

### Introduction

We read in the Gospels that Peter was originally known as 'Simon' (Gr.), or 'Simeon' (Heb.); that he was the son of Jonas; and, that he, along with his brother Andrew, was a member of a family of fishermen who lived in Bethsaida. It was Andrew who introduced him to Christ (**Jn.1:40-42**). Too, Peter was married, and it's believed that his wife, oftentimes, accompanied him in his ministry.

According to **Mark 1:16,17**, Peter was called to discipleship in the early days of Christ's ministry. And some time later, while with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi, Christ gave this disciple the name 'Peter' (Gr.), or 'Cephas' (Aramaic), when He said, 'And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock (this confession; this testimony) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (**Matt.16:18**). Note: The word Jesus uses for Peter (*petros*) means a 'small stone', or, 'a fragment of a rock' (**Jn.1:42**). Here, Jesus uses a play on words. When He says, 'upon this rock I will build my church', it is no longer '*petros*' but '*petra*', which means an unmovable stone, a foundation boulder. And that 'rock' is Christ Himself, the only foundation of the church. Note: Songwriter Edward Mote expressed it well when he penned the following words: 'My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness, I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand; All other ground is sinking sand'. Too, it's on this particular occasion at Caesarea Philippi that we have the first mention of the church.

It is interesting to note that at the close of this letter (**5:12**) Peter mentions that he is writing 'through Sylvanus', who was Paul's companion on his second missionary journey. This possibly means that Silas (which is the name for Sylvanus used in Acts) had an excellent knowledge of the Greek language and assisted Peter in his writing.

One final thought: According to tradition, Peter was forced to watch as his wife was crucified; but while doing so he encouraged her with the words, 'Remember the Lord'. When it came time for him to be crucified, he reportedly pled that he was not worthy to be crucified like his Lord, but rather should be crucified upside down - which tradition says he was.

## Chapter 1

**V.1.** 'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ'. The letter begins in the usual manner for New Testament epistles. First of all, Peter mentions the 'author' to be himself. He then states that his 'office' is that of an 'apostle of Jesus Christ'. Note: The word 'apostle' (Gr. *apostolos*) means a delegate (messenger), one chosen and sent forth with a special commission as the fully authorized representative of the sender, with the sender remaining behind to back up the one sent. When speaking of a Christian, the word apostle means someone sent by God to do what He, Himself, would do if He went. Too, it's believed that a pre-requisite for being a New Testament apostle, a person must have seen the resurrected Christ.

- 'To the strangers scattered (dispersed) throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia'.
- After mentioning that he is the 'author' of the letter and declaring his 'office' to be that of 'an apostle of Jesus Christ', Peter now tells us 'to whom his epistle is addressed'. It's to 'strangers scattered' during the 'diasporia' (which, on this occasion, speaks of Jews living outside of Palestine). Note: Some believe Peter is writing to Gentiles who had accepted Christ as Savior. (I disagree.)
- There are two major schools of thought as to when these strangers (pilgrims) were dispersed. (1) 'It took place prior to the world-wide dispersion of AD70, which was the judgment of God upon the apostasy of Israel. 'Too, a great majority of the Jews living outside of Palestine in the first century, and before AD70, were living where they were by their own choice, the chief reason being the opportunity for business activity which the Gentile centers of population afforded' (Wuest). (2) The dispersion took place primarily due to the persecution of Jews which began soon after the crucifixion of Christ, His resurrection, and, the coming of the Holy Ghost. It was a time of Jews persecuting Jews (Acts 8:1). (I agree.) Oftentimes, it was family members, who had accepted Christ as Messiah, that were being persecuted by unbelieving family members. Note: The five provinces mentioned (where these dispersed Jews were now living) were all located in modern-day Turkey and were part of the Roman Empire.

**V.2.** 'Elect (chosen ones; those selected out) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father'.

'Election is either to (1) an office (Saul was the man whom the Lord chose to be king; apostles were chosen by God), or, (2) a church-state, for the enjoyment of special privileges: thus Israel was God's elect, or (3) to eternal salvation: God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth' (Matthew Henry).

- The word 'foreknowledge' (Gr. *prognosis*) means to perceive beforehand. 'Here, it refers to God (He who is all-knowing) seeing ahead that a Savior would be needed to redeem man from the 'fall' (Dake).'
- Important to note: No one person is chosen, elected, foreknown, or predestined to be saved or lost without his personal choice and responsibility in the matter. All men are invited to choose life, and, are warned of eternal punishment if they fail to do so.
- 'Through sanctification (being set apart, made holy) of (or by) the Spirit'. The Holy Spirit is the One who sanctifies the people of God. In **Matt.5:48**, Jesus, while preaching the 'Sermon on the Mount', said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'. And in **Mk.12:30**, He said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength'. Note: Many Christians have had difficulty grasping what the Lord actually meant by believers 'being perfect' while still residing in these mortal bodies and living in a sinful and wicked world. But the words here in **v.2** give the answer. It's the person who has 'died out to self' and allowed the Holy Spirit to 'sanctify wholly' (**I Thes.5:23**) that enjoys continued victory. The Adam nature, with which we were born, is crucified. No longer is there a 'propensity to sin'

within the heart. And the sanctified believer, who now loves the Lord with his entire being, is committed to be obedient to God in all things (cf. Fig #4, p.4).

- 'Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ'. Peter uses the phraseology of the Levitical ritual where the priests sprinkled the people with the sacrificial blood (**Heb.9:19**). Too, he makes it clear that the foundation of our election is the 'blood of Jesus Christ'.
- 'Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied'. This speaks of the 'peace' which is the fruit of grace. Too, 'grace' and 'peace' are granted to all the 'elect of God'; and always in that order. Without the 'grace of God' there is no 'peace with God'. Note: The best blessings we can desire for ourselves, or for one another, are grace and peace, and, that they might be multiplied.
- The Holy Trinity is made clear in this verse relating to salvation. We are told that 'salvation' results from the Father's foreknowledge, is affected by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and, is based upon the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. To say it another way: 'We have here the three steps taken by the three Persons of the Triune Godhead. (1) God the Father chooses the sinner to salvation. (2) God the Spirit brings the sinner thus chosen to the act of faith. And, (3) God the Son cleanses him in His precious blood' (Wuest).

**V.3.** 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again (hath made us a new creation) unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'.

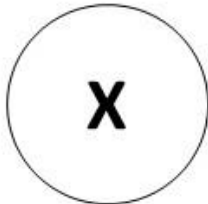
- The people to whom Peter wrote were entering a period of severe trials and persecution. With that being so, he sends words of encouragement and support, reminding them that 'God . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively hope'. Amen! In the midst of life's troubles, we have the assurance that beyond this life there is the hope of more life, abundant life; and beyond the kingdom of this world is a kingdom forever with the Father, all made possible through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Note: Hope, which is of the world, is nothing more than 'wishful thinking', and has its end at the grave.

**V.4.** 'To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you'. As children of God, we have become His heirs, and joint-heirs with His Son Jesus Christ. Since that is true, we have come into a wonderful 'inheritance'. And that inheritance is 'heaven'. Too, the three listed descriptions of our inheritance (incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away) all speak of permanence. It's an inheritance more lasting than any man could ever hope to receive while here in these mortal bodies.

- 'Incorruptible' - in which respect it is like its Maker, who is called the 'incorruptible God' (**Rom.1:23**). 'All corruption is a change from better to worse, but heaven is without change and without end; the house is eternal in the heavens, and the possessors must subsist forever, *for their corruption must put on incorruption*' (**I Cor.15:53**). (Matthew Henry)
- 'Undefiled' - means untainted, unstained with evil, having no earthly defects or human infirmities. It is like our great high priest, who is *holy, harmless, and undefiled* (**Heb.7:26**).
- 'That fadeth not away' - will forever retain its vibrancy and beauty.
- Peter then added, 'reserved in heaven for you'. Note: The word 'reserved' means to observe, to watch, protect, set aside. It's been said that 'heaven is the safe-deposit box where God is guarding our inheritance for us under constant surveillance'.

