

Studies In I Peter

The Trial Of Your Faith

A Wonderful Message About. . .

"Facing the "fiery furnace" of suffering"

"Being established, strengthened, settled"

"Being hopeful"

Being willing to suffer for Jesus' sake
The church recognizing the need of preparation
for suffering

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*"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that
perisheth, though it be **tried with fire**, might be found unto praise and honour
and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."*

I Peter 1:7

-- Preface --

What do you know about persecution in America? It seems we do not have an inkling of what persecution really is. In some ways this is true when we consider the extent to which God's children are losing their lives in many foreign countries. It is a proven fact that more people are dying for their faith today than at any time in the history of the Church.

As we approach the coming of Christ, I think we will have to take a stand as we never have before. Culture has rapidly and drastically changed in our country during the past fifty years. True Christians are often hated, accused, put upon, abused and rejected, and this is true of our message as well. This is most often seen in the political arena as well as in society in general. We wonder what the Lord will allow in our life time.

And there is a lot of *suffering* that takes place in the lives of Christians! Many a wife has paid a price to stand for her testimony and for the Lord. Often this is true on the part of husbands, youth, and even children. I have witnessed this often, for many count their friends among the family of God because their relatives want little, if anything, to do with them. At times heart and mind suffering and anguish in life comes from the response of unsaved loved ones who hate their saved relatives. We are not to count suffering as something strange. *Let's see what God says about suffering!*

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The Trial Of Your Faith

Chapter One

Introducing The Letter

I Peter 1:1,2

The Author, the Writer: (II Pet. 1:1)

This book was written by Peter toward the close of his busy life (between A. D. 63 and 66). He was staying at Babylon on the Euphrates (5:13), where a Christian church had been established. The letter was sent by Silas (5:12), one of Paul's companions.

- > Peter had become a leader among the Apostles.
- > He was the spokesman. He belonged to the "inner circle" of the three friends of Christ.
- > He was the preacher at Pentecost. The first twelve chapters of Acts are centered around this apostle and his ministry. >> He opened the door to the Gentiles salvation (Acts 10).
- > He went about ministering to the Jews, and at last he died a martyr's death, (crucified upside down) being crucified under the Roman emperor, Nero.

We must never forget that the author of all Scripture is the Holy Spirit of God (II Tim. 3:16, 17), even as Peter himself claimed (II Peter 1:21). The inspiration of the Word of God is one of the great doctrines we are to uphold. The first word of the Book leaves us no doubt as to who wrote it. (II Pet. 1:1)

"**Simon**" was his given name at birth, a reminder that he (and all of us) are sinners by birth with a fallen sinful nature that can stoop as low as Simon's did when he denied His Lord three times. "**Peter**" was the name given to him by Jesus (Matt. 16:18) to identify him as "*the little rock*," one of the living stones (I Pet. 2:5) of the New Testament temple, "*The church which is his body.*" According to the gospels (Matthew 8:14-15; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39), Peter was a married man. Nothing in the gospels or the book of Acts, nor in his own epistles would indicate any association with the papacy or the Roman Catholic Church.

I. The Theme:

A. ***In View of the Number of References to Trials and Sufferings*** (1:6-9; 2:12, 18-25; 3:13-18; 4:12-19), we understand the theme of the book as "*comfort and counsel of suffering Christians. . . be hopeful*"

1. "**Suffering**" and "**sufferings**" appear 15 times in the book. They needed to prepare for suffering. How about us today?
2. "**Glory**" and "**glorify**" appear 16 times with an emphasis upon glorifying God in the midst of suffering and the glory that shall come to the faithful believer. Other outstanding words are **grace** and **hope**.

B. ***And Peter Wrote About Things That Were Precious:***

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| >> Precious trials of faith -- 1:7 | >> Precious blood -- 1:19 |
| >> Precious Cornerstone -- 2:4, 6; | >> Precious Christ Jesus -- 2:7 |
| >> Precious spirit -- 3:4 | >> Precious faith -- II Peter 1:1 |
| >> Precious promises -- II Peter 1:4 | |

II. The Salutation: (vv. 1,2)

A. ***The Person Who Wrote the Book -- Peter -- the Man:***

1. He was called "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts 4:13). However this phrase only means "*without formal education.*" But we must remember, as all the apostles, he was trained by the Lord for 3 years.
2. He was impetuous, eager, outspoken, enthusiastic, weak when he should have been strong, defeated when he should have been victorious. (Luke 22:31, 32)

3. A man just like us, but Christ called him, saved him, filled him with the Holy Spirit, and he was a great preacher and fisher of men. (II Tim. 1:9)
- B. **Peter -- the Missionary, an "Apostle of Jesus Christ."** The word means "one sent off on a special mission with due authority to fulfill that mission." (Acts 1 - 15) To be an apostle, one must have also seen the Lord.
1. Peter, the denier became Peter, the declarer. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter thundered the message of Jesus, the crucified, buried, and risen Messiah and Savior of Jews and Gentiles. (Acts, chapters 2 and 10)
 2. Peter is an example of I Corinthians 1:26-31.
 3. He was assigned especially to minister to the Jews (Gal. 2:1-10). The Lord had commanded Peter to strengthen the brethren (Luke. 22:32), to tend the (John 21:15-17; I Pet. 5:1-4) and to write this epistle was a part of his ministry. ***This book grew out of a life lived!***

Peter, the man.

Peter was a very unique figure among men. He was human, but in no way can we say he was average. He was a man of strength. He was a born leader, courageous, and decisive. But he was also a paragon of virtues, for he displayed many weaknesses as well. At times he was cowardly and vacillating, presumptuous, impetuous, abrasive and argumentative. It was to this man Jesus turned when He was ready to select His special twelve disciples (apostles).

- C. **The People to Whom He Wrote:** "They were strangers and sojourners." (1:1) All of the book applies to every child of God . . . to each one of us!
1. Peter emphasized the pilgrim character of God's people -- "strangers," passing through an unfriendly world, looking forward to a glorious destiny with their Redeemer. (1:7; Hebrews. 11:32-39)
 2. There were "**scattered**" throughout Asia Minor. These Jewish Christians were displaced, dispersed, and persecuted, hated, hounded, and alienated. They were like **seed scattered** in the world to spring up and bring forth fruit. (Matt. 13:36-38) Wherever God places us, we are put there as **seed** to spring up and bear forth a harvest for the Lord.
 3. The word strangers described the Jews living abroad as those still looking to Palestine as their homeland. He wrote to them as Hebrew Christians.
- D. **Their Spiritual Position Before God,** (v. 2)
Peter called these believers, "**elect.**" What is the Bible teaching about election?
1. **The fact of election in eternity!**
 - a). **Election defined:** The word elect is the same root word as "**chosen.**" as found in Ephesians 1:4. (John 6:37) The word means to "**pick out.**" "**to select out of a number. . . to choose for oneself.**" Election is the sovereign act of God's grace whereby He selects out from among mankind certain ones for Himself. (cf. John 15:16)
 - b). **Election determined:** It is determined by God's **foreknowledge.** *This word may mean simply ... previous knowledge.* But in Acts 2:23, I Peter 1:2; Romans 8:29, and I Peter 1:20, the word means more than just previous knowledge.

It means that by the counsel of the triune God, in which after deliberate judgment, certain ones from among mankind were chosen unto salvation. Predestination is that effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass.

- It is deliberative judgment of God resulting in a **decision** on His part.
- This is the first step in the act of God in bringing a sinner unto salvation.

c). Election fulfilled:

- The divine order is: foreknowledge, election, predestination.
- To fore know means “to set one’s love upon a person or persons in a personal way.” It is used in Amos 3:2 concerning Israel. God set his electing love on the nation of Israel.
- The plan of salvation includes more than the Father’s electing love; it also includes the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting the sinner and bringing him to faith in Christ. (II Thess. 2:13-14)

Election looks back to foreknowledge; predestination forward to the destiny, the fulfillment of the Divine will. The fore known are elected, and the elect are predestined, and this election is certain to every believer by the mere fact that he believes. (I Thess. 1:4,5)

Note:

There is no statement in the Bible about men being chosen to eternal damnation. In fact it is just the opposite. (II Pet. 3:9; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17) Such a viewpoint is man’s conclusion. A “whosoever,” gospel is plainly taught in the Word of God, and the thrust of the early church was a missionary energized, soul-winning evangelism that spreads the gospel everywhere. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deut. 29:29) God is omniscient -- He knows all things and is perfect in wisdom. His omniscience includes His foreknowledge. He knows beforehand that which will come to pass. His saving us is all of grace apart from anything we could do.

2. *The fulfillment of election in experience.*

a). The election of God the Father in eternity is fulfilled in human experience on this earth “*through sanctification of the Spirit.*” This is a “*setting-apart*” convicting work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the sinner whereby he is convicted of his sin of unbelief and brought to the point of putting his faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior.

b). Note these steps in II Thessalonians 2:13-14).

- God choice -- *chosen you to salvation,*
- the Holy Spirit’s conviction -- *through sanctification of the Spirit,*
His work in setting us apart to God.
- God’s call -- *called you by our gospel,*
- man’s conversion -- *belief of the truth,*
- the believer’s ultimate consummation -- *obtaining the glory of our Lord.*
(The Holy Spirit brings us to personal faith in Jesus Christ.)

3. *The fruit of election in its effects:*

The results of the act of God the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit are:

a). Obedience on the part of the sinner. He obeys the gospel (Acts 6:7; Rom. 10:16; II Thess. 1:8) and is saved.

b). The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood is put to his

account for the remission of his sins, and he claims that shed blood for his forgiveness. (Eph. 1:7; Hebrews. 9:19-22)

D. The **Provision** of God for Spiritual Blessings:

1. **Grace** -- The grace that saves, (Eph. 2:8,9), the grace that is sufficient for every test, (II Cor. 12:9), that teaches godly living (Titus 2:11,12), and guarantees a glorious hope (Titus 2:13; I Pet. 1:13).
2. **Peace** -- Peace *with* God (Rom. 5:1), and the peace *of* God. (Phil. 4:6,7, Isa. 26:3; John 14:27; His peace is to give us -- freedom from fears, agitating passions and moral conflicts. (Col. 3:15)

Note:

Peter was very burdened for the early church. They were going through much suffering. At a time like this it would be very easy for them to:

1. *faint, or to give up,*
2. *to become so discouraged that they would decide the Christian life was not worth the effort,*
3. *to fall away and possibly doubt God cared for them.*

Peter and the apostles had already been beaten for their faith and had been jailed; they knew the **fiery trials** which were to come and would soon be upon them.

For Your Enrichment

Salvation:

1. As far as God the Father is concerned, I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world. As far as the Son is concerned, I was saved when He died for me on the Cross. But as far as the Holy Spirit is concerned, I was saved the day (night) when I heard the gospel and received Christ as my Savior.

2. Peter does not deny man's part in God's plan to save sinners. He emphasizes the fact the Gospel was preached to these people, that they heard it, and acted upon it. (I Pet. 1:23, 1:12) ***The same God who ordains the end-- our salvation -- also ordained the means to the end -- the preaching of the Gospel of God's grace.*** (I Corinthians 1:18; Romans 1:14-16)

The glory of God:

The glory of God means the sum total of all that God is and does. "GLORY" is not a separate attitude of God, such as His holiness, wisdom and mercy. Everything that God is and does is characteristic by glory. He is glorious in wisdom & power & all He thinks and does is glorious!

Peter's Lessons:

There are many lessons Peter needed to learn: (These we also need to learn!)

1. Dependence on the Lord. (Matt. 14:28-31)
2. Spiritual understanding and personal humility. (Matt. 16:22-25)
3. Trust in the Lord's miraculous provision. (Matt. 17:27)
4. The weakness of the flesh. (Mark 14:29-31; 68)
5. The absolute essential of daily cleansing for fellowship. (John 13:8-10)
6. The complete forgiveness of Christ for his failure. (Mark 16:7)
7. The expression of confidence the Lord gave to Peter in His commission. (John 21:15-22)
8. Acceptance of the Lord's plan to bring Gentiles unto Himself. (An openness to give the gospels to some we might think do not deserve it. Acts 10, 11)

Peter's Eulogy of God, the Father

I Peter. 1:3-12

Introduction:

After his formal greeting in the first two verses, Peter immediately voiced his praise to God. The word, "*blessed*" is the translation of a Greek word from which we get our words, "*eulogy* and *eulogize*." It means "*to praise, to celebrate with praises, to speak well and highly of a person*." As Peter praised God, he left no doubt as to God's relationship to Christ for He is the "*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*." These are blessed names for our Savior. He is our **Lord**, our Sovereign, our Master. He is **Jesus**, Jehovah-Savior, the One who saved us from our sins. He is **Christ**, the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. He deserves to be called our Lord Jesus Christ.

The child of God should be constantly praising the Lord (Psa. 34:1; 145:2), for God loves such praise (Psa. 50:23; Hebrews. 13:15, 16)

We give glory to God for who He is! When we were born the first time, we were not born for glory. "*For all flesh is like grass, and all the glory of man like the flower of grass*." (I Peter 1:24; Isa. 40:6). Whatever feeble glory man has will eventually fade and disappear; but the glory of God is eternal. The works of man done for the glory of God will last and be rewarded. (I John 2:17) ***In this section we read of much which shows us God's glory!***

In Peter's eulogy, we find seven things for which all of us should praise and glorify the Lord!

