means *dissolute*; the other is

*anachysis*, meaning *an overflowing or pouring out*. Second, for this reason, they will speak evil of you as a believer.

A second reason for obedience to the will of God is found in I Peter 4:5-6. There are only two groups of men and two futures. First, that of the unbeliever (verse 5). The expression “the living and the dead” refers to unbelievers who are physically alive and those who are physically dead (John 5:25-29). The second group is made up of believers (verse 6). We are told the gospel was preached to those who are *dead*. This refers to physically dead believers. They had a two-fold career. While alive, they were “judged in the flesh as men” (a reference to the persecution they received in life from unbelievers—see 4:4, 14, 16). Now that they are physically dead, they “live...according to the will of God.”

## THE BELIEVERS SUFFERING WITH CHRIST 4:7-19

### LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE TRANSIENCY OF LIFE 4:7-11

#### The Basic Statement of Fact 4:7a

*“The end of all things is near...”*

The words *all things* are first in the sentence and therefore emphatic. The word *end* places the emphasis on the idea of transiency or the fact that everything around us is in the deteriorating process (Romans 8:21). This statement also involves the doctrine of imminency. This doctrine is based on John 14:3 where Christ said, “I will come again.” He does not say when, but the promise is nonetheless sure. Therefore, His return should be expected anytime (James 5:8). The words *all things* can also take in the idea of suffering, reminding believers that suffering is a temporary matter (I Peter 4:13).

#### How to Live in Light of the Lord’s Return 4:7b-11

*“...therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. <sup>8</sup>Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaint. <sup>10</sup>As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup>Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

First, we must live with a right mental attitude—“be of sound judgment (4:7b).” The word used here is *sophroneo*, which means to *have a sound mental attitude*. *Sober (napho)* means to *be sober as over against being drunk* and further carries the idea of a cool, calm, collected mind. Thus, “have a cool head so you will be able to pray.”

Second, in the light of the Lord's return, there is to be a preeminence of love (4:8). *Above all (pro panton)* means *before all*—before in the sense of preeminence and importance. This love is to be *fervent (ektenas)*, which means *stretched out* and is used figuratively of being intent. The two ideas of intense love and enduring love are being stressed. A similar exhortation was found in I Peter 1:22 where we were warned to have sincere love. There are two areas where Christians are warned not to “fake it.” We are not to fake love (Romans 12:9, II Corinthians 6:6, and I Peter 1:22). We are not to fake faith (I Timothy 1:5, II Timothy 1:5). The love described in I Peter 4:8 has a characteristic, it “covers a multitude of sins.” This means that genuine love does not publish, nor desire to publish, another's sins.

Third, there should be concrete expression of that love (4:9). The word *hospitable* is *philoxenos* and means *to be friendly to strangers*. There were two reasons for this. Believers have been scattered through persecution (see Acts 8 and I Peter 1:1); also, they did not meet in buildings as we do—only homes (Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, and Colossians 4:15). One should open his home to traveling believers. The Didache (an early Christian writing) does show that this did have some misuse, however. Some guests always overstay their welcome. This friendliness to strangers is to be *without complaint*. The Greek word is *gongusmos*. Its meaning is conveyed by its sound. For example, sizzle sounds like what it means; pop pops; boom booms, etc. This word *gongusmos* was used for the cooing of doves. Here it describes a cooing undercurrent. In other words, don't extend hospitality and whisper gripes about it when company can't hear!

Fourth, there should be proper use of spiritual gifts (4:10). The word *as* is *kathos* and means *in whatever quantity*. To the extent we have received a gift (*charisma, a special God given ability to function in the body of Christ*), we are to minister our gifts to one another as “good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” A *steward (oikonomos)* was a household manager. We are to reflect the many faceted grace of God consistently.

Fifth, in light of the return of the Lord, there is to be teaching of the Word (4:11). “Speaking (*laleo* here refers to teaching) the utterances of God”—this expression is used for an utterance of deity and serves to confine the man's message to the Word of God.

Sixth, in light of the Lord's return, there is to be empowered service. Its total aim is “that in all things God may be glorified....”

### THREE AREAS OF EMPHASIS IN REGARD TO SUFFERING 4:12-19

#### The Facets of Suffering 4:12-16

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

to you; <sup>13</sup>but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. <sup>14</sup>If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup>Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; <sup>16</sup>but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.”