**V.5.** 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation'. The word 'kept' is a military term, meaning to 'guard' or 'protect'. It implies an action which is constantly going on. Note: The word for 'kept' is the same Greek word used by Paul in **Phil.4:7** - 'The peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts and minds'. Too, this 'protection' is God's response to the believer's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

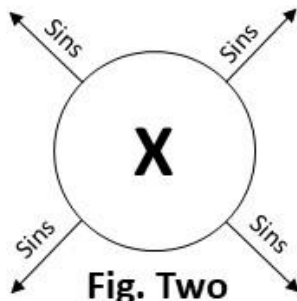
# The Heart of Man



**Fig. One**

“X” represents the ‘Sin Nature’, with which we were born.

(Ps. 51:5, Rom 5:12)

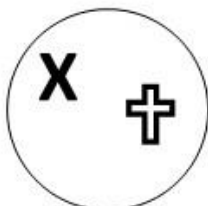


**Fig. Two**

Natural Man (1 Cor 2:6) - unsaved

‘Sin Nature’ has begun to bear fruit (sins).

Now a sinner (Rom 3:23)

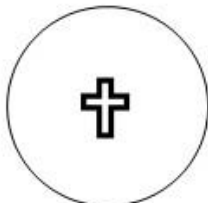


**Fig. Three**

“✝” represents the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Christ).

Sins forgiven, saved, a ‘Babe in Christ’, yet carnal (1 Cor 3:1)

A warfare within (Rom 6:7)



**Fig. Four**

Spiritual Man Sanctified. Perfect in Christ.

(1 Cor 2:6, 15; Jn 11:17; 1 Thes 4:3)

- 'Unto salvation'. Undoubtedly, the salvation spoken of here is the 'glorification of our bodies'.
- 'Ready to be revealed in the last time'. 'To be unveiled at the end of the world' (Weymouth).
- Summary: God will 'keep' us (guard us) by His power in every situation of life - if we keep our faith in Him. And His ultimate goal for us is our 'full and eternal salvation' - an inheritance in heaven.

**V.6.** 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice'. This refers to that which the apostle just mentioned, having to do with the believer's present state and his grand expectations for the future. Note: Every true Christian has something wherein he may always greatly rejoice.

- 'Though now for a season (a little while), if need be, ye are in heaviness (ye have been made sorrowful) through manifold temptations'. Note: These temptations (trials and testings) generally come from one, or more, of three sources: those brought on us by others; those caused by our own wrong-doings and indiscretions; and those permitted as tests from God, our Father.
- 'Peter teaches several important principles about trouble in this verse: (1) trouble does not last (a little while); (2) trouble serves a purpose (if need be); (3) troubles brings distress (grieve); (4) trouble comes in many different forms (manifold temptations); and (5) trouble should not diminish the Christian's joy (greatly rejoice). (John MacArthur)

**V.7.** 'That the trial of your faith (it's the end result that is in focus, not the process), being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ'. Gold is the most precious of metals, yet, the believer's faith is far more precious. Gold is tested by fire to remove all impurities, that it might bring forth that which is pure. We too are tested (tried by fire) in order that our faith might prove to be genuine, with the result being that of bringing praise, honor, and glory to God 'at the appearing of Jesus Christ'. Note: The heaviness of our trials contributes to the enlargement of our hope. Therefore, we shall not only survive the storms of life, but we shall also be stronger because of them.

**Vs.8,9.** 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of joy'. Most Christians of the early church had not seen Jesus; yet, having faith in Him is what makes one a 'new creature'. Such faith is as strong as that of those who have seen Him and known Him personally. Note: One week after Jesus' resurrection, He said to Thomas, who had doubted the words of the other disciples about having seen Jesus, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed' (**Jn.20:29**). 'Our Christianity depends upon our faith; if this be wanting, there is nothing else spiritually good in us' (Matthew Henry).

- Salvation is present as well as future. 'By grace are ye saved through faith' (**Eph.2:8**). 'According to his mercy he saved us' (**Titus 3:5**). 'God's elect (those chosen) receive salvation in various measures now; but it will one day be manifested in its fulness' (Pulpit Com.). In one sense, Christians now possess the result of their faith, having not only been delivered from sin (in salvation) but from the power of sin (in sanctification) (**cf. Figs. 3 & 4. p.4**). In another sense, Christians are awaiting 'full salvation of eternal glory' in the redemption of their bodies (**Rom.8:23**). John said, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is' (**1 Jn.3:2**). Amen! 'Who (our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ) shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself' (**Phil.3:21**). Note: We haven't yet arrived; but, like Paul, we 'press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God (upward calling; rapture of the church) in Christ Jesus' (**Phil.3:14**).

**Vs.10-12.** 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently' (literally sought out and investigated), who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow'. The Old Testament prophets were interested in determining the 'time', or, the 'kind' of age, which was to see the fulfillment of the things about which they prophesied. They were intrigued by God's plan of salvation, wanting to know 'who this person might be?' and 'when he would come'? Too, they were interested in knowing the relationship between the sufferings of the Messiah (his atonement for sins on the cross) and the glories which were to follow (His future glorious reign in the Millennial Kingdom). **Note:** The 'source' of the revelation given the prophets was the 'Spirit of Christ' (Holy Spirit), and He is the same Spirit (Holy Ghost sent down from heaven) that inspired the truths of the gospel.

- 'Which things the angels desire to look into'. The salvation which the elect of God receive is so full of joy and glory and beauty that not only the prophets of old search diligently, but even the angels desire to look into it. They are amazed at the wonderful plan of redemption and of the eternal exaltation of the redeemed. Therefore, they are searching out God's plan of salvation with an intense interest, desiring to learn more.

**V.13.** 'Wherefore (therefore) gird up the loins of your mind'. When Peter used the phrase 'gird up your loins', he was referring to the type clothing worn in the East. A person would tie up his loose flowing robe when preparing for work, or for most any action, so as not to impede his progress. **Note:** In our day, it would be similar to 'rolling up your sleeves'. But Peter doesn't have physical exertion in mind here, but that which is mental. The 'girding up of the loins of the mind' would be putting out of mind anything that would hinder the progress of living a Christlike life - things such as worry, unforgiveness, bitterness, fear, hate, jealousy.

- 'Be sober' (have self-control; be fully alert, temperate, fair). The Christian is to be vigilant against all spiritual dangers and enemies, as well as being temperate and modest in eating, apparel, recreation, business, and, in the entirety of his being. Too, believers are to be sober-minded in opinion as well as in practice. We are to be humble in the judgment of ourselves.
- 'And hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought (that is being brought) unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ'. **Note:** The words, 'hope to the end', do not refer to the Christian living in a state of hopefulness to the end of life, but describe the hope as being complete, unwavering, a perfect hope, an assured expectation - wanting nothing. 'Hope perfectly, or thoroughly, for the grace that is brought to you in or by the revelation of Jesus Christ; that is, by the gospel, which brings life and immortality to light' (Matthew Henry).

**Vs.14-16.** 'As obedient children (as children of obedience), not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance' (Not conforming yourselves (**cf. Rom.12:2**) to the strong desires you had in your former ignorance). **Note:** 'Ignorance' is a lack of awareness concerning the things of God. Before these believers accepted Christ as Savior they lived according to their lusts. But, now, they have been called out of such ignorance and unto the knowledge of Christ.

- 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (in all your actions; not just speech): Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy'. The 'goal' of a Christian must always be to fashion himself, by God's grace, after the likeness of Christ, and not according to former lusts. And this is made possible in the experience of 'sanctification' (**cf. Figs 3 & 4, p.4**). It's then that a person can love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength - and, thus, fulfill the words of Christ in **Matt.5:48**, quoted here by Peter. Holiness is to be a part of every aspect of our lives.

**V.17.** 'And if ye call on the Father'. Note: 'If' does not imply doubt. Peter is writing to praying people, who, at that very time, were calling on God for deliverance from unjust persecution.