I. For Our Position In the Family of God: (vv. 3, 4)**A. The Basis For This Position -- v. 3 "His abundant mercy."**

The mercy of God keeps from us what we really deserve -- Hell!

The grace of God gives us what we don't deserve -- salvation.

B. The Birth By Which It Became A Reality -- "begotten us again." This is the new birth experience, the act of the Holy Spirit whereby He imparts to us spiritual life and puts us into the family of God. (I Pet. 1:23; John. 1:12)**C. The Blessings of This Position -- (v. 4)****1. A living hope** guaranteed by a living Christ.

This hope is not some doubtful, nebulous *perhaps*; it is certain confidence based on God's sure promises that are guaranteed by Christ's resurrection.

Without His resurrection we would be of all men most miserable.

(I Cor. 15:12-19) By His resurrection we are on the victory side.

2. A glorious inheritance (Rom. 8:16-18)

(Notice how this inheritance is described.)

a). Incorruptible -- it will never decay, deteriorate, or disintegrate.

b). undefiled -- (same word used of Jesus in Hebrews. 7:26), it will never be tainted, spoiled, marred, or wrecked by sin and its effects.

c). Unfading -- its beauty and glory will never fade away, as does human beauty or the loveliness of a bouquet of flowers.

d). Reserved -- carefully guarded, protected, and set aside in heaven for us.

No one can swindle us out of our inheritance, or steal it away, or destroy it. What belongs to Christ belongs to us. (I Cor. 3:22,23) We are, in Him, heirs and joint-heirs who

will enter into all that is ours as those seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

He that spared not His own son, will never fail in meeting our every need for His glory and honor, yet in His providence work out His will, and chasten us when needed.

II. For the Preservation of God's Own: (v. 5)

One of the great doctrines we hold as Bible-believing Baptists is the "*preservation of the saints.*" When a person is truly saved, he is kept saved!

A. **The Fact Stated:** "*are kept.*"

1. *At any moment* the child of God can say, "I am carefully garrisoned about by God's protection." It is a 24 hour a day, year in and year out keeping until we arrive in heaven. (See John 10:27-29; I Tim. 1:12)
2. The word is a military word which means "*guarded or shielded.*" The tense of the verb means that we shall safely arrive in heaven. (Jude 24-25; Rom. 8:28-39)

B. **The Force That Guarantees It:** "*the power of God.*"

1. That power will never weaken, or fail, or be superseded by another power.
2. We are not kept by our own power, but by His power. Our faith in Christ has so united us to Him that His power now guards us and guides us.

C. **The Faith That Initiated It:** "*through faith.*"

It was through the faith we exercised when we received Christ as our personal Savior. By faith we continue to lay hold of God's power and promises, which in turn strengthens and preserves our faith. **And God uses our perseverance in His work of preservation!** (Col. 2: 6-7; We are guarded for His glory, if any believer was lost, it would rob God of His glory. (John 17:24; Eph. 1:13-14)

D. **The Fulfillment of It:** "*unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*"

An expression that refers to our deliverance from this evil world and the glorification of our bodies. (Phil. 3:20,21; Gal. 1:4) His keeping is another guarantee of our safe arrival in heaven.

III. For God's Purposes In Trials: (vv. 6, 7)

We rejoice in the final outcome of our salvation and look forward to that time. We must keep in mind that all God's plans and performs here is preparation for what He has in store for us in heaven. He is preparing us for the life and service yet to come. Nobody yet knows all that is in store for us in heaven -- but we do know life today is a school in which God trains us for our future ministry in eternity. This explains the presence of trials in our lives; they are some of God's tools and textbooks in the school of Christian experience.

Peter speaks of trials rather than tribulations or persecutions, because he was dealing with the general problems Christians face as they are surrounded by unbelievers.

A. **Trials Are Not Easy, But Are For a Time:** (v. 6)

1. They are but for a season, or period of time in God's providence. They come but not to stay. But rejoicing is still to be our experience.
2. We experience heaviness, literally, "*to experience grief and pain*" through many manifold temptations. As Christ did in Gethsemane. (Matt. 26:37) Heaviness means "*to experience grief or pain.*" (compare with Hebrews. 5:7-9)
3. We ought not just try to keep a stiff upper lip, or to put up a brave front just to appear to be "*more spiritual.*" To deny trials are painful is no help!

B. ***Trials Meet Needs:*** (I Pet. 5:10; James 1:2-4)

1. There are many kinds of testings, trials, afflictions. They are “*manifold*” meaning “*variegated, many-colored.*” They come in many different ways.
2. They are allowed for a testing of our character, and often bring heaviness, but we rejoice in our salvation and in the Savior Himself.
3. Sometimes trials are disciplines when we disobey God’s will. (Psa. 119:67) At other times, trials prepare us for spiritual growth, or even help to prevent us from sinning. (II Cor. 12:1-9)

C. ***These Are Controlled By God:*** (v. 7)

1. They often bring pain, heaviness and sorrow, but God keeps His hand on the oven. He may have to reset the clock; but, if we submit and are teachable, He will not allow us to suffer one moment too long. (Hebrews. 12:5-11)
2. God looks at the result of our suffering as gold, tried in the furnace, bringing out beauty and value. As the goldsmith desires to see his face in the hot vessel of gold, so God desires for us to reflect His glory and beauty.
3. God associates trials with glory! Peter associated *rejoicing* with *suffering*. While we may not be able to rejoice as we *look* around at our trials, we can rejoice in what God is *doing* in our lives.

Consider: The seed that fell on shallow soil produced rootless plants, and the plants died when the sun came up. (Matt. 13:1-9) The sun in the parable represents “*tribulations and persecution.*” The person who abandons “*his faith*” when the going gets tough is only proving that he really had no faith at all. A faith that cannot be tested is a faith that cannot be trusted. Far too many have a false faith that falls short of real salvation!

IV. **For The Person of Jesus Christ:** (v. 8)

A. ***Though We Have Not Seen Him, We Love Him.*** Why? (Rom. 5:5) Though we may not be able to rejoice *over* the circumstances, we can rejoice *in* them by centering our hearts and minds on Jesus Christ.

1. Every trial (v. 7) helps us to learn something new about our Lord.
2. Abraham discovered new truths when He offered up his son. (Gen. 22)
3. The three Hebrews discovered His nearness when in the fiery furnace. “*We walk by faith and not by sight.*” This faith rests totally on the Word of God. (John 20:29-31)

B. ***Though We Have Not Seen Him,*** we rejoice with an inexpressible joy and a glory that fills the soul. Why? BECAUSE OF JESUS -- all that He is, all that He has done, all that He promises for His own. HALLELUJAH!

V. **For the Prospect Awaiting Every Child of God:** (v. 9)

The end, or consummation of our salvation will be glorious. But we have glory now! We are to experience NOW some of the future glory. (John 17) We will receive the consummation of it all, He will finish what He has begun in us and for us. (Rom. 8:32-39; Rev. 22)

VI. For the Prophets and Their Ministry: (vv. 10, 11, 12)

The amazing thing is that this “*salvation*” we are awaiting -- the return of Christ -- was a part of God’s great plan for us from eternity. The Old Testament prophets wrote about this salvation, and studied closely what God had revealed unto them. They saw the sufferings of the Messiah, and also the glory that would follow, but they could not fully understand the connection between the two. In fact, in some of the prophecies, the Messiah’s sufferings and glory are blended into one verse or paragraph.

Even the disciples were not clear about the need of Christ’s death on the cross (Matt. 16:13-28). They were still inquiring about the Jewish kingdom even after His resurrection (Acts 1:1-8). The truth about the church was a hidden mystery in the Old Testament period (Eph. 3:1-13).

A. Their Search:

They sought diligently to understand the truth and message of their own writings. This understanding was not fully given until after Christ’s death and resurrection. (Luke 24:44-48)

B. The Subjects About Which They Wrote:

>> The grace of God, v. 10b >> The sufferings of Christ, v. 11 (The Old Testament prophets were searching out for an understanding of the sufferings of Christ.) (See Isaiah 53.) >> The glory that should follow, v. 11 (This is probably a reference to Christ’s millennial glory.)

C. The Spirit Who Testified Through Them. (vv. 11, 12)

These things were revealed through them, and reported unto the saved in Peter’s day.

VII. For the Preaching of the Gospel: v. 12b

“... by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

Through the preaching of the Gospel, the message and ministry of the prophets was fulfilled and explained. The Holy Spirit used those who preached the Gospel to reveal the wonderful truths in which we believers now rejoice. Peter praised God that he had been empowered by the Holy Spirit to be one of those preachers and he rejoiced in the glorious message of the Gospel.

For Your Enrichment

Note how Peter emphasized hope, security, love, faith, joy and glory -- truths that should thrill the heart of every believer and send him forth to tell others what they can have in Jesus Christ.

Note Some of the Highlights of Peter’s Life:

1. He moderated the election of Judas’s successor. (Acts 1:15)
2. He delivered the great introductory sermon of Christianity. (Acts. 2:14-40)
3. He was the early apologist for the new faith. (Acts 3:12-26; 4:8-12)
4. He moderated the Ananias-Sapphira problem. (Acts. 5:1-11)
5. He opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. (Acts 10:34-48)
6. He had the gospel of the circumcision committed to him. (Gal. 2:7)
7. He became the author of two Epistles which the Holy Spirit led him to write.
8. He knew what it meant to suffer for Christ’s sake and he wrote much about suffering.

Trials should make us better -- not bitter!

You may trust the Lord too little, but you can never trust Him too much.

-- Reflections --

1. Why are believers chosen by God? (Eph. 1:3-7)
2. How did Job respond to extreme loss and suffering? (Job 1:21, 22; 2:10)
3. Why did Job pass through such severe trials? (Job 1:8-12)
4. How did Paul regard suffering? (Rom. 8:18, 37)
5. Why do you believe the Christian is secure? (I Pet. 1:5; Eph. 1:13,14; Rom. 8:38, 39)

Staying Clean In a Polluted World

I Peter. 1:13-25

Introduction:

- > Note the word, “*wherefore.*” Because of all that we have for which to praise God, our lives should be different.
- > We are to live in this world, “*as obedient children.*”
- > Peter had to learn the hard way how important obedience was to the Lord. (v. 14a)
- > Jesus told him to “*let down your nets.*” Peter let down only one net and it overflowed with fish. He then realized how sinful he was because of his disobedience, and lack of faith. (Luke 5:1-11)
- > He had been told to watch and pray, but he failed to do so and this grieved his Lord. (Matt. 26:40, 41)
- > If an earthly father is thrilled to be able to say, “*my child is an obedient child,*” don’t you think our heavenly Father is delighted when we are His obedient children?

I. Our Responsibilities Fulfilled By Us. (vv. 13-16)

The Scripture we are looking at in this section puts a great emphasis on living a holy life. “*Every man that hath this hope (what we saw in the early study) purifieth himself, even as He is pure.*” (I John 3:3)

The root meaning of the word translated holy is “*different.*” A holy person is not an odd person, but a different person. He lives a different lifestyle. He desires to obey the Lord and in so doing will strive to be a holy child of God

A. “*Gird up the loins of your mind.*” (v. 13)

1. This simply means “*pull your thoughts together!*” Have a **disciplined** mind!
2. The image is a robed man, tucking his skirts under the belt, so he can be free to run.
3. The Christian is to guard his mind and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.(II Cor. 10:4-5).
4. He is to think upon the proper things. (Phil. 4:8), for as a “*man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*” (Prov. 23:7) Only by having a mind under God’s control, obeying the Word of God, can the believer live a holy life.
5. Outlook determines outcome; attitudes determine our action. What a contrast between Abraham and Lot and the focus of their mind and heart.

B. “*Be sober.*” (v. 13)

1. This word means “*to be calm and collected in one’s spirit, to be self-controlled.*” It means “*to be steady, controlled, to weigh matters.*”
2. While others allow their passions and self-will to go uncontrolled, the Christian is to bring himself under the control of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)
3. To be serious about God’s will and toward being holy is extremely important.

C. ***“Hope to the end . . . at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*** (v. 13)

1. Ah, to have a hopeful outlook depends upon the focus of our minds.
2. This entire statement suggests once again the confident expectation and anticipation of the completion of God’s work in the believer’s life.
3. His work will be culminated and completed *“at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” the time of Christ’s appearing for His own.* (Phil. 3:20,21; Col. 3:4; II Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13; Phil. 1:6)

D. ***Do not “fashion yourselves according to your former lusts.”*** (v. 14)

1. We had been *“children of disobedience.”* (Eph. 2:1-3) True salvation always results in obedience. (Rom. 1:5; I Peter 1:2)
2. The word *“fashion”* refers to an outward appearance that is patterned after something, somebody. Far too often Christians do not look much different in appearance than the lost around them.
3. Children inherit the nature of their parents. God’s is holy, therefore, His children ought to live holy lives. The inner and outer fashion of our lives ought to manifest that we belong to Him.
 - 1). Nature determines appetites and actions.
 - 2). A dog and cat behave differently because they have different natures.
4. The believer is to look differently and act differently for ***obedient*** children will want to obey. (Rom. 6:16-18; Romans 12:1,2)

E. ***“Be ye holy in all manner of conversation (conduct, life).*** (vv. 15, 16)

1. Peter often speaks of being ***called*** for we are ***called*** to be holy. (v. 15)
 - 1). We are *“called out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* (2:9)
 - 2). We are called to suffer and follow Christ’s example of meekness. (2:21)
 - 3). In the midst of persecution, we are called *“to inherit a blessing.”* (3:9)
 - 4). Best of all, we are called to *“His eternal glory.”* (5:10)
2. ***“It is written,”*** is a statement that carries great authority for the believer. The first step toward being pure is to ask, *“What does the Bible say?”* What are its precepts, principles, promises, commands for me to follow?
3. Here is a command we must not treat lightly. BE YE HOLY! A holy life is becoming to a child of a holy God. God knows no other standard to set before us. It is God’s calling to us (I Thess. 4:7), and His work in us. (I Thess. 3:13)
4. Peter was quoting from the Old Testament Law. (Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26)
5. God’s Holiness is an essential part of His character and He calls us to be holy in character and in conduct. We are partakers of the divine nature, (II Peter 1:4), then surely we ought to *“follow after holiness.”* (Heb. 12:14)
6. It involves being separated from that which is unclean. *It is not true that some things in life are secular and some sacred.* All of life is to be holy as we live to glorify the Lord. And God will judge every man’s work. (Eph. 1:12)

II. Our Redemption -- Bringing Change In Us: (vv. 17-21)

Obedient children will not forget they have been redeemed, blood bought -- not belonging to themselves, but are set free from sin by the payment of a price. What an incentive to stay clean in a polluted world.