First, suffering is normal (4:12). We are told “do not be surprised.” The grammar of the passage forbids a practice that is going on. Gentiles were not used to persecution. Therefore, the text addresses them by saying, “Stop thinking it alien to you.” The thing they conceived to be alien to them was the *fiery ordeal* (*purosis*). Here is a word that simply means *exposure to fire*. It was used of burning, as in baking or boiling or testing metals. In the LXX (Septuagint) it is used for the smelting of metals, as in Proverbs 27:21 and Psalm 66:10. In the light of the type of suffering Christians experienced in the first century, literally burning in fire cannot be ruled out. This *fiery ordeal* has a purpose. It is *for your testing*.

Second, suffering is fellowship (4:13). There is fellowship in time—“you share the sufferings of Christ.” In other words, we participate in the same sufferings He participated in. We must distinguish here, however, by revealing that His life sufferings were non-saving, while His death sufferings were propitiatory. We participate in the life sufferings of Christ.

Third, suffering shows prosperity (4:14a). *If* introduces a first class condition sentence, meaning the author assumes this to be so. The word *blessed* (*makarios*) refers to spiritual prosperity.

Fourth, suffering brings blessing (1:14b-15). “The Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” The word *rests* (*anapauo*) is a technical term from the realm of agriculture for planting a light crop on a section of ground to give the ground a rest. It is used in Matthew 11:28, “I will give you rest.” It is important always to note the types of suffering. Verse 15 describes the kind that comes about from being a *meddler*. The word is *allotriepiskopos* and means *a self-appointed overseer of the lives of others*. A Christian should never suffer because he cannot mind his own business. God is the Father of every believer and can handle every believer without our assistance.

Fifth, suffering is a witness (4:16). “...if anyone suffers as a Christian...” The word for *Christian* is *Christianos*. We must remember that the cult of Caesar was the state religion of the Roman Empire. People obeyed the law not only as a civil duty but as a religious duty as well. This, of course, preserved unity in a widespread empire. Those under the Roman system were *kaisarianos*. Those of the opposite who served Christ were *Christianos*. Rome considered Christians as challenging and defiant of its leadership and authority. Their answer was ten bloody persecutions. *Christianos*, in many cases, meant death.

### The Application of Suffering 4:17-18

*“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?”*

Discipline and testing is needed by believers. If this be the case, what is the end of the unbeliever?

### The Conclusion of Suffering 4:19

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

The word *entrust* (*paratithami*) is a banking term that means *to place on deposit*. This is absolute security. Where could a deposit be more secure than with God?

## SUFFERING IN SERVICE 5:1-11

We have just studied the longest and most specific portion in I Peter concerning suffering. It was described as a *purosis* or a *burning* (4:12 *fiery ordeal*). In the midst of this, there is to be a depositing of our souls with God (4:19). In doing this, believers need assistance. This is why chapter five introduces the elders. Believers are to be assisted toward stability through the teaching of pastor-teachers. Several words in English express this office. We have the word *clergy* from the Greek *klaros*, meaning *lot or portion* as in I Peter 5:3. We also use the word *reverend*. It means *to be feared* and is a name that is appropriate only to God (Psalm 111:9-KJV). We sometimes use the word *minister*, as in Ephesians 4:12 (KJV), but here it refers to all believers, not just a special class. *Preacher* is sometimes used and means *one who proclaims a message*.

### THE LEADER OF THE BODY OF LOCAL BELIEVERS 5:1-4

*“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; <sup>3</sup>nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

### I Peter 5:1 Connects to Chapter 4

The word *therefore* (*oun*) connects chapter 5 to chapter 4. Here is the connection. Believers suffer (chapter 4). *Therefore* (chapter 5), God provides men to assist believers under pressure to remain stable. Notice the elders exist *among you*. Peter is, therefore, not referring to a single local church. I Peter 1:1 would forbid this since the book

is addressed to scattered believers. These scattered groups were given gifted men. There are three designations in the New Testament for men responsible in overseeing and teaching believers.

First, it speaks of *elders (presbuteros)*, which means literally *one advanced in age*. As a title, its emphasis lies on the man's maturity. Second, we read of *bishops (episkopos)*, meaning *one who oversees*. As a title, it emphasizes the man's function. *Elder* and *bishop* refer to the same office, however. Third, the New Testament speaks of the *pastor-teacher*. The word *pastor* has accrued hundreds of stereotyped ideas, most of which have nothing to do with the Bible. The word *pastor* is Greek for *shepherd* and is a metaphor for what the man does. The word *teacher* tells how he does it. He shepherds by teaching.