- 'Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work'. Our heavenly Father judges our lives without partiality (without the slightest favoritism). Paul said, 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad' (**II Cor.5:10**).
- 'Pass the time (to conduct one's self) of your sojourning here (refers to a person living in a foreign land alongside of people who are not of his kind; here, it speaks of Christians living far from their heavenly home) in fear' (holy fear; the fear a son has of a loving father; a healthy reverence for God's holiness and judgment; the fear of displeasing God, who gave His only begotten Son to die in our stead). Note: It's been said, 'a wise man is known by what and whom he fears (**Mt.10:28**).

**Vs.18,19.** 'Forasmuch as ye know (have self-evident, intuitive knowledge) that ye were not redeemed (set free by the payment of a ransom) with corruptible things, as silver and gold (referring to little 'silver' and 'gold' coins which were used to buy slaves out of the slave market), from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers (the emptiness of your manner of life, received by tradition from your ancestors); but with the precious (costly, highly esteemed, held in honor) blood of Christ (God's blood; Deity having become incarnate in humanity), as of a lamb without blemish and without spot'. Note: 'No language known to man can adequately express the mystery of the atonement. That stupendous fact transcends human reason, and cannot be defined in human words. But the Lord himself describes it as a ransom - a ransom for many, given in their stead' (Pulpit Com.). Jesus gave his life on the cross, not only 'in behalf' of us, but also 'instead' of us - a ransom for our sins. The songwriter said it well:

'He paid a debt He did not owe; I owed a debt I could not pay,  
I needed someone to wash my sins away.  
And now I sing a brand new song, 'Amazing Grace'.  
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay'.

**V.20.** 'Who verily was foreordained (designated beforehand) before the foundation of the world'. In the councils of the triune God, the Lord Jesus Christ was the 'Lamb' marked out for sacrifice. Note: 'The incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ were not the result of a change of purpose to meet unforeseen circumstances; they were foreseen and foreordained in the eternal counsels of God' (Pulpit Com.). Note: The death of Jesus on Calvary's cross was not an after-thought. It was not something God decided He must do when the world, seemingly, had spun out of control. It was all planned beforehand.

- 'But was manifest (made visible) in these last times for you' (at the end of times for your sake). 'It was the invisible God (**Jn.4:24**) who, in the Person of His Son, was made visible to human eyesight by assuming a human body (**Jn.1:14**) and human limitations' (Wuest). Note: The 'last times' are the times of the Messiah, from his First Coming into the world (at incarnation) to his Second Coming at the end of the 'seven-year tribulation' (**Rev.19**).

**V.21.** 'Who by him do believe in God' (who through him are faithful towards God). Note: It's through him as author, encourager, supporter, and finisher of our faith, that our faith and hope may be in God.

- 'That raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God'. The Lord Jesus Christ was raised out from among those who were dead. They remained in their condition of death, whereas he was given life. 'The death of Christ is the atonement for sin; his

resurrection and ascension are the ground for our confidence and hope' (Pulpit Com.). God, through the ascension, returned Christ to the glory that He had with Him before the world began (**Jn.17:4,5**).

**V.22.** 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently'. The gospel is called 'truth'; and if obeyed, it is effectual in purifying the soul. The sad part is: multitudes have heard the truth, but are never purified by it, because they will not submit nor obey it. Note: It is only after we have become pure through our acceptance of and obedience to the gospel truth that we are able to live a life of love. And 'real love' (that which is Christlike) is from a pure heart, intense, sincere, genuine, and fervent.

- Jesus himself had told His disciples, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (**Jn.13:35**). And this becomes possible when we are changed, forgiven, regenerated, born-again by the Word of God.

**V.23.** 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed (by which we become the children of men), but of incorruptible (by which we become the sons and daughters of the Most High God), by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever'. Note: Two agents are involved in bringing about the 'new birth', (1) The Holy Spirit (**Jn. 3:3-5; I Cor.6:11**), and (2) the Word of God (**Jn.15:3; Eph.5:26; Ja.1:18**). All those born-again are Christians.

**Vs.24,25.** 'For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever'. Man, with all his success, accomplishments, wit, strength, vigor, wealth, and honor - is but as the 'flower of grass', which soon withers and dies away.

- The apostle quotes **Isa.40:6-8** to illustrate his assertion that the Word of God abideth for ever. And in so doing, he reminds his readers of 'two truths' they will need to understand as persecution of the church continues to increase: First, that 'life is short'. And secondly, that the 'word of the Lord endures forever'.
- It's been said: 'Everything in this life will eventually fade away and be gone. Yet, God's will, His word, and, His works are permanent'.
- 'And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you'. 'The only way to render this perishing creature solid and incorruptible is for him to entertain and receive the word of God; for this remains everlasting truth, and, if received, will preserve him to everlasting life, and abide with him for ever' (Matthew Henry).



## Chapter 2

**Vs.1-3** - Peter speaks of 'Personal Christian Growth'.

- Many believers in Christ fail to realize that the bulk of the New Testament is not written to explain the 'Plan of Salvation', but to reveal 'How we are to live the Christian life after being saved' - 'Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (**Eph.4:13**). It's important that every believer understand what the Bible has to say along these lines. There are guidelines to follow.
- In **Jn.8:31**, Jesus said to those who believed on him, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed'. I will mention **Five things**, listed in the New Testament, in which we must continue:
  - 1) 'Continue in my Word' - **Jn. 8:31**.
  - 2) 'Continue ye in my Love' - **Jn. 15:9**.
  - 3) 'Continue in the Grace of God' - **Acts 13:43**.
  - 4) 'Continue in the Faith' - **Acts 14:22**.
  - 5) 'Continue in Prayer' - **Col. 4:2**.
- Here in chapter two Peter speaks of those whom he described in chapter one as being 'redeemed', 'regenerated', and 'purified' (made holy).

**V.1.** 'Wherefore' (goes back to the fact of the 'new life' received when born again - **1:23**) laying aside (putting away, once for all, any sins that may be in one's life). There must be a complete 'about face' (a turning around to go in a different direction altogether). The Christian's 'new life in Christ' cannot grow unless sins are renounced. Paul then mentions five 'sins of the flesh' (carnal activities and attitudes) that must be 'laid aside' ('put off').

- 'Malice' - ill will toward another; the desire to hurt someone (either by action or words), and, is reflected in the attitude of vengeance. 'Malice is anger resting in the bosom of fools until it inflames a man to design mischief, do mischief, or delights in any mischief that befalls another' (Matthew Henry).
- 'Guile' - deceit, cunning, craftiness. Imposing upon another's ignorance or weakness, to his damage.
- 'Hypocrisies' - pretending to be something they are not. In matters of religion it is 'counterfeit piety'. In civil discourse it is 'counterfeit friendship'.
- 'Envies' - the state in which one no longer seeks to please God but one's self. Such a person ends up comparing himself with others and desiring the good things they have for himself.
- 'All evil speakings' - slander, which is defamation of character.

**V.2.** 'As newborn babes, desire the sincere (pure, without guile) milk of the word' (food proper for the soul, whereby the mind, not the body, is nourished and strengthened), that ye may grow thereby'. Not only is there a need for the 'newborn in Christ' to turn to the Word for nourishment and life, but the Word is a necessity for all believers, whatever may be the stage in their walk with the Lord.  
Note: The word of God, if used rightly, will not leave a man as it finds him, but improves and makes him better.

**Vs.3,4.** 'If so be (forasmuch as) ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious'. 'Believers do not have to simply trust that the Lord is gracious; they can experience His goodness firsthand by appropriating the Word in their lives' (David Jeremiah). Centuries earlier, David made a similar statement when he said, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good' (**Ps.34:8**). **A question is raised:** Can a person be saved without 'tasting of the Lord'? (No. To 'taste of the Lord' is similar to becoming 'a branch in the vine' (**Jn.15:2**). Such cannot be unless converted.