A. *The Path of the Redeemed:* (v. 17)

1. We have the great privilege of calling upon the Father. How blessed it is to call God "*our Father.*" (Gal. 4:6,7)
2. God will be impartial in judging every man's work. We must serve with holy reverence, or godly fear, seeking not to displease Him whom we love.
3. We must recognize that we pass through this world as *sojourners* -- as *foreigners* living in a strange land alongside people who are not children of God. The redeemed should honor God and seek to win those lost to Him.

B. *The Price of Our Redemption:* (vv. 18, 19)

1. Peter spoke often about Christ's sufferings and sacrifice. (2:21; 3:18; 4:1, 13; 5:1) We are not redeemed with silver or gold, such as the coins used to buy slaves out of slavery. Peter used the words, "*corruptible*" and "*incorruptible*" several times: (I Peter 1:4, 18, 23, 3:4)
2. Redemption does not come through the vain manner of life handed down through a family heritage or environment.
3. But with the PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST. That blood is precious because of the Person to whom it belonged and because of its mighty power to cleanse from sin. (I John 1:7; Eph. 1:7; John 1:29) **Worthy Is the Lamb!** (Rev. 5:11-14)

C. *The Plan of Our Redemption:* (v. 20)

God planned it all! In the councils of the triune God in eternity it was designated that Jesus Christ should be the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. (Acts. 2:22-24; Isaiah 53)

D. *The Person Who Redeemed Us:* (v. 21)

By Him we believe in God. By Him we base our faith and hope in God because He is the risen, glorified Savior. HE REDEEMED US! (Titus 2:14)
Note that we are redeemed by blood (God's part) and by believing (our part).

III. Our Regeneration -- Begotten By Him: (vv. 22-25; James 1:18)

If we are to be **obedient** children, transformed, salvaged from a polluted world, it will be because of our regeneration. . . made a child of God. Every saved person has experienced the same spiritual birth, through faith in Christ Jesus. (John 3:1-16)

A. *What Is Regeneration?* (vs. 23)

1. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in a person whereby He gives that person a birth into the family of God. (John 3:3-7) **It is to be born of God!**
2. Thus we are born again (John 1:11-13; I Pet. 1:23) when we receive Christ as our Lord and Savior.
3. Our first birth was of "*flesh,*" and the flesh is corruptible, whatever is born of flesh is destined to die and decay. We have regeneration, not reformation.

- B. **How Is It Accomplished?** *“by the word of God.”* (v. 23; Titus 3:5)
1. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to convict us of our sin, creating faith in our hearts toward Jesus Christ, (Rom. 10:17; Acts 20:21) converting us to Jesus.
 2. No one is saved apart from the Word of God. That is the reason why this Word must be faithfully taught and preached. (v. 25)
 3. Notice these three things about the Word in this passage:
 - a). It is *energizing*; it lives and makes alive. (John 6:63; Hebrews. 4:12)
 - b). It is *enduring*; nature’s beauty fades and dies. Man’s glory passes away. *“The Word of the Lord endureth forever.”*
 - c). It is *expressed* through the preaching of the Gospel. (I Cor. 1:18, 21)
- C. **What Are the Results of Regeneration?**
1. We have a purified life through obeying the truth (v. 22a). The Spirit works within us, bringing about His work of grace and love.
 2. We are to love one another with a ***pure heart fervently***. This was Christ’s command to His own (John 15:12, 17). It is a mark of being born again. (I John 3:14-18; 4:7-12)
 3. Divine love is to flow through us unto others, a brotherly love that is unselfish, sacrificial. It will be a *“sincere, unfeigned love”* that others will receive from us.

-- Reflections --

1. What does it mean for a Christian to be holy?
2. What provisions does God make for holy living? (See II Peter 1:3,4)
3. What does it mean to be called children of obedience? (See I Peter 1:13-15).
4. What is God’s provision for transforming a self-centered life into a Christ-centered life? (See Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:6, 11, 13-14)
5. What do you think is the one key God has given believers by which they may appropriate His provisions? (See Romans 1:17; 10:17; II Peter 1:4)
6. What does it mean to *“pass the time of your sojourning here in fear”* (I Peter 1:17)?
7. Do you practice *“unfeigned, fervent love”* to the brethren?

Distinctives of the People of God

I Peter 2:1-10

We are the people of God. . . what a holy position. What a blessed privilege! To be an earthly king, one must be born royalty. More important than being a king on earth is the position of being a child of the King of the universe. The “*wherefore*” of verse 1 reminds us of the spiritual birth (1:23) whereby we became children of the King and joined ranks with the people of God. This divine birth which imparts to us a new kind of life demands a new kind of behavior. This passage reveals some great truths about the people of God.

I. The Sins They Lay Aside: (2:1)

The people of God are to put away, once for all, any sins that may be in their lives. (Look at Colossians 3:5-14.) Here five specific sins are named in this verse.

- A. **Malice** -- a word that means any kind of wickedness or evil conduct. I think of malice as being the desire to get revenge. . . the leftover dregs from bitterness.
- B. **Guile** -- craftiness or cleverness in trying to get away with wrong. “*A bate or deceit,*” which can be manifested in one’s speech.
- C. **Hypocrisies** -- *deception* in putting on a front. A hypocrite is one who tries to pretend he is something he really is not. The people of God are to be genuine and above board at all times.
- D. **Envies** -- resentful begrudging of the blessings or success that someone else has. To be moved with jealousy.
- E. **Evil Speaking** -- speaking against another person by slander or defamation of character.

It must have been that these kinds of sin abounded among the unsaved of that day, and now to be free from the practice is very important. These are often our sins! They are to be laid aside once and for all. The people of God are to judge sin in their lives and be separated from such practices.

II. The Source Of Their Strength: (2:2-4)

The people of God derive their strength from:

- A. **Feasting on the Word of God.** (v. 2) The figure of speech “*newborn babes,*” suggests a newly born infant (compare Isaiah 28:9). Even as a just-born infant must be nourished at its mother’s breast, so also must a Christian be nourished by feeding on the Word of God.
 - 1. God’s Word *has* life, *gives* life and *nourishes* life. We should have appetites for the Word just like hungry newborn babes! It is sad when we don’t have a hunger for the Word.
 - 2. It is the “*sincere*” or unadulterated Word of God, without guile or deceit.
 - 3. It brings growth when read and applied. (Jer. 15:16; Heb. 5:11-14; I Cor. 3:1-4)
- B. **The Lord** -- “*If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*” He is the ONE to whom we come, (v. 4a) and He is one in whom we are to abide. (John 15:1-7)

This is the action of **continually** coming to the Lord for precious fellowship with Him. Such fellowship will result in great spiritual strength.

III. The Stone Upon Which The Believer Is Built: (2:5-8)

Christ is the Living Stone upon which the people of God are “*built a spiritual house.*” (Matt. 7:24, 25) “*On Christ the Solid Rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.*” This passage answers the question: “*What think ye of Christ?*” (Matt. 16:41-46) and “*Whom say ye that I am?*” (Matt. 16:13-16).

There is only one Savior, Jesus Christ, and only one spiritual building, the Church. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of the Church (Eph. 2:20), binding the building together. Whether we agree with each other or not, Christians belong to each other as stones in God’s building. **And He is building His Church through the witnessing believers!**

A. **What Do the Scriptures Say?** (cf Isa. 28:16; I Pet. 2:6)

1. He is the chief cornerstone, the only foundation. (I Cor. 3:11) He is the living stone because He was resurrected from the dead.
2. He is the elect, the chosen One of God. (v. 4) God laid in Zion a chief corner stone, elect and precious. (v. 6) And we are living stones.
3. He is precious, the One who is held in high esteem.
 - a). God honored Him. (Matt 3:16, 17; 17:5; Phil. 2:5-1)
 - b). Paul honored Him. (Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:15-19)
 - c). Peter honored Him. (II Peter 1:17,18) DO YOU HONOR HIM?

B. **What Do the Saints Say?** (vv. 4, 7) “*Unto you who believe, He is precious.*”

1. The saints of all ages have **testified** with the hymn writer, “*He is precious to me.*” . . . *of great value!* This will be our testimony throughout eternity. (Rev. 5:11-4; 7:9-11; 19:1-6) Is This YOUR Testimony now?
2. Those who believe in Him shall never be **confounded** (put to shame or confusion). Faith in Christ is never misplaced or disappointed. (v. 6)
 - a). We should not be in a state of **disorder**, disturbance, confusion or tumult.
 - b). Tumultuous disorder should not take place in the saints’ lives.

C. **What Do the Sinners Say?** (vv. 7, 8) This was true of those disobedient, or unbelieving when Jesus was on this earth. (Eph. 2:2, 3) To the lost Christ:

1. Was **disallowed**, (vv. 4, 7) -- put to the test and disapproved by man.
2. Was a **Stone of Stumbling** -- as a loose object or obstacle against one who strikes it.
3. Was a **Rock of offense** -- as a ledge rising out of the ground that becomes a trap over which one trips and falls.

Those who were disobedient, (disbelieving, nonperishable), thus looked upon Christ and rejected Him. Such would stumble at the Word, which is the penalty for refusing to believe it. (I Peter 2:8; I Cor. 1:18)

IV. The Sacrifices They Offer: (2:5)

A. **We Are Lively**, (literally living stones) **Stones, Built Up, A Spiritual House.** (v. 5a)

1. We are described as blocks in God's building. As living stones in His Church.
2. Maybe we look like a pile of rubble, but God sees the finished structure. (Eph. 2:19-22) As such we are an habitation through the Spirit.
3. This is a spiritual house in which we are a part of an holy priesthood.

B. **Note that the People of God Are To Offer Up:**

"Spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." We come to God only through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6; I Tim. 2:5) (Consider the High Priest of the Old Testament and his access to God.)

1. Not bloody offerings, the blood of lambs, and bullocks, but those which are offerings of the heart -- the sacrifices of surrender, of prayer and praise.
2. Where there is a priest (and we are priest unto God), there is also the notion of a sacrifice. A priest did not come into God's presence without a sacrifice!
3. These are to be sacrifices of the heart -- spoken forth from the lips, and in a holy life. It should be the sacrifice of worship -- of praise and honor and glory to a precious, worthy Savior and Heavenly Father.
4. What do we have to sacrifice?
 - a). yielded body, for His glory; (Rom. 12:1,2; Matt. 16:24,25; Rom. 6:13)
 - b). praises unto our God.; (Heb. 13:15)
 - c). good works to perform as unto the Lord. (Heb. 13:16; Eph. 2:10)

V. A Summary of Who We Really Are: (2:5, 9, 10)

Peter shares a list of precious truths about their (and our) condition in the past and present position in the Lord. This is an awesome listing which should challenge our own hearts.

A. **Our and Their Past:**

1. We were in darkness, (v. 9) This word describes man's sinful, lost condition, his rebellion against God; and God's judgment upon him. (Exod. 10:21-23; Mark 15:31-33; John 3:19; 8:12, 35, 46; II Cor. 4:6; Eph. 4:17-19; 5:8)
2. "Not a people." (v. 10) -- no relationship with God, no fellowship with Him,, no blessings from God, *"without God and without hope."* (Eph. 2:12)
3. "Had not obtained mercy," (v. 10) -- All who reject Christ have not experienced the blessings that come because of the mercy of God. We were without pity!