#### Instructions for the Elders 5:1-4

First, we have the exhorter; his name is Peter, and he calls himself a *fellow elder (sumpresbuteros)*, which means *co-elder*. Notice, this eliminates the supremacy of Peter. He also calls himself a *witness (martus)*, a word that refers to an official witness. He is further called a *partaker (koinonos)*, a *joint participant*.

Second, we have the content of the exhortation (5:2-3). Note its simplicity. Only one simple verb—*shepherd*. This is the key duty of the pastor; everything else should only aid in its execution. The verb form of *shepherd* is *poimaino*. A *poiman* is a shepherd; *poimaino* means to *do shepherd work*. This word is often translated *pastor* and has certain connotations with it in English. All of them must be dismissed from our minds in order to gain the true biblical meaning. Two basic ideas are connected to *poimaino*. They are the idea of protection and the idea of provision. The exercise of them requires gift, maturity, and authority. Note these areas of gift (I Timothy 4:14), maturity (I Timothy 4:15), and authority (Titus 2:15). This Titus passage notes that he is to “speak and exhort and reprove with all authority.” The Word of God is to be taught with authority. In many areas of life, we must preface a remark by, “It is my opinion that...” or “I may be wrong, but I think...,” etc. Things are different, however, with Scripture. The Bible is ultimate truth; there is no appeal beyond it. The U. S. Treasury is the only source of American currency, and attempts to obtain it from other sources are criminal. The Scripture is the only source of absolute truth—any opinion contrary to it is wrong.

Third, we have the involvements of a pastor-teacher—*exercising oversight*. This phrase is the single Greek word *episkopeo*. It is not to be done under duress or constraint but done *voluntarily (hekousios)*, which means *deliberately*. It is not to be done for *sordid gain (aischrokerdos)*. The pastor was obviously a paid servant, but this was not to be his motivation. Paul enunciates that he is to be paid



(I Corinthians 9:7-14) and to be paid well (I Timothy 5:17), but this is not to be the motivating factor.

The pastor-teacher is also to present a pattern (5:3). He is not to bully or *lord it over* people (authority has its limitations). The way he leads is expressed in the words “proving to be examples to the flock.” When he exercises his authority, he must set the pattern by giving it personal priority.

Next, we have the crown for the pastor-teacher (5:4). Notice the order in the chain of command: there is the Chief Shepherd (Christ), then the shepherd (pastor-teacher), and then the sheep.

Several concepts emerge here. First, notice the pastor-teacher is not an employee of the church. A pastor-teacher is placed in a local church by God. A pastor-teacher must account directly to the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:17). The crown for the pastor-teacher is for service to the Lord alone!

### A SET OF FIVE RELATIONSHIPS 5:5-9

*“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. <sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”*

#### Relationship to the Pastor-teacher 5:5a

A first glance at the words “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders” would make us think Peter is speaking of age groups. In light of the context, however, the word *elders* refers to the pastor-teacher (the *shepherd* of verse 2). The younger would therefore refer to the congregation. They are told to *be subject* (*hupotasso*) or to line up under leadership in military fashion.

#### Relationship to Others 5:5b

All are directed to “clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.” What is humility? Humility is basically a correct knowledge of one’s capacity and limitations. In Revelation 3:17, pride is essentially assuming something beyond our capacity (a non-grace attitude). This same idea is contained in Galatians 6:3—pride is failure to see ourselves as we are. Romans 12:3 confirms the same. All of our capacities and limitations are defined by the Word of God. Humility is freedom from illusions about ourselves. With the proper attitude, we are to *clothe* (*egkomboomai*) ourselves, which means to *tie on oneself*. It is in the imperative mood—an order. Humility is the basic mental attitude that holds us together. This

attitude of humility has a doctrinal basis, as seen in 5:5c—"GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." The word *opposed* (*antitasso*) is a Greek military term for the opposition of an army. Pride calls out God's armies. *The proud* (*huperaphanos*) means to *shine above*. Humility is the only mental attitude that grace can work with. Grace is the only way God will bless. The word *humble* (*tapeinos*) is a colorful word; it was used to describe the Nile River at its lowest stage.

### A Relationship to God 5:6

Verse 6 begins with the word *therefore* (*oun*) that ties it to verse 5. Humility is an attitude that is indispensable under grace. We are told to *humble yourselves* (*tapeinoo*)—imperative mood, passive voice meaning *allow yourself to be humbled*. The phrase *under the mighty hand of God* views pressures as under the control of God who is omnipotent. God's purpose is introduced by the words *that He may exalt*. God's purpose is to follow suffering with glory. *At the proper time* is at His return (see 4:13).