- 'To whom coming (believers in Christ coming with the idea of remaining), as unto a living stone (Peter speaks of Christ Jesus, the resurrected Savior, as a 'stone' to show forth His invincible strength and everlasting duration, and, to teach His followers that He is their protection and security, the foundation upon which they are built), disallowed indeed of men (rejected by His own countrymen, the Jews), but chosen of God (those chosen-out), and precious' (despised of men, but held in high regard with God). Note: The word 'precious', as mentioned here, doesn't have the same meaning as that in **1:19**. There, it speaks of the preciousness of the blood of Christ; here, the 'honor' with which God 'hath highly exalted him'.
- V.5.** 'Ye also, as lively (living) stones'. The same Greek word is used for both Christ and the believer, because the life that exists in Christ exists also in them (**Gal.2:20; I Jn.5:12**).
- 'Are built up a spiritual house'. As 'stones', we are being built up into a 'spiritual house'. And this 'building' is His body, the Church. Note: The 'Church' is recognized as transcending (rising above) the glory of the magnificent Jewish temple built by King Solomon.
  - 'An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ'. Those who served in the Jewish temple, which was meant to house God's presence, were no longer a 'holy priesthood', because they had rejected Christ as the Promised Messiah. The 'Church' (the body of believers) is a 'spiritual temple', where sanctified men and women (an holy priesthood) offer up 'spiritual sacrifices' (their bodies, souls, affections, prayers, praises, alms, etc.). Now, through Jesus Christ, every Christian has been made a 'priest' before God. Yet, the most spiritual sacrifices offered by the best of men are not acceptable unto God, but through Jesus Christ (Who is our 'great high priest', **Heb.4:14**). It is only through Him that 'we', our 'services', or our 'sacrifices' can be accepted.
- V.6.** 'Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious' (Isa.28:16). The 'Living Stone' (the Lord Jesus Christ) becomes the 'chief corner stone' of the temple (the Church). He is not only its 'foundation' (**Matt.16:16,18**), but is also that which holds the Church together.
- 'And he that believeth on him shall not be confounded' (put to shame). The person who believes in Christ will certainly not fail to be saved. Note: As Christians, we need never feel 'let down' by Christ. He is totally reliable and trustworthy. It's been said that there are 'three things which put a man into great confusion: disappointment, sin, and judgment'. Yet, we have the assurance in the scriptures that 'faith' is the remedy for all three. Amen!
- V.7.** 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious (an honor, a thing prized): but unto them which be disobedient (for such as disbelieve), the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner'. Peter shows the contrast between what the 'Living Stone' is to believers and what He becomes to unbelievers. Note: The word 'disallowed', as mentioned here, does not mean the 'stone' was just neglected, or had escaped their attention, or that they were unaware of its existence, and therefore, went on building without it not knowing that it was available. Actually, it means the 'stone' was examined, estimated, and appraised. And when these disbelieving builders completed their criticism of it, they purposely set it aside. It was disallowed.
- 'The same is made the head of the corner'. The One rejected (repudiated) by the builders of Israel (spiritual leaders of the nation) was made by the grace of God the Head Cornerstone. Note: Peter seems to infer that God revealed Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone to these disbelieving builders, offering the opportunity for them to accept him as such. If that is the case, God was saying that the 'door of mercy' was not yet fully closed to them.

**V.8.** 'And a stone of stumbling (a loose stone in the path), and a rock of offense (as a ledge rising out of the ground; a trap set to trip one), even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient (non-persuadable), where unto they were appointed (appointed to stumble at the Word, which is the penalty for refusal to believe it)'. Peter quotes from **Isa.8:14**.

- 'People see Jesus either as one who offends their personal freedom (a stone of stumbling), or as one who frees from sin and is worthy of their worship and obedience (the chief cornerstone). Truth offends those who do not want to hear it, but to the growing believer, it is life' (David Jeremiah).
- 'Christ crucified is the Rock: (1) *Smitten* that the Spirit of life may flow from Him to all who will drink (**Exo.17:6; I Cor.10:4**). (2) To the *church* the foundation and chief corner Stone (**Eph.2:20**). (3) To the *Jews* at His first coming a 'stumbling stone' (**Rom.9:32,33**). (4) To *Israel* at His second coming the 'headstone of the corner' (**Zech.4:7**). (5) To the *Gentile world-power* the smiting 'stone cut out without hands' (**Dan.2:34**). (6) In the *Divine purpose* the Stone which, after the destruction of Gentile world-power, is to grow and fill the earth. (7) To *unbelievers* the crushing Stone of judgment (**Mt.21:44**)' (C. I. Scofield). Note: When Jesus spoke of Himself as the 'stone', in **Ps.118**, He spoke of that to which the rejecters of Christ are appointed: 'And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomsoever it falls, it will grind him to powder' (**Mt.21:44**).

**V.9.** 'But ye (but as for you, in contrast to those disobedient of **v.8**) are a chosen (elect) generation' (race, kind). We are chosen by God's grace and not by our merit. That which once belonged exclusively to Israel (their election, priesthood, and calling) are no longer the property of Israel alone. These now belong to every Christian. The Lord has called Jew and Gentile alike out of darkness to witness to the peoples of the world that His divine mercy is available to every creature.

- 'A royal (kingly) priesthood'. 'All believers in this dispensation are king-priests, and are associated with the Lord Jesus, who is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, a king-priest. Through Jesus Christ, every Christian has been made a priest before God. We are a 'royal priesthood, separated from sin and sinners, consecrated to God, and offering to God spiritual services and oblations, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (Matthew Henry).
- 'An holy (set apart for the service of Deity) nation'. Note: 'The Israelites were a holy nation as separated from the heathen and consecrated to God's service by circumcision' (Pulpit Com.). Christians of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, are one nation, under one King, separated to his service.
- 'A peculiar (special, purchased) people'. Note: The word 'peculiar', today, usually means 'odd', or 'strange'. Some believe the apostle has in mind how we, as believers, should dress, or speak, or our manner of life. But that's not its use here. These believers are 'special' because they are God's purchased possession, a people who belong to one Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 'That ye should shew forth (proclaim) the praises (gracious dealings, glorious attributes) of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light'. The purpose for these high and noble privileges is not so that we might become proud, but that we might proclaim the praises of Him who has done so much for us. The Apostle Paul said, 'For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's' (**I Cor.6:20**).

**V.10.** 'Which in time past were not a people (not even a people before God), but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy'. 'Who at one time were a No-people, but now are a people of God' (The Emphasized New Testament - Rotherham). Note: A people of God, only through His great mercy.

**V.11.** 'Dearly beloved' (not the 'dearly beloved' of a pastor addressing his congregation on a Sunday morning, but Peter reminding them that they are the dearly loved-ones of God).

- 'I beseech (I beg you) as strangers and pilgrims' (as aliens in a foreign land). A 'stranger' was one who lived in a foreign country but had no citizenship rights in that country. The word 'pilgrim' refers to a person visiting in a foreign country with no intentions of settling there permanently. Note: Christians are foreigners in a secular society because our citizenship is in heaven.
- 'Abstain from fleshly lusts (earthly values and obsessions), which war against the soul'. In warfare, you either kill or take captive. And you can be sure that 'fleshly lusts' will do just that. 'Some escape disease in the physical body when they sin, but the disease and death of the inner man is a penalty that no one given over to the flesh escapes' (Gucik). Peter calls his readers to a righteous life in a hostile world. They have a testimony to maintain and a message to share.

**V.12.** 'Having your conversation (manner of living) honest among the Gentiles'. Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay. Christians are to live in such a way that they can be depended upon to always tell the truth. Note: 'Our manner of life is honest when our lives are in accordance with what we are inwardly, cleansed, regenerated children of God' (Wuest).

- 'That, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers (so that, for all their slander of you as bad characters - Moffatt), they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation' (the day when God shall look upon these evil-doers with mercy and grace, and become the bishop of their souls - Vincent). In **Mt.5:16** Jesus said, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven'.

**Vs.13,14.** 'Submit yourselves to (be subject to) every ordinance of man'. As Christians, we are called to be good citizens, submitting to government (**cf. Rom.13:1-7**). We (Christians) are under command to obey human laws and civil rulers as long as these laws do not transgress the laws of God.

- 'For the Lord's sake'. Though the Christian's true citizenship is in heaven, he still must live as an obedient citizen in this world so that God may be honored and glorified.
- 'Whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well'. Note: This is altogether different from the zealous Jews in Peter's day. They recognized no king but God and paid taxes to no one except God. Only when the government tries to force a Christian to do what is against the law of God explicitly stated in Scripture should he refuse to submit (**cf. Acts 5:28,29**).