B. **Our and Their Present:**

1. Living stones, (v. 5) -- Every believer is a living stone in the great house of a spiritual family that Christ is building for Himself. (Eph. 5:25-27)

2. A spiritual house, (v. 5) -- The Church of Jesus Christ, composed of all who are born again, is described in the Bible as a body, a building and a bride.
3. A holy, royal priesthood, (vv. 5, 9) -- We are "*king-priests*" unto our God, a position of royalty and priesthood with direct access to God.
 - a). We have the privilege of total freedom to come directly into the Lord's presence. (Heb. 10:19-25)
 - c) We come through our mediator, Jesus. (I Tim. 2:1-8; I John 2:1,2; Heb. 7:25)
4. A chosen generation, (v. 9) -- We are a body of people with a common life, the special object and result of God's choice in giving us spiritual life and putting us into His family.
5. An holy nation, (v. 9) -- We are a multitude of people who have been made partakers of the divine nature and set apart for the service of a Holy God.
6. A peculiar people, (v. 9) -- The word peculiar does not mean odd or strange. ***It speaks rather of the unique, private, personal ownership of the saints of God.***

C. Our and Their Purpose:

"To show forth (tell out, declare abroad) *the praises of Him who called us."*
(See Acts 4:18-20)

-- Reflections --

1. Do you feel that God has a special place in His Church for each believer to fill? Why? (See I Corinthians 12:7-11, 18)
2. Why has the Lord saved us and made us a "*holy temple in the Lord*"? (See Eph. 2:19-22)
3. Who are the "*living stones*"(2:5) in the "*spiritual house*," and what is their responsibility?
4. What are the spiritual sacrifices which the believer should offer?
5. What happens if a believer does not fulfill his designed place in the local church?
6. What does it mean to be a priest?
7. What is the identity of the "*holy nation*" of verse 9, in its boundaries, its capital, its ruler, its subjects and its constitution?

A Christian Life In A Christless World

I Peter 2:11-25

The idea of *situation ethics* has permeated our society -- doing what seems right according to the situation regardless of God's principles of right and wrong. Peter wrote about how to live in a Christless world. His letters were filled with instructions and commands for Christian living. The emphasis in this passage is for all of us to heed.

It is impossible to live as the Lord desires without **submission**. This certainly is not a popular topic in this day of lawlessness and the quest for "personal fulfillment." *Submission does not mean slavery or subjugation, but simply the recognition of God's authority in our lives.*

I. God's Call For Separation: (2:11,12) (Cf II Cor. 6:11

A. How He Addressed the Christians: 2:11,12

1. Their position before God: "*dearly beloved*"

As Christians, we must constantly remind ourselves *who we are*, and Peter did this in verse 11, we are *God's dearly beloved children*. Eight times in his two epistles, Peter reminded his readers of God's love for them (I Peter 2:11; 4:12; II Peter 1:7; 3:1, 8, 14-15, 17). We are accepted in the beloved. (Eph. 1:6)

2. His plea to them: "*I beseech you.*"

This expression means, "*I beg of you, please!*" God is not a God of coercion; He is a God of compassion who tenderly pleads with us for a willing response.

3. Their pilgrimage in the world: "*strangers and pilgrims*"

We have these two terms again, suggesting a child of God is a person who is just passing through a foreign area and who is not at home alongside of those whom he meets. (See John 15:18-21; 17:14-16; Phil. 3:20,21)

B. What We Are To Abstain From: (be ye separate), (v. 11b)

1. The adversaries identified: "*abstain from fleshly lusts.*"

a). The word abstain means: *Hold yourself constantly back from and in check.* There is a constant downward pull, and we must put on the brakes.

b). The fleshly lusts are the strong, evil desires of the old sinful nature. There must be constant watchfulness and opposition against sin.

2. The antagonism expressed by these lusts: (v. 11a)

They "*war against the soul.*" These evil desires are like an army carrying on a military campaign; they are waging a warfare to drag down and defeat the soul. (II Cor. 10:3-5; Gal. 5:17; Eph. 6:12)

C. How We Are To Live Before the Unsaved: (v. 12a) "*Having your conversation, (manner of life) honest among the Gentiles. . .*"

We are to have a steadfast, godly life before the lost, an honesty and goodness that is eye-catching among the heathen (lost) around us. Consider: (Phil. 1:27; I Tim. 4:12; I Peter 1:15; Heb. 13:5)

D. ***How The Unsaved May Act Toward Us:*** (v. 12b)

1. The antagonism: They may talk down a person, defame, criticize, and censure us as if we are evil doers.
2. Our answer: Our good works which they will behold should cause them to consider their need in the day of visitation. They may indeed later praise the Christian whom they hated, because of the life which drew them to Christ. ***Yes, someone is watching you!***

II. **God's Command For Submission to Governmental Authority:** (2:13-17)

A. ***A Rule to Follow:*** (v. 13)

The word "submit" is a military term means "*to arrange in military fashion under the command of a leader.*" (Wuest) The early Christians lived under the authority of a godless, cruel Roman dictatorship, but they were to submit to this rule. GOD IS ALWAYS AGAINST LAWLESSNESS!!

1. Source of human government: There are two distinct realms of authority, human and divine. (Luke 20:19-26). The Christian is to be in proper submission to each. God has ordained human government as an institution for the welfare of mankind. (Romans 13:1-7)
2. The scope of human government: "***... every ordinance of man.***" These are the rulings and laws governing human relationships for the good of a given society. The purpose of human government is to control and deter evil. (Roman 13:3-4; I Tim. 1:8-10; I Peter 2:14)
3. The spheres of human government: Every level of human government should be respected and obeyed.

B. ***The Reasons For Following This Rule:*** (vv. 14-16)

1. For the Lord's sake: (v. 13) This is something the Lord wants us to do so that we can reveal Him to others. A Christian who is not a law-abiding citizen is a reproach to the Lord.
2. As a part of "*the will of God.*" It is God's will for every child of God.
3. Law officials are to punish evil doers. (v. 14) We are to do what is right! If we do evil and break the law then we contradict divine authority and revelation and aid what is wrong rather than what is right.
4. For the sake of a good conscience: (Acts 24:16; Romans 13:5) Our conscience is awakened and sharpened by our new life in Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Word of God. ***We need to keep a clear conscience!***
5. For the sake of a good testimony: (vv. 15, 16) With well-doing we are to silence any criticism ungodly men have. We are free, but to act as servants of God to stand against wickedness and for truth and righteousness.

C. ***A Resume' of Our Duties In Society:*** (v. 17)

1. ***Honor*** all men -- We are to respect and honor all men in every way we can.

2. **Love** the brotherhood -- We are to love all who are in the God's family, all who are born again. (John 13:34; I John 4:7-21)
3. **Fear God** -- Reverence God! Give Him His due and rightful honor and place in our lives. (Ecc. 12:1, 13-14) Where there is no fear of God, there will be a corrupt society.
4. **Honor** the king -- Give those in governmental authority rightful respect and esteem.

Present day liberals and social reformers would be (and are) at great odds with Peter and Paul. **Neither of them advocated a revolution against the social order, freedom marches, sit-down demonstrations, riots, or peaceful, nonviolent protests against the social ills of the day.** And no doubt there were as many then as now.

Peter and Paul were concerned with evangelization, edification and the exhibiting of godly living by the citizens of heaven. We do not have marching orders from the Lord to reform society; our marching orders are to get men regenerated into the family of God. (Phil. 2:15-16; Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-41)

III. Peter's Exhortations To Servants: (2:18-21a)

A. **How He Addressed Them:** "servants." (v. 18)

These were the household slaves, domesticated servants, who lived under the authority of one householder. Thus they were under close scrutiny and much pressure.

B. **What He Advised Them To Do:** (vv. 18-20)

1. **"Be subject to your masters with all fear."** They were to be in complete subjection and submission to their masters. No hint of striking for bargaining rights, higher pay, benefits, etc. **To what masters were they to be in subjection?**
 - a). To the "good and gentle" -- Those who were good hearted, mild, yielding, and not unduly rigorous.
 - b). Also "the froward," -- "One who was unfair, surly, and set against his servant to the point of mistreatment." The meek, pure, honest, submissive life of a godly servant was a rebuke to such a master, to bring conviction.
2. **Suffer without retaliation:** May be:
 - a). suffering for faults, (v. 20) It is no glory (nothing worthy of fame, praise or commendation) if a person suffer when he is at fault. The word, "buffet," means to be beaten with fists, as Jesus was. (Isa. 52:14; Matt. 26:67)
 - b). suffering wrongfully (v. 19, 20)
We are to be willing to suffer wrongfully, taking it patiently, manifesting composure, self-control and gracious endurance without retaliation.

This is thank worthy, an action that is acceptable and commendable.
 - c). What they could anticipate, (v. 21a)
"Even hereunto were ye called. . . ." Unto this very thing (suffering) you were called. A Christian can expect and should anticipate suffering (Phil. 1:29) **Where will we find courage for suffering?... read on!**

IV. The Example of Christ: (2:21-23)

A. *The Challenge Given To Us*, (v. 21)

“Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example...” He left us a model or a pattern for us to trace, to follow -- even in adverse circumstances, we are to follow His steps. ***We are to take the course of action He took, to follow His steps.***

B. *His Conduct*: (vv. 22,23)

1. *“He did no sin.”* No sin in His life.
2. *“No guile in His mouth.”* Never once could they accuse Him of crafty, tricky, deceitful speech, though they sought often to *“catch Him in His words.”* (Mark 12:13-17; Luke 11:53-54).
3. No reviling when He was reviled. When His tender heart was wounded with sharp railing and words of contempt and scorn, He did not revile in return.
4. No threatening in return for what He suffered or to get even.
5. No rebellion against His Heavenly Father for allowing such mistreatment. He committed (handed) Himself over to His Father for safekeeping. He completely trusted God to take care of Him and to avenge His adversaries. (See Romans 12:17-21).

We are to follow His steps. Is your reaction Christlike when you suffer wrongfully and are unjustly treated?

V. The Explanation As To Why He Thus Suffered: (2:24,25)

Christ did not just suffer and die as an exemplary martyr. But for US!

A. *For Our Redemption From Sin*: (v 24)

He bore our sins in His own body upon the tree (cross). As the Old Testament priest carried the sacrifice up to the altar, so Christ carried all our sins upon Himself. He bore the penalty, guilt, and judgment of our wickedness and sin.

B. *For Our Release From the Power of Sin*:

Because of what He did for us, we can be dead to sins and live unto righteousness. (Gal. 2:20) The power of the sinful nature with all of its sins has been broken. (Romans 6:11-14; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 4:22-24)

C. *For a Complete Renewal of Our Relationship With God*:

“By His stripes we are healed.” (Isa. 53:5) Bodily healing is not in view here; it is not in this context, which has to do only with our sins and *“going astray.”* (Isa. 53:6) This healing is often means of a spiritual renewal. (See Hosea 6:1; 14:4)

D. *For a Complete Restoration to God’s Oversight Over Our Souls*: (v. 25)

Notice our past as lost sinners: *“As sheep going astray.”* Then our present as a saved sinner: *“now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop (overseer) of our souls.”* Notice again the contrast: ***“you were -- but now!”***

Oh, how Jesus suffered: He was reviled, blasphemed, falsely accused, buffeted, beaten with men’s fists and with the stripes of the Roman scourging -- all for us as the Good Shepherd.

-- Reflections --

1. Why did God say to Christians, *“be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”*? (See II Corinthians 6:14-16)
2. How would you identify *“filthiness of the flesh and spirit,”* from which Paul said Christians should cleanse themselves? (See II Cor. 7:1)
3. Why should Christians be submissive to authority?
4. How can believers be separated, but not isolated?

Your Marriage -- Is It Wedlock or Deadlock?

I Peter 3:1-12

A strange situation exists in our day for we have never had so much information available about sex and marriage as we do today, yet we have never had more marital problems and divorce. Even many Christian homes are falling apart.

The fact that a man and woman are both saved is no guarantee that their marriage will succeed. Marriage is something that we have to work at; success is not automatic. In this text, women had unsaved husbands and Peter is sharing with them how to win their husbands to Christ. There are some very important principles and admonitions for us to follow. Every couple can learn from Peter the essentials for a happy and successful marriage.

I. The Example of Christ: (3:1a, 7a)

Much of our learning comes by way of imitation. When we try to imitate the world and get our standards from Hollywood instead of heaven, there will be a lot of trouble in the home.

A. **The Phrases** “*in the same manner,*” and “*in like manner*” refer us back to Peter’s discussion of the example of Jesus Christ (2:21-23). Just as Jesus was submissive and obedient to God’s will, so a Christian husband and wife should follow His example.

B. What Kind of Model Do We Follow?

1. If we follow the wrong model we can expect potential ruin to our lives and to our marriages. Do we clutter up our minds with the world’s trash?
2. When we imitate the world then we can expect Satan has a distinct advantage.

II. God’s Directive To The Wife -- Submission: (3:1-6)

Twice in their section, Peter reminded Christian wives that they were to be submissive to their husbands. (vv. 1, 5) The word translated “*subjection,*” is a military term that means “*to place under rank.*” God has ordained a place for everything and submission has to do with order and authority.

A. Submission Is An Obligation:

1. God has commanded it in His wisdom. He knows that this is the best arrangement for a happy, fulfilling marriage.
2. Headship on the part of the husband is not dictatorship, but the loving exercise of divine authority under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 11:3)
3. Husbands and wives are partners, not competitors. “*It is not a matter of yours and mine, but ours.*”

B. Submission Is An Opportunity: (3:1b, 2)

1. An opportunity for what? To win an unsaved husband to the Lord.
2. God would use the wife’s submission as a powerful spiritual influence in the home. It does not mean the “*wife gives in*” to her husband so she can subtly manipulate him, and get him to do what she desires.

An unsaved husband will not be won to Christ by a wife's nagging or preaching in the home. Without a lot of talking, but by living the life she can impact him for conversion. It is the character and conduct of the wife that will win the husband -- not arguments, but attitudes of submission, understanding, love, kindness and patience.