### Relationship to Pressure 5:7

First, we have an order, "casting all your anxiety upon Him." *Cast* is *epiripto* and means *to throw or place on*. It is a word for making a deposit. Since it is in the aorist tense, the emphasis lies on a definite and deliberate act. A decisive action is in view.

Second, we have an emphasis. It is expressed in the word *all*. It is the first word in the sentence, making it emphatic. It is not each worry as it comes along but rather that total worry scene—including even the future ones. What are we to deposit directly with God? The text states it to be our *anxiety* (*merimna*). This action has a doctrinal basis—"because He cares for you." The word *cares* (*melei*) is in present tense, meaning this is a continuous state.

### Relationship to Satan 5:8-9

First, here is our basic preparation. We are to be of *sober spirit* (*napho*), meaning *to be calm and collected*. *Be alert* (*gragoreo*). It is possible to be alert only when the Word of God is known. It is possible to be calm only when the Word of God is believed. Verse 9 will call this being *firm in your faith*.

Second, we have a description of the enemy. Note the fullness of the description. We have two titles and a simile. Satan is called our *adversary* (*antidikos*), a word used of an opponent in a lawsuit. He is called *the devil* (*diabolos*), which means literally *to cast against—an accuser*. He is also called a *roaring lion*; his roaring is a roaring due to hunger. *Prowls* (*peripateo*) refers to pacing around in a circle. Satan is described as *seeking* (*zateo*); he is not waiting in hiding but on the prowl. *To devour* (*katapino*) means *to swallow down*, with total extinction as the goal.

Third, we are to have a defense against the enemy (5:9). Two factors give us a defense. First, stability in doctrine. *Resist* is *anthistami*, meaning *to stand your ground*. Success against Satan is not due to an offensive attack but rather to our dependence on preparation prior to an attack (Ephesians 6:11-13; James 4:7; I Peter 5:9). The word *firm* (*stereos*) means *firm and solid*. The second factor for stability is due to understanding of pressures, “knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

### THE PURPOSE OF LIFE 5:10A

“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ,...

This short verse expresses three things. First, it expresses the nature of God. He is *of all grace*. This means the kind of grace that covers every situation. God’s grace is comprehensive in coverage. Second, we are told about the process of God in regard to us—“After you have suffered for a little while.” *Little while* is the translation of *oligos* and means *a little, either in terms of time or degree*. The stress is that suffering is limited to this life (see I Peter 1:6; II Corinthians 4:17). Third, the sequence to maturity is clear—maturity follows suffering.

### GOD’S PRODUCT IN TIME 5:10B-11

“...will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

There are four facets of absolute maturity. The words *perfect*, *confirm*, *strengthen*, and *establish* are all in future tense. These are not ultimate possibilities but ultimate realities.

First, He will make you *perfect* (*katartizo*). The basic idea is to fit or join together. It was a medical term for setting a bone; in Mark 1:19 it is used for mending a net. In this passage, it conveys the promise that God will put us together so as to fulfill His plan.

Second, He will *confirm* us (*starizo*), meaning *to make solid or provide a solid foundation*. It is used in passages such as Luke 22:32; II Thessalonians 2:17, 3:3; James 5:8.

Third, He will *strengthen* us (*sthenoo*), meaning *to make strong*; and He will *establish* us (*themelioo*), which means *to lay a foundation*.

### SUMMARY

There is one single object: God’s glory. There is a single process: our suffering. There is one single product: stability.

NOTES

# C Conclusion of the Book

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I Peter 5:12-14

This is really a post script in the hand of Peter, the author.

*“Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! <sup>13</sup>She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark. <sup>14</sup>Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.”*

The Scribe: Silvanus

The Script: *exhorting (parakaleo)*—to address so as to encourage and exhort  
*testifying (epimartureo)*—to affirm emphatically

The Final Word: The words *chosen together (suneklektos)* are in feminine gender and could be greetings from Peter's wife. The *kiss of love* was intended to express good will, as our handshake. As so often happens, the external handshake continues, but the inner love lacks. Clement of Alexandria observed this of the kiss of love. He wrote, “Love is judged not in a kiss but in good will. Some do nothing but fill the church with the noise of kissing.”

From the birth of the body of Christ to the present, all remains the same. Each individual believer stands in daily need of growth through the Word of God and the blessing of suffering so that we, along with those we read of in I Peter, will ultimately bear His likeness.

NOTES

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