**V.15.** 'For so is the will of God (when Christians obey the commands mentioned in **vs.13,14**), that with well doing ye may put to silence (muzzle) the ignorance (a want of knowledge, or of understanding) of foolish men (senseless, having a lack of reason)'. A Christian must endeavor, in all relations, to behave himself so as to silence the unreasonable reproaches of the most ignorant and foolish men. 'For this is God's intention, that by behaving well you should silence the foolishness of thoughtless people' (The Berkley Version of the New Testament).

**V.16.** 'As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God (God's love-slaves)'. The Jews, from **Deut.17:15**, concluded that they were bound to obey no sovereign, but one *taken from their own brethren*; and the converted Jews thought they were free from subjection, by their relation to Christ. Note: Both groups were mistaken. The apostle, here, admonishes them to 'live like free men, only never make your freedom a pretext for misconduct' (Moffatt).

- 'All the servants of Christ are free men (**Jn.8:36**); they are free from Satan's dominion, the law's condemnation, the wrath of God, the uneasiness of duty, and the terrors of death' (Matthew Henry).

**V.17.** 'Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king'. 'Show honor to everyone.

Practice love for the brotherhood; practice reverence to God and honor to the Emperor' (Charles Williams). 'Christians must not be lifted up; they must despise no one, but honor in all men the handiwork of God, created after God's own image, though sadly marred and defaced by sin. Respect is due to all men, of course in varying degrees and to be shown in different ways; but in some sense it is due to all, to the humblest and even to the worst' (Pulpit Com.).

- 'Love the brotherhood'. This speaks of the totality of Christian brethren (the Church), regarded as one body in Christ.
- 'Fear God' (Have an humble reference for God). We're told in **Prov.9:10**, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'.
- 'Honor the king'. If we fear God as the King of Kings, it will help us give due honor to earthly rulers.

**V.18.** 'Servants, be subject to your masters (Christian household slaves, for the most part in the homes of pagan masters, were exhorted to be in subjection to their masters) with all fear (in a spirit of fear); not only to the good and gentle (good at heart, having a mild disposition), but also to the froward (those harsh and unfair)'. Note: The servants were directed to do such as this as a powerful testimony for the gospel, and, in hopes that it would bring their masters under conviction of sin.

**Vs.19,20.** 'For this (obedience to masters who are froward) is thankworthy (commendable, since it's an action that goes beyond that which is expected), if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully'. Note: The Christian slave does this because of his relationship with God, and, by the grace of God.

- 'For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God'. There is no merit in suffering at the hands of authority because of our personal misdeeds. This suffering is just and does not count as suffering for the cause of Christ. 'If you do wrong and receive a blow for it, what credit is there in your bearing it patiently' (Weymouth)? But if we suffer wrongly, and patiently endure it, God regards us in a favorable manner.

**V.21.** 'For even hereunto were ye called (Christians are called to suffer and endure hardships, thus, following Christ). Peter knew firsthand what it meant to suffer for Christ. Earlier, while in Jerusalem, he had faced what he thought was to be his last night of life, only to be delivered (**Acts 12**). Yet, that experience did not cause him to give up following Christ as being too dangerous or unreasonable. Rather, he accepted it, 'for even hereunto were ye called', because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example (Jesus is our example as someone who endured punishment unjustly. He, the Just One, died on behalf of unjust ones. He paid the penalty of sin for lost sinners.), that ye should follow his steps' (walk the same road He walked; be Christlike). Suffering for righteousness' sake is not reserved for a select group of holy martyrs; it is foundational for every believer. **Question is asked:** Is Peter saying that all Christians are called to suffer? if so, in what way? (**cf. Jn.16:33; Rom.8:17,17; II Tim.2:11,12**).

**Vs.22-24.** 'Who did no sin (who never, in a single instance, committed sin), neither was guile (craftiness, deceit) found (after having made careful scrutiny) in his mouth' (the entire verse, a quotation from **Isa.53:9**). Note: Since he did no sin, all punishment and indignity to him was without reason.

- 'Who, when he was reviled (subjected to verbal abuse), reviled not again' (never retaliated with vicious words or threats; 'offered no insult in return' - J. B. Phillips).
- 'When he suffered, he threatened not'. 'He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either done or said. In deed and word, he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering; expect the

same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit' (Adam Clarke). 'But committed himself to him that judgeth righteously' ('left his cause in the hands of him who judges justly - Richard Weymouth).

- 'Who his own self bare our sins (was punished for our sins; was our sin-bearing substitute) in his own body on the tree (the *tree* was a symbolic name for the cross among the Jews during the first century), that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness'. The purpose of Christ's substitutionary death was that we might be totally separated from sin's guilt, power, and influence. Amen!
- 'He who bore my sins in his own body on the tree, took all my debts and paid them for me, and now I am dead to those debts; they have no power over me. I am dead to my sins; Christ suffered instead of me. I have nothing to do with them. They are gone as much as if they had never been committed' (Spurgeon).
- 'By whose stripes ye were healed'. Peter quotes **Isa.53:5**. The provision for our healing (both physically and spiritually) was accomplished by the sufferings (stripes) of Jesus. Note: 'The Romans used a scourge of cords or thongs to which were attached pieces of lead or brass, or small, sharp-pointed bones. Criminals condemned to crucifixion were ordinarily scourged before being executed. The victim was stripped to the waist and bound in a stooping position, with the hands behind the back, to a post or pillar. The suffering under the lash was intense. The body was frightfully lacerated. The Christian martyrs at Smyrna (about A.D.155) were so torn by the scourges that their veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and sinews and even the bowels were exposed' (Wuest).

**V.25.** 'For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls'. Peter concludes his advice to Christian servants by reminding them of the difference between their former and present condition. They had been like sheep wandering off from the flock (voluntarily straying, sinning), but because of the misery experienced they had returned from their sinful ways to the Good Shepherd (**cf. prodigal son - Lu.15:11-20**). Note: God is the Bishop of the souls of Christians in the sense that He is the Overseer of their spiritual welfare.

## Chapter 3

- In chapter 2, Peter taught that in order for Christians to live successfully in a hostile world they must learn to be submissive. First, he mentioned Christians submitting to rulers and authorities (**2:13-17**); and then, servants submitting to their masters (employees to employers - **2:18-20**). Now the apostle comes to 'submission in the home'.
- V.1.** Likewise (just as had been taught concerning Christian servants and Christian citizens), ye wives, be in subjection (submissive) to your own husbands'. Note: Peter did not say that wives, or women, are to be submissive to all men in a general sense. God's stated principle for 'male headship' was for the home and the church, but not for society in general. Women are not inferior to men in any way, any more than submissive Christians are inferior to ungodly rulers or to non-Christian bosses.
- 'That, if any obey not the word (refuse to be persuaded, will not listen to reason), they also may be won by the conversation (conduct, behavior) of the wives'. Peter exhorts the wives with unbelieving husbands to stop preaching to them about the gospel, and just live a Christ-like life before them. If they obey not the 'Word', they may without a 'word' be won. 'There is nothing more powerful, next to the Word of God, to win people, than a good conversation, and the careful discharge of relative duties' (Matthew Henry). Note: I love the verse in Isaiah that says, 'Come now, and let us reason together (let's have a conversation), saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool' (**Isa.1:18**). 'A self-denying holy life will do more to win those with whom we live in close intercourse than even holy words, and much more than debate and controversy' (Pulpit Com.).
- V.2.** 'While they (unsaved husbands) behold (view attentively) your chaste conversation coupled with fear' (purity of life with reverence for God).
- Vs.3,4.** 'Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel'. Peter is speaking of worldly adornments, the kind which some women wore before they were saved; immodest, showy, even gaudy. History tells us that the Roman women of that day were addicted to ridiculous extravagance in the adornment of the hair. But such as this was forbidden for Christian wives because the Holy Spirit doesn't use the styles of the world in winning a lost companion to the Lord. Beauty in the eyes of God is far different than that which society sees (merely the outward appearance). It's been said, 'True beauty is a matter of character, and not a matter of decoration'. Note: 'Peter did not forbid all adornment. But for the godly woman outward adornment is always in moderation, and her emphasis is always on inward adornment' (Gucik).
- 'But let it be the hidden man of the heart (the soul; the inner man of **Rom.7:22**), in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit'. 'Your beauty should, rather, be from within. It should be the inner loveliness of the heart, the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit' (Olaf Norlie).
  - Which is in the sight of God of great price'. Such as this is precious not only to an unsaved husband, but also to God.
- Vs.5,6.** 'For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands'. Peter is not referring to some particular or unique class of Old Testament individuals, but to ordinary sinners that had been saved by grace. He did not call them to a new standard; but to that which was practiced by holy women of former times.