C. Submission Is An Ornament: (3:3-6)

In a Christian home the husband and wife must minister to each other. God tells the husband in Ephesians 5:25-230 some keys to "beautify" his wife. A wife needs to also encourage her husband with respect and honor. (Eph. 5:33)

1. The word translated "Adorning" is *Kosmos* in the Greek, and gives us the word "cosmos" (the ordered universe) and "cosmetic." It is the opposite of chaos.
2. Peter warned the wives not to major on external adornments but on inner character. Glamor is something a person can put on and take off, but true beauty is something that can always be present. Glamor is corruptible; it decays and fades.

In that day it was not unusual for women to have elaborate *coiffures*, studded with gold and silver combs and even jewels. They were elaborate and expensive garments, all for the purpose of impressing one another. Glamour is artificial and external; true beauty is real and internal. True beauty grows more wonderful as the years go by, and a women who cultivates the beauty of the inner person will be truly beautiful. Peter did not forbid the wearing of jewelry any more than the wearing of apparel. The word "wearing" in verse 3 means "the putting around," and refers to the gaudy display of jewelry.

3. Submission As An Example: (3:3-6)

Peter closed this section by pointing to Sarah as an example of a godly, submissive wife. (Read Genesis 18 for a background.) She called him "lord" which shows her attitude. The believing wife is to cultivate a "meek and quiet spirit." God will watch over such a wife even when her unsaved mate creates problems and difficulties for her.

III. God's Directive To the Husband: (3:7)

Why did Peter devote more space to instructing the wives than the husbands? Because the Christian wives were experiencing the whole situation and needed guidance.

In general, women were kept down in the Roman Empire, and often they were treated as slaves, or a piece of property. The wives' new freedom in Christ created new problems and challenges. And many of them had unsaved husbands and needed extra encouragement and enlightenment.

As Peter wrote to the Christian husbands, he reminded them of four very important areas of responsibility in their relationship with their mates.

A. Physically -- "dwell with them."

1. This implies much more than sharing the same address. Marriage is a union of two people... "they two shall be one flesh." (Eph. 5:31).
2. He must make time to be home. One survey revealed that the average husband and wife had 37 minutes a week together in actual communication. No wonder many marriages are falling apart, especially after children leave the home -- the parents are left alone to live like strangers.
3. "Dwell with them" -- also suggests the husband providing for the physical and material needs of the home. (Titus 2:4-5) It is the husband who ought to provide. (I Tim. 5:8)

B. **Intellectually** -- "**according to knowledge.**"

1. Know your wife, understand her, know how she "ticks."
2. Know or understand your wife's moods, feelings, needs, fears, and hopes.
3. Learn to "listen with the heart" and share meaningful communication with her.
4. When your mate is afraid to be open and honest about a matter, then you are building walls and not bridges. Sir, be a bridge builder.
5. "*Speak the truth in love.*" (Eph. 4:15) Love without truth is hypocrisy, and truth without love is brutality. We need both truth and love.

C. **Emotionally** -- "**giving honor unto the wife.**"

1. Chivalry may be dead, but every husband must be a "*knight in shining armor*" who treats his wife like a princess. (Is it not interesting that the name, Sarah, means princess?)
2. Peter did not mean the wife is a weaker vessel mentally, morally, or spiritually, but rather physically. Generally, the man is the stronger and ought to bear the load, ***treating his wife like an expensive, beautiful, fragile vase -- in which is a precious treasure.***
3. "*Giving honor*" means that the husband respects his wife's feelings, thinking, and desires. (He may not agree with her ideas, but he respects them.)
4. The husband ought to be the "*thermostat*" in the home, setting the spiritual emotional temperature. The wife often is the "*thermometer,*" letting him know what the temperature is. *Be sensitive to what makes your wife happy.*

D. **Spiritually** -- "**that your prayers be not hindered.**"

1. It is assumed the husband and wife pray together. Often they do not; and this is the reason for much failure and unhappiness.
2. If something is wrong in the marriage -- their prayer life will be hindered!
3. They need their own private, individual prayer lives -- but they desperately need to pray together. (Acts 6:4;
 - a). They are heirs together. If the wife shows her husband submission and consideration and if they both submit to Christ and follow His example then, they will have an enriching experience in their marriage.
 - b). How precious -- you are joint heirs of the grace of life -- which may refer to children. (Psa. 127:3)

Reflection. . . questions to ask yourselves

1. Are we partners or competitors? Do we truly pray together consistently?
2. Are we helping each other become more spiritual?
3. Do we work at understanding each other? Are we sensitive to one another?

IV. Biblical Directives For Good Communication: (3:8-12)

One could look at this portion in many different ways -- but let's look at it as applies to the context of husbands and wives and their lives together. Remember these people were suffering trials, persecutions, afflictions beyond what we have endured.

Building good, godly communication, by:

A. **Meeting Needs:** (3:8)

1. Need of **oneness:** *“Finally, be ye all of one mind.”* Naturally, this would apply to the church, but also to the homes that make up a church.
 - a). Unity in the marriage, ah, how good! Agreement, not arguing, unity and not division and strife.
 - b). Coming to agreement about Bible answers concerning finances, child rearing, use of time, giving, showing affection, and a host of things that make up life.
2. Being **Compassionate:** (3:8) *“having compassion one to another.”*
 - a). Sincere feelings “for and with” the other person. We get our English word *sympathy* from the Greek word.
 - b). Not being hardhearted, indifferent, but having empathy, tenderness, and therefore manifesting a compassionate heart.
3. Love As **Brethren:** *“love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.”*
 - a). Loving as the best of companions, precious friendship, sharing life. (Mal. 2)
 - b). Sharing both joys and trials. (Rom. 12:15; I Peter 1:22) Love will be revealed in pity (tenderness), and in courteous actions.

B. **Experiencing Blessings:** (3:9)

1. *“not rendering evil for evil.”* Not giving railing for railing, returning hurt for hurt. We can live on the human, sinful level and return evil for evil and good for good -- OR we can live Biblically and give good for evil. (Rom. 12:21)
2. God promises blessings, gives blessing to those who give good for evil, who seek to bless when hurt. . . seeking to live after Christ’s example. Giving blessing we will receive blessing.

C. **Having Good Days:** (3:10, 11) *Will we have good days?*

1. We must deliberately decide to love life. This is an act of the will: *“He who wills to love life.”* It is an attitude of faith in every situation; the opposite is a pessimistic attitude which can cause us to feel all is *“vanity and vexation of spirit.”* (Ecc. 2:17)
2. To have good days one must keep his tongue from evil, his lips from guile. (We need to read James chapter 3 often, most our problems are from the tongue!)
3. Such a one must turn from wickedness and shunning it, do right. Let him seek those things that bring peace and harmony, with no agitating passions or moral conflicts. ***The right must be pursued with all the heart!***

Reflections

1. Why did Peter state that the Christian wife should be in subjection to her husband?
2. Why, and how should the Christian husband give honor to his wife?
3. Consider I Corinthians 11:3 as to how the word *head* relates to your own life as a spouse.
4. What can you do to improve your marriage? How could your relationship to your spouse become as a *beautifully song duet*?
5. What important guidelines did Peter give the Christian community that should also be applied to the husband and wife relationship? (I Pet. 3:8-11)

The Believers' Reaction To His Critics!

I Peter 3:12-22

What do we know about suffering? Sprinkled throughout this Book of I Peter are a number of passages dealing with the subject of the believer in times of suffering. The theme of the book is "*Comfort and Counsel in Suffering!*" Peter wrote a great deal of practical instruction for Christian living. They could have well been tempted to say it is too hard to live the Christian life in the midst of suffering!

I. The Assurance the Child of God May Have: (3:12) "*For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*"

A. We Know Where Our Protection Is:

1. God sees us, looks over us with all seeing eyes and ever-listening ears, and everlasting enmity against those who do evil.
2. Critics may be able to destroy the body, but they can't touch the soul. (Matt. 10:28) These Christians may have suffered as Paul spoke of in II Corinthians 11:23-27 and Hebrews 11:35-38, yet they had a holy boldness and courage in the face of it all. They trusted His protection and preservation!

B. We Are To Know God's Purpose For Our Lives: "*Followers of that which is good.*"

1. The word *followers* is the same word as translated, "*zealots.*" The verb form speaks of *burning with zeal*. (Tit. 2:14; Eph. 2:10; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20, 21)
2. "*That with well doing we may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*" (I Pet. 2:15) Today we have many zealots for evil, or immoral causes.

II. The Attitude the Child of God Is To Have: (3:14) He writes... "***But and if...***"

What if suffering does come our way because of a righteous life, how should we respond, then what?

A. Recognize the Reason For Your Suffering: "*if he suffer for righteousness sake. . .*"

1. You have no cause for remorse or regret. Standing for righteousness is what God wants of us.
2. It is the way for us. . . as it was the way for Him. (John 15:18-21)

B. Rejoice In the Prosperity That Can Come To You In Suffering:

1. The word rejoice actually means prosperous.
2. Often those who are persecuted are spiritually stronger and more prosperous in the Lord than those who do not suffer. We have it too soft!
The tree that must withstand the storms must send its roots deep!

C. Resist Fear and Refuse To Be Troubled.

1. This statement means: "*Don't be filled with fear by the fear which they seek to stir up in your hearts.*" (Prov. 29:25) Fear can be a snare!
2. Consider Daniel and his three friends. (Dan. 3:16-18); the religious leaders and the apostles in Acts 4:13-21. Let us claim II Timothy 1:7!
3. We must refuse to be disturbed or agitated! Oh, how small Christians are in this age, especially in our country. So many insignificant, temporal things

disturb us, agitate us, and upset us. Often over almost nothing!

III. The Answer the Child of God Is To Give: (3:15-17)

This answer will take a threefold direction as follows:

A. **Godward:** (vv. 15a, 17)

1. *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.”* The word *sanctify* means to “set apart for a holy purpose.”
2. Give Him, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the first place of obedience. Allow Him to be Master, surrender to Him, give Him absolute control.
3. Submit to the will of God. (v. 17) Accept it may be His will that you suffer. It is far better to suffer in the will of God than to escape suffering out of the will of God.

B. **Manward:** (v. 15b)

1. What to do: *“be ready.”* Never be caught off guard! The watchword of the early believers was: READY! (Acts 21:13; Rom. 1:15). There was never a loss of words when their witness was required. We see this in the Book of Acts.
2. When to do it: *“always”* At any moment, at all times, we are to be ready.
3. What to say: *“give an answer.”* This word meant, *“To talk off from.”* It was used of an attorney who talked his client off from a charge against him by a strong verbal defense. We are to defend the Bible, share it with the critics as we lovingly give an answer for our faith.
4. To whom to say it: *“to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you.”* We have a wonderful hope (confidence) in Christ. We are never to be timid nor hesitant about an answer when we are asked what we believe.
5. How to say it: *“with meekness and fear.”* Don’t be high handed or domineering, but meek and lowly of heart as Jesus was, and be respectful toward all men.

C. **Selfward:** (v. 16)

1. Have a good conscience! (Be like Paul --Acts 24:16; 23:1.) Though you may be accused of evil and wrongdoing, know in your own conscience that such accusations are false.
2. *“A good conscience is the best bedfellow!”* -- Dr. F. B. Meyer
Maintain a good manner of life in Christ. (Phil. 2:27,28)

IV. The Glorious Example of Our Savior. . . In His Suffering: (3:18-22)

One of the best things for us is to suffer for well-doing rather than for evil-doing (vs. 17). If that seems hard to understand, then consider Christ and His sufferings (v. 18). Peter continually pointed suffering Christians to Christ for comfort, courage and conquest. *“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”* (Rom. 8:37)

A. **The Sufferings of His Death:** (v. 18)

In this verse we have a tremendous presentation of Christ’s death for us! If anyone could ever know what suffering is -- HE DOES!

1. Surely His death involved the most intense sufferings known to man. That suffering was predicted in -- Psalm 22:1,2, 6-8, 11-18; Isa. 60:6; 52:14-53:10.

2. His suffering is graphically **described** in Matthew 26:31- 27:50.
 >> He suffered once for all, never to be repeated -- Heb. 9:26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14
 >> He suffered for SINS, yours and mine -- Isa. 53:6; Heb. 9:28
3. His death was a **substitutionary** death, for He died the "*just for the unjust.*"
 An absolute just, holy Person took our place and died in the stead of all sinners (unjust). If one does not accept this, then His death is meaningless.
4. His death was a **success**, for He died that He might "*bring us to God...*"
 By His death, He can lead us into God's presence, by His death we can be assured of a full and righteous entrance into the presence of God, for He is a LIVING SAVIOR. (See Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 2:14,15; Heb. 10:19,20.)
5. He was sustained in His death, for He "*was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit...*" He was caused to live by the Spirit. The soldiers, Pilate, Joseph, Nicodemus and others knew He died. **But He is ALIVE.**
 (Consider the emphasis on His resurrection in Acts, chapters 3 and 4)

The balance of this portion of I Peter 3:19-22 will be found in the Appendix Section; It is a difficult portion of Scripture to understand and I decided to deal with suffering in general in the balance of this chapter.

SUFFERING IN THE LIFE OF THE CHILD OF GOD

Does Life Go Better With Christ?

This is a very important question for every child of God to consider, especially in our prosperous, comfortable country like America. I wonder how many times I have heard Christians testify of how much easier their life has been since they came to Christ? And then I have heard preachers bring an entire message about how Christianity gives you a life full of perks, of material blessings. . .and "*this is the way to go.*" It seems that some Christians in the prosperous West describe the benefits of Christianity in terms of material, psychological, and relationship benefits. Yes, there are many blessings, but are these what the Word of God sets forth?

Was not Paul living the abundant life when he wrote about suffering? Did he miss the abundant life because he experienced so much suffering? (II Cor. 4:8-10; 11:23-28) For Paul the Christian life was not the so-called "*good life*" of prosperity and ease. I think many Christians in the United States do not understand the truth about suffering as taught in the Word of God.

I. **Biblical Principles of Persecution:** (Consider these questions.)

1. According to II Timothy 3:12, is persecution unlikely, or inevitable?
2. According to John 15:18-21, what is the reason for Christian persecution?
3. How were the disciples strengthened by Paul and Barnabas? (Acts 14:22)
4. Against whom was the persecution directed? (Acts 9:4,5) Has that changed?
5. Give some reasons why some Christians forsake Christ? (Matthew 13:20, 21)
6. What three things does Christ expect from us in Matthew 16:24?
7. What three things does the Lord promise to those who are prepared to be persecuted? (Matthew 5:10-12)

8. What were Peter and John's reactions when they were beaten for their faith? (Acts 5:41)
9. What was the context of the disciple's prayer when they were persecuted? (Acts 4:23-30)
10. In Revelation 12:11, three ways to overcome Satan are mentioned, what are they?

Some Say, "Well, Persecution Will Never Happen Here!"

Consider these truths about Christians experiencing suffering!

I. Some Common Misconceptions:

- A. *Suffering is punishment for some wrong or sin.* (I Peter 4:19; 3:14; 4:16)
- B. *Thinking that one should never be sad.* (I Peter 1:6)
- C. *Thinking that only Christians suffer.* (Genesis 3:16-19)

II. What the Bible Teaches About Suffering:

There are different levels or types of persecution: pressure, humiliation, discrimination, threats, loss of material possessions or physical violence.

- A. *Christians are to expect suffering.* (Philippians 1:29; John 15:18-21; 17:14; I John 3:13; I Peter 2:21; 4:12; I Thessalonians 3:3,4; Acts 14:22; II Timothy 3:12; Mark 13:9, 13)
- B. *As we suffer, know the teaching of the Word of God.* (Philippians 3:10; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 4:7-11; 12:9, 10)
- C. *God blesses right suffering.* (Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22,23)
- D. *Suffering in the life of the child of God has a purpose.* (I Peter 1:6,7; II Corinthians 12:7-10)
- E. *Suffering can be the will of God for us.* (I Peter 4:16; 2:21)
- F. *We should expect suffering as we follow the example of Jesus.* (I Peter 2:19-25)
- G. *We must react under suffering as the Lord did.* (Matthew 5:38-49; Romans 12:14, 17-21; I Peter 2:21-23)
- H. *We are to edify our brethren when we and they are called to suffer.* (I Thessalonians 5:14; II Corinthians 4:7-18; Colossians 3:16,17; Ephesians 5:19-21)
- I. *Rest in the will of God.* (Ephesians 5:17; Hebrews 4:1, 9-11)

III. Dangers In Times of Suffering:

- A. *There is a difference in suffering for Christ and suffering for one's guilt or foolishness.*
- B. *We are apt to embrace shame or feel it.* (Hebrews 2:9-12)
- C. *We could easily become bitter instead of having joy and thanksgiving.* (Exodus 15:23, 24; 16:2; I Thessalonians 1:6, 7; 5:15-18)

IV. Purification Often Comes Through Suffering:

Suffering can be used to purify, purge, burn up "dross." Suffering in itself cannot refine or purify, only the grace of God can produce refining and purification, but suffering can cause us to recognize our need. It can help us understand that nothing can be done in our strength, and can make us sensitive to sin. It caused Paul to learn to completely depend upon the Lord. (I Cor. 12:9, 10). How will we respond? Will we entrust our souls to God? (I Peter 4:19; Acts 7:59; Galatians 3:4; Romans 8:18; II Timothy 2:12)

V. God's Power and Blessing Can Be Known Through Suffering: (I Peter 4:14)

The Holy Spirit rests upon those who suffer. In the Old Testament a cloud was a symbol of the presence of the Lord. This cloud was known as the glory of the Lord. (I Kings 8:10, 11). A similar glory comes on a believer by the Holy Spirit when he suffers for Christ. The Spirit comes to minister, that is -- to fill, to cover, to clothe, to enclose, to sustain, to help, to strengthen, to intercede, and to make up that which is lacking. This glory was seen in Stephen (Acts 6:5-8; 7:55, 60). The darker the night, the brighter the stars (II Corinthians 12:9, 10)

-- Ideas taken from Book: *The Triumphant Church*, pgs. 80 - 88

Three Pictures Of A Faithful Christian!

I Peter 4:1-11

Peter had a lot to say about *time* (1:5, 11, 17, 20; 4:2-3, 17; 5:6). Certainly the awareness of his own impending martyrdom had something to do with this emphasis (John 21:15-19; II Pet 1:22) If a person really believes in eternity, then he will make the best use of time.

Peter also constantly pointed readers to Christ and their relationship to Him: (1:2, 3, 7, 13-16, 18, 19, 21; 2:5-7, 21, 25; 3:16, 18, 21, 22) He knew how important it was to keep one's eyes on Christ and stay close to Him. This chapter opens with the thought: Since Christ has suffered for us, we should take a faithful stand for God, just as He did, no matter the suffering we might experience.

We find here the believer pictured as a soldier, servant, and steward. Our attitude toward these truths make all the difference in the world.

I. The Believer -- As A Soldier: (vv. 1-6)

The expression "*arm yourselves,*" was used of a heavily armed soldier putting on his armor and taking his weapons in preparation for battle. Our attitudes are weapons and weak or wrong attitudes will lead us to defeat. Outlook determines outcome, and a believer must have the right attitudes if he is to live a right life.

A. The Soldier's Armor:

1. He is to arm himself "*with same mind,*" that is, the mind of Christ. As Christ thought and acted under pressure of suffering, so is His faithful soldier to think and act, for "*as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" (Prov. 23:7)
2. Think of what sin did to Jesus (4:1). He had to *suffer* because of our sin, so how can we enjoy that which made Jesus suffer and die on the cross? With our mind we must detest sin, turn from it, cease sinning -- have Christ's mind about sin!
3. Many battles are won in the mind, and thought life. (See I Cor. 2:14-16; II Cor. 10:3-5; Phil. 2:5-8; 4:6-9) The full armor is described in Eph. 6:10-18.

B. The Soldier's Action Against Sin: (vv. 1-3)

1. He has ceased from sin (literally, has gotten release from sin.) One who suffers for Christ shows he has really been saved and wants to live for God.
2. He no longer wants to spend his time satisfying the evil desires of the flesh as other men. (v. 2)
3. He realizes he lived in sin long enough in his past life. (v. 3) He renounces the sins that wrought the will of the Gentiles, such sins as:
 - > Lasciviousness -- sensual actions that are disgusting, public indecency evil appetites.
 - > Lusts -- passionate evil desires that are sinful and wicked.
 - > Excess of wine -- a drunken life overflowing with wine.
 - > Revelings -- carousing in wild parties.
 - > Banquetings -- drinking bouts such as those held, in that day, in connection with religious ceremonies.
 - > Abominable idolatries -- idolatry that was contrary to law and justice and resulted in lawlessness.

The will of the unsaved world is to live in sin. Lost sinners imitate each other as they conform to the fashions of this world. (I Pet. 2:12; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 3:1-3) God urged Israel to remember that they had once been slaves in Egypt. (Deut. 5:15). We sometimes forget the bondage of sin and remember only the passing pleasures of sin.

C. **A Soldier's Ambition:** (v. 2)

His one desire was to **DO** the WILL of God as he turned from past sinful habits and associations. (This should be our desire.)

D. **The Antagonism of the Soldier's Opponents:** (v. 4)

1. His old *buddies* are astonished that he does not continue running with them in their sinful life that overflows with wicked practices. They do not think it strange when people wreck their bodies, destroy their homes, and ruin their lives by running from one sin to another!
2. Let a drunkard become sober, and an immoral person pure, and the family thinks he has lost his mind. (Consider Festus and Paul, Acts. 26:24)
3. They will "*speak evil*" of the Christian. . . maybe hating him, but we must be patient with them for they are blind. (II Cor. 4:3,4)

E. **The Accountability of ALL Men to God:** (vv. 5, 6)

Peter was reminding his readers of the Christians who were martyred for their faith. They had been falsely judged by men, but now, in the presence of God, they received their true judgment.

1. The WHO of verse 5 speaks of those who are speaking evil. God holds Himself in readiness to judge the quick (living) and the dead.
2. The saved will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:10); the unsaved at the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Verse six does not teach the dead have a second chance to hear the gospel and to be saved. "*Them that are dead*" refers to believers who had died. They had the gospel preached to them while they lived. They believed the gospel and were saved. They then were judged "according to men" (by men) while they lived on earth in the flesh. They now live in the spirit (disembodied state) according to God's power and plan for them as they wait for the resurrection of the body.

II. The Believer As A Servant -- Waiting For His Master's Return: (vv. 7-9)

"*The end* (termination) of all things (the present order of things) is at hand (drawing near). The early Christians had a tremendous eschatological emphasis in their teaching and living. Christians in the early church expected Jesus to return in their lifetime. (Rom. 13:12; I John 2:18) The fact that He did not return does not invalidate His promise as given in II Peter 3 or Revelation. 22:20.

They believed the course of end-time events was shaping up and moving to a climax. Peter knew a time of suffering was coming upon them. That prospect meant the Lord's soon return for His servants, **a prospect that called for the right kind of living in obedience to each command, such as:**

A. **Be Serious Minded:** (v. 7)

1. To be thoughtful, considerate. The fact that the end of all things is at hand should make a solemn impression. (See Mark 5:15).

2. When the minds of men all around are loose, immoral, and flippant about life we dare not have this attitude as Christians. We are to take the responsibility of obedience seriously.
3. The opposite of being sober means to be "*in a frenzy, madness.*" There have been many who have written books, claiming dates for Christ's return, etc., who had a *mania*, a new interpretation -- lacking sober judgment.
4. Ten times Paul admonished people to "*be sober minded.*" It is one of the qualifications for pastors (I Tim. 3:2) and for the members of a church. (Tit. 2:1-6)
5. To make the best use of our time -- we need to live in the light that we are called to occupy until He comes. Watch unto prayer, be burdened for what burdens God!

B. *Be Watchful By Prevailing Prayer:* (v. 7)

1. We are to have a calm and collected spirit that results in a consistent prayer life. (I Tim. 2:4-8) The dark valley of suffering was almost upon them. They would soon suffer greatly at Nero's hand.
2. The Christian who is always in a hurry, whose mind is crowded with fears and worries, who is never at rest in his heart, does not do much praying.
3. We need to be alert in our praying, to be controlled. There is no place in the Christian life for lazy, listless routine praying -- without heart and passion.

C. *Be Ministering With Fervent Love:* (v. 8)

1. Its ascendance, "*above all,*" else, have love. Courtesy without love is cold, generosity without love is empty; Christianity without love is lifeless and powerless.
2. Its ardency -- "*fervent,*" love is to be expressed. It is to be earnest and intense, not shallow, superficial, selfish -- given "*among yourselves.*" Such love should be given eagerly, and intensely.
3. Its achievement -- "*for love will cover a multitude of sins.*" Love will veil or hinder the knowledge of sins in another's life. It will forgive and hold no grudge.

If we really look for the return of Christ, then we shall think of others and properly relate to them. Love is badge of a believer in this world (John 13:34-35) In times of testing and persecution, Christians need to love one another, and be united in heart.

D. *Be Active In Blessing Others:* "*Use hospitality one to another, without grudging.*"

1. (v. 9) They were to be friendly to strangers, generous to fellow Christians who, because of persecution, were deprived of the necessities of life.
2. Hospitality is a true virtue commanded and commended through the Word of God. (Ex. 22:21; Deut. 14:28-29). (see I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
3. This ought to be done without murmuring, grumbling, or complaining but cheerfully, knowing God honors those who are serve others.
4. This makes our love practical, not just empty words, but to love in word and in truth. John wrote much about giving such love. (I John

III. The Believer As A Steward: (vv. 10, 11)

A steward is one who is responsible for the proper use and disposition of that which is entrusted to his care. We are to be faithful stewards. (I Cor. 4:2)

A. *The Man Who Is A Steward:* "As every man hath received the gift."

1. Every believer is a steward of all God has given him. The word, "gift" suggests something pleasant or agreeable, a favor, a benevolence.
2. It is a favor God has bestowed that is to be passed on to others. This could also refer to spiritual gifts given to us to use for God's glory. (I Cor. 12)

B. *The Manner of This Stewardship:* (v. 10b)

1. We are to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God and we ought to minister by God's grace.
2. The many-sided aspects of God grace is to be expressed through the believer. Our ability to be or do what God requires comes only from Him.

C. *The Ministry of This Stewardship:* (v. 11)

1. As a speaker -- to declare God's authoritative Word (the oracles of God).
2. As a servant or minister -- be of a mutual good and blessing to others. "Minister the same one to another."

D. *The Motive of This Stewardship:* (v. 11b)

1. "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."
2. That all praise and dominion (control) may be given to Jesus Christ forever and ever.