They are spoken of as being 'holy women' because they had been 'set apart' from the world. One aspect of these holiness women making themselves beautiful was by their submission to their husbands.

- 'Even as Sara obeyed Abraham (she obeyed her husband habitually; the entirety of her life was one of obedience to her husband), calling him lord (thereby showing him reverence and acknowledging his head-ship over her): whose daughters ye are (inasmuch as Abraham is the father of all who believe (**Rom.4:12**), so Sarah, here, is spoken of as being the mother of many daughters), as long as ye do well (if you continue to follow in her footsteps).
- 'And are not afraid with any amazement'. This is not easily understood. (1) 'If you do well, being faithful wives, as was Sarah, you will not live under fear of being found guilty of infidelities' (Dake). (2) 'As long as you are doing good, as believing wives, you need not be afraid with any sudden terror concerning some accusation an unbelieving husband may bring against you' (Wuest). (3) 'Wives should be in subjection to their churlish husbands, not from dread and amazement, but from a desire to do well and to please God' (Matthew Henry). 'The Christian wife might often experience cruel treatment from an unbelieving husband, but she must not live in a flutter of excited terror. Rather, she is to be calm and quiet, trusting in God' (Pulpit Com.).

**V.7.** 'Likewise, ye husbands'. Just as Christian wives were to be in submission to their husbands, Peter says that submission is the responsibility of the Christian husbands, as well. They are to be just as faithful to their wives as they desire their wives to be faithful to them. Notice: Peter doesn't consider the case of a Christian husband with an unbelieving wife; possibly, because such as that, in that day, would be very uncommon.

- 'Dwell with them according to knowledge'. A godly husband doesn't just share a house with his wife, he *lives* with her; not according to lust or passion, but as one who knows the word of God and has an understanding of his duties in the marriage relationship.
- 'Giving honor (due respect) unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel (Christian husbands are to consider the *helpmeets* God has given as being *precious* and are to treat them with honor. Too, he must realize that Christ died for her as well as for him. This admonition was especially needed at the time Peter penned this letter because of the low place, in general, which was accorded womanhood. Peter is not implying a moral or intellectual inferiority of women but is recognizing women's physical limitations.)
- 'And as being heirs together (a godly husband realizes that his spouse is not only his wife, but is his sister in Christ) of the grace of life (since the wife is the weaker of the two, husbands are to honor them as heirs equally with themselves), that your prayers be not hindered' (feelings of resentment in the home, which arise out of selfish conduct, renders effective praying impossible).

**V.8.** 'Finally'. Peter is bringing to a close his exhortations concerning 'submission' and turns from particular classes and relations to the whole Christian community'(Pulpit Com). 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous'. Peter now outlines some actions that are characteristic of the Christian life. First, he calls for all believers to be 'of one mind' (which is not based on man's opinion or popular vote; but, rather, on God's Word). Secondly, he calls believers to sympathize with others (stand with others in their emotions; rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep). Thirdly, those in Christ are to 'love as brethren'. We are sons and daughters of the living God, having been adopted by faith in His Son. Therefore, we are brothers and sisters with each other. Fourthly, believers are to 'be tenderhearted' (have a heart open to the needs of others). Fifthly, we are to 'treat each other with courtesy (not just with good manners, but with a humility which considers others first; rejoices in the successes of others).



- V.9.** 'Not rendering (giving back) evil for (in exchange for) evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing' (be constantly blessing, speak well of). The greatest challenge to our love for others comes when we are wronged. Yet, in God's Kingdom, revenge is never acceptable behavior.
- 'Knowing that ye are thereunto called (for hereunto were ye called), that ye should inherit a blessing'. The surest way to receive a blessing is to be a blessing to others.
- Vs.10-11.** 'For he that will love life, and see good days (he who is loving life and wishes to continue doing so), let him refrain (bridle, restrain) his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile (that they speak no deceitful words): Let him eschew (shun, avoid) evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue (pursue) it'. (This is a quotation from **Ps.34:12-14**). The apostle gives an excellent prescription for a good and happy life in an evil and contentious world. The person who wants a truly happy life, enjoying all of God's blessings, must first turn away from evil in both word and deed. Too, he must pursue (run after) peace. And remember, peace doesn't come automatically or with little effort. That's why we must pursue it. Yet, it can be ours (a promise of God), even in the midst of difficult situations and hurt feelings. Jesus said, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' (Jn.14:27). Amen! Not only can we have 'peace with God', but the 'peace of God'.
- V.12.** 'For the eyes of the Lord are over (upon) the righteous (upright), and his ears are open unto their prayers (God is earnestly listening to the petitions of those who love and serve him): but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil' (God will look upon the wicked to punish them for their sins). Note: 'God's anger and displeasure will pursue those who are evil; for he is more an enemy to wicked persecutors than men are' (Matthew Henry).
- V.13.** 'And (seeing that God takes such good care of the righteous) who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers (be zealous) of that which is good?' If God's eye is over the righteous, and his ear open to their prayers, who shall harm them? Note: Peter is not saying, 'Who will have the heart to harm them?' He knew what the Lord had said about believers suffering persecution. He is actually saying, 'No one can do real harm to the Lord's people. They may be persecuted, even severely, but God, in His providence, will make all things work together for their good' (**Rom.8:28**).
- Vs.14-17.** The apostle tells how Christians should act when they are falsely accused or unfairly persecuted.
- V.14.** 'But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye' (you are spiritually prosperous; happy that you are privileged to suffer for the sake of Christ). Peter did not say that if a man lives blamelessly, he will always be free from cruel treatment. Jesus, while giving the sermon on the mount, gave words of encouragement for such times, saying, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you' (**Mt.5:11,12**).
- 'And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled' ('Be not affected with the fear by the fear which they strive to inspire in your heart' (Wuest).
- V.15.** 'But sanctify (set apart) the Lord God in your hearts'. In essence, Peter is saying, 'set apart in your hearts Christ as Lord'. 'At the very center of life there is to be one Lord, and that is Christ' (G.

Campbell Morgan). We are to give Christ his rightful place in our hearts and lives, serving him with reverence and godly fear.

- The songwriter said it well when he penned the following words:

'My hope is built on nothing less - Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.'

- 'And be ready always to give an answer (not just a reply, but a verbal defense) to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear'. Note: It's important that a believer understand what he believes and why he is a Christian, and then, be able to share his beliefs humbly and biblically.

**V.16.** 'Having a good conscience'. In addition to meekness and fear (mentioned in the previous verse), the defender of the 'Faith' must have a clear conscience, which is the result of a life lived in obedience to God's word, free from known sin. 'A good conscious is one that has been purged from dead works (**Heb.9:14**); is sprinkled with the blood of Christ (**Heb.10:22**); is witnessed by the Holy Spirit (**Rom.9:1**); is full of joy, and has glory welling up within (**II Cor.1:12**), and enjoys the peace of God' (Evangelical Com.).

- 'That, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed (they may be put to shame) that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ'. Note: The confession of a Christian's faith is credibly supported by the two means mentioned here: a 'good conscience' and a 'good conversation in Christ'. The latter speaks of a holy life with the believer following in the steps of the Lord (**cf. 2:21**).