The Christian, as a soldier, a servant and a steward is to have one goal, one motivation: Do "All Things For the Glory of God!" (I Cor. 10:31; Eph. 1:12)

-- Reflections --

1. What is the difference between weights and besetting sins? What do you find in your life?
2. How should a Christian respond to chastening? (Heb. 12:5-11)
3. Why did Paul receive a thorn in the flesh? (II Cor. 12:7-9) Could there be some thing God allows in your life in order to build your life as a saint of God?
4. What generally happens when new Christians break with old practices and old friends? (I Pet. 1-4)
5. What will *fervent love* do for Christians? (I Pet. 4:8)
6. In what way should your spiritual gifts be utilized by the Lord? (I Pet. 4:10, 11) Are they?

Living In the Furnace

I Peter 4:12-19

Perhaps we forget there was a bloodbath at the hands of Nero and others in the later half of the first century. Peter explained about a special kind of persecution -- a "*fiery trial*" that was about to overtake the entire Church. Peter knew what it was to suffer for Christ (Acts 5:17-42; 12:1-19). He was thus able to instruct these believers how to respond to "*fiery trials*." We so readily think that we will never face persecution as they did. Are you aware there are more Christians dying for their faith today, at the hands of Islam, than at any time in Church history?

Because of the intense persecution early Christians experienced, they needed constant encouragement and exhortation. If one does not receive help when passing through a time of great trial, he will feel that no one cares and will be ready to give up. We need to stand by each other at such times.

There are some very important truths we need to look at:

I. An Attitude We Need To Maintain: (vv. 12, 13)

Attitude determines actions and reactions. And thoughts are the backbone of our attitudes. If we have the attitude that God wants, we will act as He desires in every situation. Three proper attitudes are suggested here:

A. Remember, You Are God's "Beloved." (v. 12a)

1. You are His beloved loved one. You have all the love that God has. (Col. 3:8; Jude 21; John 15:9; 17:26)
2. God loves you too much to let anything touch your life that is not for your good. (Rom. 8:28,29)

B. Recognize the Nature and Purpose of Your Trials.

1. The word, "*strange*" suggests something that is foreign. Do not think your testings, trials, persecutions that might come -- are foreign to the Christian.
2. Becoming a Christian does not guarantee immunity from suffering. Jesus explained to His disciples that they should expect persecution and opposition from the world. (John 15:17-- 16:4, 33)
3. They did not just happen, in the sense of being an accident. They are a part of God's plan, and He is in control.

The word "*fiery*" suggests a melting furnace in which gold or silver ore is purified. **That's it!** God is seeking to remove impurities in your life and perfect His glory in you. Let Him do it without complaining. That trial is to test you, to bring discipline in your life -- that He might receive honor and praise by what you live. (Deut. 8:2,3)

God declared war on Satan after the Fall of man (Gen. 3:15), and Satan has been attacking God through His people ever since. Christians are "*strangers and pilgrims*" in an alien world where Satan is god and prince. (John 14:30; II Cor. 4:3-4). Whatever glorifies God will anger the enemy, and he will attack. For believers, persecution is not a strange thing. The *absence* of Satanic opposition and persecution would be strange.

C. Rejoice In Your Sufferings. Hard to do? (v. 13) (Heb. 12:1-4; Matt. 5:11,12)

1. We should rejoice because "*ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.*"

Literally, Peter wrote, “*Be constantly rejoicing!*” In fact, he mentioned joy in one form or another in I Peter 4:12-14. “*Rejoice. . . be glad also with exceeding joy. . . happy are ye. . .*”

2. Rejoice because our joy will be greater when we share in His glory. Our great incentive for enduring is to be found in the deliverance and glory that shall be ours when His glory is revealed. (Rom. 8:18; II Cor. 4:16-18; Col. 3:1-4; John 17:).
3. The world cannot understand how difficult circumstances can produce exceeding great joy, because the world has never experienced the grace of God. (see II Cor. 8:1-5).

II. An Assurance To Claim: (4:13, 14)

We can share in common with Him what it meant to suffer at the hands of wicked men for the sake of righteousness. According to verses 13, and 14, God is not going to *replace* suffering with glory; rather He will *transform* suffering into glory. (Consider John 16:20-22; II Cor. 12:7-10).

A. *Our Suffering Means Fellowship With Christ.* (vv. 13, 14)

1. “*The fellowship of His sufferings*” are a gift from God. (Phil. 1:29; 3:10) Not every Christian grows to the point where God can trust him with this kind of experience, so we should rejoice if we are permitted to suffer for Him. (see Acts 5:41)
2. Christ is with His own in special ways when they are in the furnace of trials, and persecutions. (Isa. 41:10; Dan. 3:23-25). The Lord was with Paul in all his trials (Acts. 23:11; 27:21-25; II Tim. 4:9-18). And He promises to be with us to the end. (Matt. 28:20)
3. When sinners persecute us, they are really persecuting Jesus Christ. (Acts 9:4)

B. *Our Suffering Means Glory In the Future.* (4:13)

1. Suffering and glory are twin truths, that are woven into the fabric of Peter’s letter. The world believes that the *absence* of suffering means glory, but a Christian’s outlook is different.
2. Christ entered into glory AFTER His sufferings, and when He comes again we shall enter into glory, for the trial of our faith today is the assurance of glory later. (I Pet. 1:7,8)

C. *Our Suffering Is To Bring Prosperity.* (4:14a)

1. “*Happy are ye!*” Happy actually means *prosperous*. Briefly God desires to prosper our lives through sufferings He allows.
2. Persecution was actually an indication of spiritual prosperity.

D. *Our Suffering Brings Us the Ministry of the Holy Spirit.* (4:14)

1. He is the “*Spirit of glory,*” and He has a special ministry to those who suffer for the glory of the Jesus Christ.
2. This verse could be translated, “*for the presence of the glory, even the Spirit, rests upon you.*” When the people had stoned Stephen, he saw Jesus in heaven and experienced God’s glory.

E. **Our Suffering Enables Us to Glorify His Name.** (v. 14) “on your part He is glorified.”

1. We suffer because of His Name. (John 15:21). Every time we are reproached for speaking of the Savior, we bring glory to that Name. (Consider use of the word, NAME as found in Acts.)
2. When we speak of any religious denomination people are not usually offended, but bring the name of Jesus into the conversation -- that is a different matter.
3. Wicked, unsaved men may speak evil of us and our Savior and a faithful Christian under trial brings glory and honor to his Lord.

III. Accusations We Ought To Avoid: (4:15)

It should be our desire to live above reproach before an unsaved world so that no one can accuse us of the sins that the ungodly commit, such as those things listed in verse 15.

In the furnace of persecution and suffering, we often have more light by which we can examine our lives and ministries. *The fiery trial is a refining process*, by which God removes the dross and purifies us. One day a fiery judgment will overtake the whole world. (II Peter 3:7-16) This truth ought to motivate us to be pure and obedient as possible.

A. **Why Am I Suffering?** (4:15)

1. Not all suffering is a fiery trial from the Lord. Far too often, even the saved suffer because of their own sinful doings. We cannot escape normal consequences of our misdeeds.
2. Are we guilty of **murder**? The crime of cold-blooded, premeditated murder is on the rise. But what about anger that can be murder in the heart. (Matt. 5:21-26). And murder has been licensed through legalized abortion.
3. Do we **steal**? The sacredness of property is a Biblical principle, one that was most precious to our forefathers. Again, our world is discarding this concept. And we could be stealing affection, time, someone’s reputation, etc.
4. **Evildoing** can be any form of doing evil according to God’s standards and must be renounced and forsaken by the child of God. No one should be able to say of us, “*That was an evil thing you did.*” What about porn, or viewing things not wholesome and Christ honoring?
5. Lastly, Peter mentions being a **busybody** in other’s matters. This means being a “*self-appointed ruler*” A Christian is not to act as a judge to run the life of anyone else. He is to mind his own business!

This does not mean he should refrain from warning someone about the consequences of a wicked life, but he is not to be guilty of gossip or interference in other’s affairs. (Legitimate pursuits and activities.)

IV. Aims To Accomplish: (v. 16)

A. **Never Be Ashamed To Be Identified As A Christian.**

1. The name Christian must have carried great weight in Peter’s day.
2. This statement must have reminded Peter of his own denial of Christ. (Luke 22:54-62). Jesus is not ashamed of us (Heb. 2:11) -- though many times He surely could be! We are to be willing to bear approach for Him, and not

suffer for our wrong doing. *“Go outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”*

B. ***Our aim ought to be to glorify God in every circumstance.*** If we truly desire to glorify Him, we will never be ashamed of suffering as a child of God.

V. Admission To Be Made: (vv. 17, 18)

These two verses reveal four things we need to admit.

A. ***Judgment Must Begin With God’s People.*** (v. 17)

1. God must discipline His own in order to purify their lives.
2. A lack of discipline will lead to indifference, complacency, and carelessness toward sin and ungodliness.

B. ***Those Who Do Not Obey the Gospel Will Be Judged.*** (v. 17)

1. If God deals severely with His own, surely He will deal more severely with those who refuse the gospel and reject the Savior.
2. When God’s own are judged and purified, there should be a great effect (for good) upon those who have not obeyed the gospel.

C. ***The Righteous Will With Difficulty “scarcely” Be Saved.*** (v. 18)

1. There are perils that jeopardize their salvation, (deliverance) and which are of such a kind as to make it very nearly not to happen.
2. As God works in their lives to accomplish full deliverance from the power of sin and Satan, they (we) will experience many difficulties and hardships.
3. Consider also the many issues that had to do with Satan’s work to bring to naught all God did for centuries to bring about man’s redemption.

D. ***The Ungodly and Sinners Will Suffer Awful Doom.*** (v. 18)

1. Where will the sinner and godless appear? At the Great White Throne judgment and they will be banished into hell forever. (Rev. 20:11-15)
2. They will certainly perish! They make no use of the means for their salvation but reject every offer of God’s love and grace.

VI. An Action To Take. (v. 19)

Those who suffer for doing the will of God because they do what is right are to commit (deposit for safekeeping) their souls unto God, their faithful Creator. He has made us for Himself; He will see us through. We can rest in the confidence that Paul had (Phil. 1:6), and be sure when we turn ourselves over completely to God to allow Him to accomplish His purpose in us, the result will be glorious. This was Job’s testimony as well. (Job 23:10)

-- Reflections --

1. Do you as a Christian have the right attitude toward suffering?
2. Does that attitude result in committing yourself completely to God with the Savior’s words, *“Not my will, but thine be done”*?
3. Are you willing to embrace all and any suffering God allows as His best for you, and therefore rejoice in such suffering? (II Cor. 12:7-12)
4. What does the *“fellowship of His sufferings”* mean to you in daily life?
5. How do you relate God’s unconditional love to sufferings and persecutions?

Godly Leadership, Satan's Enmity, and God's Work

I Peter 5:1-14

Introduction:

It has been said, *"Everything rises and falls on leadership."* Godly leadership, good leadership will usually produce godly people, good people. The spiritual temperature of a group will rise no higher than that of its leadership. Thus Peter addressed the elders directly with special instruction. The terms in Scripture -- Elder -- *presiding officer*, (Acts 10:30; 14:23; 15:2; 10:17; 21:18), Bishop -- *overseer*, -- (Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7), and Pastor -- *shepherd to lead and feed* -- (Eph. 4:11) denote the same person.

Peter was no pope, he claimed no higher position than that of any elder. He was a *witness* (one responsible to tell what he had seen) of the sufferings of Christ. He qualified to exhort, counsel, comfort, and encourage other elders as partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. (v. 1)

Considering Godly Leadership

I. The Responsibilities of "Elders." (5:1-3)

A. They Are to Feed the Flock.

1. To *feed* suggests the duties of a shepherd to feed, guide, guard the sheep.
2. Every pastor is an under shepherd. He is to look to the Good Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, for his direction and example. (John 10)

B. They Are To Oversee the Flock.

1. The word *oversight* is the same as bishop. Every pastor is an overseer, a guardian over the flock to be sure the sheep go the right direction.
2. He is to see everything is done properly, orderly, and above all Scripturally.

How is the "elder" to lead? Negatively -- or *not by constraint*, or not as a result of being forced, which would result in his being harsh and cold. *Not for filthy lucre* -- or not for base, dishonorable gain. Neither as being a *lord over God's heritage* -- or not as a domineering monarch with high-handed, autocratic rule to subject others to one's own self and power.

Positively -- *willingly*, -- or voluntarily with the right attitude, *or a ready mind*,-- with an attitude of zeal, eagerness, cheerful readiness without thought of what is in it for me. *As examples to the flock* -- as one who demonstrates a godly life and a Spirit-filled diligence in all duty and service. (Phil. 3:17; I Thess. 1:5- 2:12; I Tim. 4:12, 6:11,12).

II. The Reward For Faithfulness. (v. 4)

A. The Prospect of His Return. "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear. . ." *"What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see!"*

1. This prospect should motivate the under shepherd to be his best for his Chief Shepherd's approval. (I Thess. 4:2; I John 2:28)
2. The desire for Christ's coming ought to motivate as well! (Rev. 22:

B. The Promise of His Reward. ". . . ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

1. The full identity and details of this crown are not given, but it will never wither nor fade away. (Consider the Chief Shepherd -- Heb. 2:9.)
2. Christ's faithful under shepherds will share that glory and honor. If earthly honor brings a measure of satisfaction, how much more will heavenly honor be the soul's delight.