**V.17.** 'For it is better, if the will of God be so (if perchance the will of God so will), that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing'. No one wants to suffer. But if suffering comes our way, may it be for doing good rather than for doing evil. It's been said, 'Blessings always follow suffering for doing good'.

**V.18.** 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins'. He suffered for well-doing when he was put to death on the Cross. By so doing, he made a way of salvation for all mankind. 'Christ suffered *once for all*; so the sufferings of the Christian are soon over - are but for a moment' (Pulpit Com.). Note: Under the Old Testament Covenant, God's people offered sacrifices repeatedly, over and over again. But Christ's *one sacrifice for sins* was sufficient for all, and, for all time. It would never again, of necessity, be repeated (**cf. Heb.7:27**).

- 'The just for the unjust'. He, the innocent One, died in behalf of the guilty. 'He that knew no sin suffered instead of those who knew no righteousness' (Matthew Henry).
- 'That he might bring us to God'. His substitutionary death on the cross was an atonement for our sins. And its purpose was to bring us to God (reconcile us to the Father). 'The Lord Jesus has provided for lost sinners an entree (entrance) into the presence of God' (Wuest). Note: At the crucifixion of Christ, the veil in the Temple, which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy, was rent in twain (a type of the human body of Christ being torn); thereby, signifying that a new and living way was opened for all believers into the very presence of God.
- 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened (made alive) by the Spirit'. Note: There are two schools of thought concerning this statement. (1) 'The word *Spirit* is not a reference to the Holy

Spirit, but to Jesus' inner life, His own spirit'. 'In his flesh he was put to death, but in his spirit he was quickened'. 'It is the human spirit of our Lord that is set over against His human body'. (2) 'Jesus did die in his body but was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit'. 'He was put to death in his human nature, but he was quickened and raised again by the Spirit'. 'The word flesh is used by Peter to refer to mankind in **1:24**, and, here, this seems to be the obvious opposite to the Spirit who raised Christ to life again'. At any rate, it would seem that flesh and Spirit have a parallel but opposite meaning; if Jesus' flesh and spirit are meant rather than the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to view the resurrection as pertaining to only the spirit and not the body'. Note: I agree with both 2a and 2b.

- 'This verse tells us that the *Holy Spirit* raised Jesus from the dead. In **Rom.6:4**, Paul tells us that the *Father* raised Jesus from the dead. And in **Jn.2:18-22**, we're told that *Jesus raised himself* from the dead. Note: 'The resurrection was the work of the Triune God' (Gucik). An interesting thought: 'Peter summarizes the gospel message in four phrases: Christ *suffered*, was *put to death*, and was *made alive by the Spirit* (the Resurrection) . . . for us, *that he might bring us to God*' (D. Jeremiah).

**Vs.19,20**. 'By which also (directed and anointed by the Holy Spirit) he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water'.

- **Questions are raised**: Who, and where, were these 'spirits in prison'? Again, these verses have proven difficult for interpreters. The following are some answers gleaned from various writers. 'After his death and resurrection, Jesus went to imprisoned angels who had sinned in Noah's day and preached to them of his victory over death and Satan'. 'Christ, by the Holy Spirit, proclaimed through the mouth of Noah a message of warning to his disobedient generation, who are now in Hades awaiting final judgment'. Both of these interpretations are mentioned as possibilities in the Full Life Study Bible. 'Jesus went to Hades (realm of the dead) between his crucifixion and resurrection to proclaim judgment upon those condemned in Noah's day while the ark was being built'. 'This refers to fallen angels (demon spirits), who were permanently bound in the abyss because of heinous wickedness'. 'In all probability this was preaching (the proclamation of God's message), but it was not evangelism (the proclamation of good news). Jesus preached a message of judgment and final condemnation in light of his finished work on the cross to these disobedient spirits' (Gucik).
- The Greek poet Homer uses the term '*Hades*' as the place for dead men, and '*Tartarus*', a murky abyss beneath Hades for fallen immortals. Too, in **Lu.16** we're told the story of the rich man and Lazarus, and, into which part of Hades each of these men went at death (the rich man to hell, and Lazarus to Abraham's bosom - Paradise). Note: I believe Jesus, while in Paradise between the time of his death and resurrection, preached to those in the hell section of Hades who had rejected the call to repentance and the opportunity for salvation during the many years of the ark being built by Noah. We are not told what the Lord's message was, but we can rest assured it was not an invitation to be saved. Nowhere in scripture is it said that unregenerate man will have a 'second chance' to accept Christ as Savior after death.
- 'Eight souls were saved (brought safely through) by water'. The eight of Noah's family were not saved in the sense of their souls being saved from sin but saved from death (drowning in the flood), because they obeyed God and went into the ark. Too, those who saw no need of entering the ark heeded neither the preaching of Noah nor the longsuffering of God. At the last, 'the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be' (**Mt.24:39**). Note: The 'eight' were 'saved by water' inasmuch as the water buoyed up the ark and was the source of saving those inside.

**Vs.21,22.** 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the fifth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ'.

- **The question is raised:** How, or in what sense, does 'water baptism' save us? Note: Just as it was not the water that saved the eight persons of **v.20**, but the ark, so, water baptism does not save the soul, but faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It's that, for which water baptism is a figure.
- 'Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him'. After completing that for which he came into the world to accomplish, Jesus Christ ascended triumphantly into heaven (**cf. Acts 1:9-11**), sat down, and is now enthroned at the right hand of the Father.
- Think about it: The Lord Jesus Christ, He who suffered, the Just for the unjust, is now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high - 'far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion' (**Eph.1:21**).
- Note: No doubt, Peter mentioned this to give encouragement to his readers (who at the time were suffering severe persecution), and to remind them that their sufferings could be that which would bring to them their greatest triumph, as seen in the example of Christ Jesus.

## Chapter 4

- Peter continues the thought of Christians suffering for the cause of Christ, always keeping Christ as our Example.

**Vs.1,2.** 'Forasmuch then (because of; in view of the fact that) as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh (in his human nature; endured bodily suffering; was put to death with respect to the flesh), arm yourselves likewise with the same mind (approach suffering with the same mind; have the same determination; put on the same armor of forgiveness, meekness, and gentleness): for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin' (he that has mortified the flesh has ceased from sin - **Rom. 8:12,13**; he that is wholly sanctified, with the 'old man' (inbred sin) having been crucified, hath ceased from sin - **Rom.6:6-11**).

- 'That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts (strong cravings) of men, but to the will of God'. Note: The lusts of men are uncertain, restless, shifting - but the Apostle Paul says, in **I Thes.4:3**, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication'. When the born-again believer dies to self and self-will and reckons the 'old man' crucified by faith, it's then that he is capable of living his life in the will of God (**cf. Figs.3 & 4. p.4**).

**Vs.3-5.** 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will (desire, inclination) of the Gentiles'. The word 'suffice', in Greek, means 'sufficient'. 'You have spent time enough in the past in doing as the heathen like to do' (Goodspeed). 'Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do (Revised Standard Version). Note: A Christian should view his life previous to being saved from sin as 'past and done with', a 'closed chapter'. He now has a 'new life in Christ' Old things have passed away, and all things have become new (**cf. Figs. 3 & 4. p.54**). Amen!

- 'When we walked in lasciviousness (every form of lewdness and impurity), lusts (evil desires; hidden sins of unclean thought), excess of wine (aflame with wine; drunkenness), revellings (luxurious feasting; too full, too frequent, and often too expensive), banqueting's (gluttony; wine feasts), and abominable idolatries' (the most impure, obscene, detestable rites practiced at idol feasts).
- 'Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them (that you no longer run in company with them) to the same excess of riot (surprised that you no longer desire the pleasures of sinful living), speaking evil of you'. Since they were unable to understand the change that had come into the lives of these believers, they abused them. 'They marvel how you can renounce these fleshly gratifications for something spiritual that you cannot see' (Dake).
- 'Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead'. When this account is required, all who have lived their lives in sin will then see how foolish they have been. Note: Many have tried to put this truth out of their minds, but there is coming a day when 'all' will give an account to God.