III. The Relationship To Be Practiced. (v. 5)

This verse shows the proper response to leadership and the relationship to be practiced between those who lead and those who are led.

A. **The Younger in Submission to the Elder** “. . . submit yourselves unto the elder. . .” (Or rank yourselves under the elder.) “Younger” would refer to both individuals and groups who are younger. (Far too often the norm today is for youth to tell older leaders what to do.)

B. **All In Subjection to Each Other.** “. . . yea, all of you be subject one to another.” There is no place for a bigoted hierarchy of authority among God’s people. God has established leadership but not lordship. We are to be in subjection to each other (Eph. 5:21), and to honor each other as fellow citizens of the household of faith (Rom. 12:10, 16).

C. **All Clothed With Humility.** “. . . be clothed with humility. . .” This suggests putting on a waiter’s apron to serve others. We are to put on humility as a garment and “*by love serve one another.*” (I John 3:16) God resists the proud person, but will give grace (His unmerited, unlimited favor) to one who is humble (James 4:6).

IV. Complete Reliance Upon God. (5:6, 7)

In all circumstances, we are to completely yield to God and rely upon Him for His care.

A. **By Complying With God’s Command for Humility** (v. 6)

1. The requirement is: “*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God... Allow yourself to be humbled!*”
2. God’s hand is upon our lives, it is a mighty hand to correct, to comfort, to conform us to His will, mighty to conquer us and our obstacles.
3. That hand is at work in our lives, and He will never make a mistake.

B. **In Casting All Your Care Upon Him** (v. 7)

1. The **problem** is our **care**, a word that suggests “*being drawn in different directions*” resulting in anxiety and distress.
2. These cares keep men from Christ and the gospel (Luke 12:16-20; 14:18-20). They hinder sweet fellowship with the Lord (Luke 8:14); they dim our vision of Christ’s return (Luke 17:26-29); 21:34).
3. There is a **prescription** for cares: “*Casting all your care upon him. . .*” Deposit them with God in a once-for-all act of turning them over to Him.
4. The **promise** is: “. . . for He careth for you.” You are His all-consuming concern. Your welfare is of primary importance to Him. Let this verse be a soft pillow for your weary heart. **Oh, what this must have meant to suffering saints!**

Considering Satan’s Enmity

In the struggle for supremacy among nations, the term “*super power,*” is often used. In this section there is a striking contrast between two super powers in the spiritual realm -- our adversary (the devil), and the God of grace. Each has an objective for every human life as contrasted by Jesus in John 10:10. None of us dares to be ignorant of Satan and his clever devices. We dare not overlook him and what his objectives are. He is a real person with real power, and evil purposes. And what he seeks to do does have an impact on people in the midst of suffering, in fact he is the source of much of our suffering.

Admonitions Concerning Our Adversary. (5:8,9)

The admonitions involve reproof, counsel and warning, all of which are needed when Satan is under consideration.

A. His Description

1. As to his *identity*: Peter uses three terms to denote what Satan is like.
 - a). He is our *adversary* -- a word that was used of an opponent in a lawsuit. He is the one who opposes us before God, as he did Job (Job. 1:6-12; 2:1-6).
 - b). He is the *devil* -- one who will accuse us and slander us maliciously with great hostility.
 - c). He is the *roaring lion* -- a comparison that pictures his ferocity, power, and eagerness to devour.
2. As to his *intention*: he is a lion with great cunning, stalks his prey, attacks ferociously, and then devours his victim. What a picture of our enemy!

B. Our Defense Against Him

A fourfold line of defense is here outlined and advocated:

1. Be *sober* -- which means to be serious minded and mentally self-controlled. Don't be flippant and frivolous about Satan. His person and power are real.
2. Be *vigilant* -- which means to be alert and watchful. Never allow him to catch you off-guard. Be on the outlook for his clever attacks.
3. Be *firm* against his onslaughts -- the word resist means that one should stand his ground and not be wavering, double-minded, and "wishy-washy."
4. Be *steadfast* in the faith -- which means to put up a solid front against Satan by holding to the faith (true doctrine) and exercising personal faith in God's strength and power.

Since every believer is involved in this battle, he needs to remember that he is not alone in these afflictions and struggles. Our fellow brethren everywhere face the same vicious foe and experience his devices, snares, and fiery darts. His goal -- defeat us through suffering! (Eph. 6:16)

Consider God's Work For His Own

The Assurance of What God Will Do For His Own: (5:10,11)

Satan is against us; God is for us! Satan wants to destroy us; God wants to develop us into trophies of grace for His glory. Notice these three great words that can summarize God's program for us.

A. Grace -- God is the "*God of all grace.*"

He is the One Who is the source of all blessing, favor, and help.

By that grace He called us unto salvation, out of darkness into His glorious light. What will be the final outcome of that work of grace?

B. Glory -- "*. . . who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus . . .*"

1. We shall be to God's eternal glory, all because of Jesus Christ and our personal relationship to Him.
2. God's eternal glory is at stake in the life of every believer! Because of that fact, we ought to give Him glory, both now and forever. (v. 11) (Eph. 1:12)
3. We should have one basic motive in life: "*Live unto the glory of God!*" This necessitates our examination of every detail of life. Does my life truly bring glory to God? What about all I read, listen to, or do with time, talent, tithe?

C. **Growth often comes through suffering.**

Ah, after you suffer a while. God has some very definite purposes in allowing suffering in our lives, and among other things, Peter lists some things here:

1. *“make you perfect”* -- The word perfect here means to *“fit or join together, the putting of parts in the right relationship with each other.”* God is putting all the pieces together; all the experiences of our lives are being brought into a proper relationship to each other so that we will be right with Him.
2. *“stablish”* -- This word means *“to fix firmly, to set fast.”* Christians must not be unsteady in their stand for Christ. Our hearts need to be established, (I Thess. 3:13; James 5:8), and this is accomplished by God’s truth (II Pet. 1:12). The believer who is established will not be moved by persecution, or be led away by false doctrine (3:17).
3. *“strengthen”* -- means just that. God’s strength given to us to meet the demands of life. What good is it to stand on a firm foundation if we do not have power to act?
4. *“settle you”* -- is the translation of a word that means *“to lay a foundation.”* It is used this way in Hebrews 1:10. The house founded on a rock withstood the storm (Matt. 7:24-27). A believer who is equipped by God will *“continue in the faith grounded and settled”* (Col. 1:23; 2:6,7). He will not be *“tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”* (Eph. 4:14).

God builds character and brightens hope when a believer trusts the Lord and depends on His grace. God desires to use sufferings to bring many good things in our lives. (Rom. 5:3-4)

Look At Peter’s Closing Greetings: vv. 12-14)

The writings of Paul, Peter, and John, especially in their conclusions, often throb with a deep tone of affection that apparently existed among the first century Christians.

1. He complimented Silvanus, a ***faithful brother***, (v. 12) who no doubt was the one to whom Peter dictated the letter and by whom it was sent as Peter exhorted and testified of the true grace of God wherein we stand. **Are we as faithful?**
2. Peter was writing to someone at the church at Babylon. It could well have been an outstanding person, maybe a woman who was well known, to whom he gave greeting.
3. Mark, “my son,” also greets you. Probably in a spiritual sense as one whom he had won to Christ. It was a great blessing to name others of like precious faith.
4. Peter gives a closing benediction (v. 14). He urged outward love to be shown, and that they would know inward peace because of being in Christ Jesus. The word *peace* is empty without a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:1)

-- Reflections --

1. Do we live in subjection to one another? Why should we do so? (Eph. 5:21)
2. How can we better obey the injunction to *“humble ourselves”* ?
3. How did the Lord evidence His humility? (Consider John 13, Heb. 2; Phil. 2:5-11)
4. Do you know how to resist the devil? What does it mean to resist him?
5. Why should one practice *casting all your care* upon Christ, and what will such a practice do for you?

Appendix: Extra Materials. . . Thoughts. . . Personal Helps

Peter's conversion: We can't pinpoint Peter's conversion very well.

In I John 1:42, Andrew introduced Peter to Christ. Little is said of Peter's response although the Lord prophetically foretold Peter was scheduled for some transforming operations by the Spirit. He was now Simon, but he would soon become Cephas, a stone.

In Matthew 4:18, 19, Jesus again meets Peter and invites him to be His disciple. This time we know he followed Christ. It seems to be a little later when Jesus visited Peter's home and healed his wife's mother. (Luke 5:1-7). It was at this experience Peter fell down before Jesus and acknowledged his own sinfulness. (v. 8) It was yet later when Peter boldly recognized that Christ alone had the words of eternal life. (John 6:69).

F. B. Meyer wrote: *"It is HE who watches the progress of the trial. No mother bending over her suffering child is more concerned than He -- suiting the trial to your strength -- keeping His finger on your pulse so as to stay the flame when the heart begins to flutter -- only too eager to see the scum of sin pass off, and His own face reflected from the face of the moulten metal."*

Watson -- *"As we sometimes hold a crooked rod over the fire to straighten it, so God sometimes holds us over the fire of affliction to make us move straight and upright."*

Looking At I Peter 3:19-22

WE WILL TREAT THE BALANCE OF THIS SECTION OF SCRIPTURE MORE AS AN PARENTHETIC PORTION... although it is to a degree related to the above notes.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe writes the following: A Pastor was teaching a Bible study on Matthew 16, explaining the many interpretations of our Lord's words to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" (v. 18). Afterward, a woman said to him, "Pastor, I'll bet if Jesus had known all the trouble those words would cause, He would have never said them!"

When Peter wrote this section (3:18-22) of his letter, he had no idea that it would be classified as one of the most difficult portions of the New Testament. Good and godly interpreters have wrestled with these verses, debated and disagreed, and have not always left behind a great deal of spiritual help. We may not be able to solve all the problems in this section, but we do want to get the practical help that Peter gave to encourage Christians in difficult times.

I. OUR LORD'S PROCLAMATION TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON, vv. 19, 20a

A literal translation of this verse would be: *"In which spirit to the spirits in prison having gone, He preached."* Our Lord in His spirit being, which had been energized and caused to live by the Holy Spirit, went to the spirit beings in prison to deliver a proclamation.

This verse prompts three questions:

A. Who Were These Spirit Beings?

1. They were disobedient spirit beings whose disobedience took place in the days of Noah, v. 20a.
2. They were in prison, v. 19. The word for prison means a place where captives are kept under careful guard.

B. Where Were These Spirit Beings?

They were *"in prison,"* held captive in the lower parts of the earth. (Compare II Pet. 2:4 and Jude, v. 6.) The word for hell in II Peter 2:4 is "tartarus," meaning the deepest abyss. The Greek poet Homer spoke of this place as a murky abyss beneath Hades. Hades is the Greek word for the place of the departed spirits of unbelievers; Tartarus is the Greek word for the place to which the sinful, fallen angels were confined. This writer believes that these spirit beings were from the demonic world,

special emissaries of Satan, to incite the corruption, violence, and immorality of the days of Noah. They received a special judgment from God, just as did the people of Noah's day.

C. What Did He Preach To Them?

The word for preach here is not the New Testament word used for the expression, "preach the Gospel." It is the word " ... used in the secular Greek of an official announcement or proclamation made by a representative of a government" (Wuest). In His Spirit being Jesus Christ descended to the lower parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9) to proclaim that He had openly triumphed over Satan and all his hosts; that all of Satan's evil designs and efforts to thwart God's plan of redemption had utterly failed; and that the judgment and destiny of the Satanic world were guaranteed as absolute and final. **NOTE:** This verse gives no basis for the doctrine of purgatory nor for the idea of a "second chance" to hear the Gospel after death.

II. THE PICTURE OF THE ARK IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO BAPTISM (vv. 20, 21)

What a blessed truth is the long-suffering of God (II Peter 3:9), which was shown so vividly during the 120 years of Noah's preaching while the ark was being built.

A. Noah And The Ark (compare Hebrews 11:7).

The ark's preparation was carefully outlined by God and carried out by Noah (Gen. 6:13-22). Its purpose was for "the saving of his house. " Its proclamation was plain; all through the raging flood, and to this very day, it bore testimony to Noah and his superb faith and obedience.

B. Believers and Baptism

Verse 21a may be more fully translated: "*Which (water) as a figure (antitype) now also is saving (delivering) us, namely, baptism. ..*"

1. Just as the water of the flood gave testimony to Noah's faith and obedience by bearing up the Ark and thus was the means of delivering him and his family from God's judgment for his generation, so also the water of baptism now testifies to our faith in Jesus Christ as our Ark of safety and is delivering us from the condemnation that God says rests upon every unbeliever (John 3:18, 36) .
2. That figure (baptism) does not put away the filth of the flesh; it does show the answer (the earnest seeking) of a good conscience toward God.
3. Our salvation is in His death and resurrection, to which we give testimony in baptism along with showing our desire to walk in newness of life and to have a good conscience toward God through our obedience.

III. THE PREMINENCE OF JESUS CHRIST, (v. 22)

1. His all-sufficient substitutionary death, (v. 18)
2. His victorious proclamation, (v. 19)
3. His glorious resurrection, (v. 21)
4. His literal ascension to the right hand of God, (v.22)
(Acts 1 :9-11; Heb. 1:1-4; 4:14-16; 10:11-13)
5. His exaltation, (v. 22) (Phil. 2:9-11) All angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Him. **HALLELUJAH, WHAT A SAVIOR!**