**V.6.** 'For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead'. Peter speaks here of believers who had heard and accepted the gospel while alive but had died before Peter wrote this letter. Note: The Christians of Thessalonica feared that those believers who had died before the return of Christ would somehow miss out on the blessings promised to those living at the Lord's coming. Too, some of Peter's readers could possibly have thought that those who had passed away before the times of the gospel of Christ could not be judged in the same manner as those who were then living.

- Some take this statement by the Apostle Peter (having to do with the gospel being preached to the dead) as referring to a 'post-crucifixion evangelization' of those who lived before the 'flood' of

Noah's day, a further offer of salvation. (I totally disagree.) The Bible does not teach that men have a second chance after death. (**Heb.9:27**)

- 'That they might be judged according to men in the flesh but live according to God in the spirit'. 'The gospel was preached to those believers, now dead, that, though they were judged, yet they might live' (Pulpit Com.). 'Though these were dead physically, they were triumphantly alive in their spirits' (John MacArthur).
- V.7.** 'But the end of all things is at hand'. Note: The Greek word for 'end' is never used in the New Testament as a chronological end (that something simply stops). Instead, it means a consummation, a goal achieved, a result attained. The end is at hand, not only the judgment of wicked and sinful men (of persecutors and slanderers, etc.), but the end of troubles and trials and persecutions and sufferings; the end of man's great conflict with sin, the end of mankind's probation. And in light of that, Peter says, 'be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer' (be serious and watchful; give yourselves to serious prayer). Note: Knowing that Christ is soon to come should be a motivation for all believers to live holy.
- V.8.** 'And above all things (indicates that love is the virtue of the highest priority) have fervent charity (the love that is produced in the heart by the Holy Spirit) among yourselves' (having love that endures and reaches out to others).
- 'For charity shall cover the multitude of sins'. The term 'covering' refers to a pardoning or forgiving of sins. it does not suggest that God doesn't hold individuals accountable for sins. He does. The emphasis in this verse speaks of the love believers have for one another. 'Love' causes the Christian to endure wrong and forgive others when he is sinned against. Note: As Christians, we should not seek to dwell on the past sins of others; but, rather, be ready to forgive. In so doing, a multitude of sins may be forgiven.
  - It's been said, 'Love covers a multitude of sins, both the sins of the one loving and the sins of the one who is being loved'.
- V.9.** 'Use hospitality one to another without grudging'. Hospitality is a vital part of expressing love one to another. Peter is emphasizing the importance of believers having a readiness to receive and serve others, especially those of the household of faith.
- 'Without grudging' (grumbling). Note: The practice of hospitality could become costly, often inconvenient, and even burdensome. Yet, it is a wonderful way of expressing Christian love to others. Whatever a Christian does by way of charity or of hospitality, he ought to do it cheerfully, and without murmuring. Jesus, when sending forth his disciples to minister, said, in **Matt.10:8**, 'Freely ye have received, freely give'.
- V.10.** 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another'. Note: Since the term 'the gift' does not have article 'the] in the original Greek, this speaks of 'any gift' (meaning something one receives for nothing). The gifts of grace, whatever they may be, are entrusted to individual Christians for the good of the entire Church. Therefore, whatever gift has been given us, as Christians, is to be used to bless others.
- 'As good stewards of the manifold (variegated or many colored) grace of God'. A 'steward' is responsible for another's resources. He manages and disperses property and goods that are not his. Thus, the talents with which we are entrusted are our Lord's goods and are to be employed as He directs. Every man is to minister to others according to the ability he receives from God. One writer said it this way: 'Everyone has some abilities. Find yours and use them for the benefit of others'.

**V.11.** 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth (not try to minister beyond his ability, or imitate the ability of another).'

Note: 'The Greek word 'oracles' speaks of the oracular utterances of heathen deities' (Wuest).

'Heathens gave the highest respect to oracles from their gods. They held them as sacred and inviolable, and did scarcely anything in business, war, making peace, or making laws without an oracle' (Dake). Here, Peter mentions two categories of gifts: speaking gifts and serving gifts.

- 'That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' The goal of Christian ministry, whether speaking or serving, is to bring glory to God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Vs.12-13.** 'Beloved (divinely loved ones), think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you' (nothing just happens in the life of a Christian, not even fiery trials). Remember: Those to whom Peter was writing were going through much suffering at this time because of persecution. But he reminds them that they were loved with all the love in the heart of God. Note: It's inevitable that faithful Christians will experience troubles and afflictions in this ungodly world that is controlled by Satan and is opposed to that which is good and right. The Apostle Paul said, 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' (**II Tim.3:12**). And in another place he said, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it' (**I Cor.10:13**).

- 'But rejoice, inasmuch as (in so far as) ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings'. Note: 'The Christian's rejoicing arises from the fact that he shares in common with Christ in suffering for righteousness' sake. 'These sufferings of Christ, which we share in common with Him, are not His expiatory sufferings on the Cross, but His sufferings for righteousness' sake while enduring the opposition of sinners previous to the Cross' (Wuest). When giving the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, 'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven' (**Matt.5:11,12**).
- 'That, when his glory shall be revealed (in the unveiling of His glory at His Second Coming), ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (be extremely joyful).' Note: Jesus is presently glorified in heaven, where He sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high; but His glory is not yet fully revealed on earth.

**V.14.** 'If ye be reproached (when ye are reviled; have insults heaped upon you) for the name of Christ (because ye belong to Christ, because ye are Christians), happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you' (because you have the Spirit of God with you, to strengthen and comfort you).

- 'On their part he is evil spoken of (the Spirit itself is evil evil-spoken of and blasphemed), but on your part he is glorified' (when good people are vilified for the name of Christ, the Spirit of God is glorified in them). Those who suffer because of their loyalty and faithfulness to Christ are blessed, for God's Spirit will rest upon them in a special way.

**V.15.** 'But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters' (of things that do not concern you). Suffering as 'an evildoer' is deserved and brings shame to the name of the Lord. Note: Christians were spoken against as evildoers: therefore, the apostle thought these cautions necessary when outlining the guidelines of Christian religion.

**V.16.** 'Yet if any man suffer as a Christian (for being Christ-like), let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf'. The word 'Christian' occurs only three times in the New Testament - twice in the Book of Acts (**11:26; 24:28**), and here. The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, but it's believed that the name was invented by the heathen, and was used as a term of ridicule, or scorn.

- Suffering as a Christian is nothing for which to be ashamed. Instead, we should give glory to God for the 'grace' He gives when persecuted because of our faith and testimony as believers in Christ.

**V.17.** 'For the time has come that judgment must begin at the house of God' (for being a Christian). The 'judgment' mentioned here is actually the persecution which these saints were suffering at that time. Yet, this disciplinary judgment was for their purification, not punishment for sin. Too, it was not unto condemnation, but the purging, chastening, and purifying of the church by the merciful and loving hand of God. Is was a 'fiery trial' of their faith, as mentioned in **v.12**.

- 'And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?' 'Who can express or say how dreadful their end will be?' (Matthew Henry) 'If God so strongly and painfully judges His church which He loves, what will be His fury on the ungodly?' (John MacArthur) 'And if even we who are Christians must be judged, what terrible fate awaits those who have never believed in the Lord?' (Kenneth Taylor)

**V.18.** 'And if the righteous scarcely (with difficulty) be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' Note: It's not that it is hard to be saved (salvation is a free gift of Jesus Christ). Peter is saying, if the righteous need disciplinary judgments, how much more will the unrighteous merit the wrath of God, whose offer of salvation and righteousness they have rejected. If a good man is saved only with difficulty (persecution, trials, chastening from the Lord), the destiny of the nonbeliever is far more terrifying (an eternal separation from God).

**V.19.** Peter gives a 'summary' of his teachings on Christian sufferings.

- 'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator'. Note: The word 'commit' is a banking term meaning 'to deposit for safe keeping' (used for leaving money on deposit with a trusted friend). It is interesting that this is the same word Peter used in **2:23** to describe that which Jesus did in his suffering for our sins on the Cross; He committed himself 'to him that judgeth righteously'. 'We are admonished to follow after our crucified Savior, and, like him, commit our souls to the keeping of our heavenly Father as a deposit which may be left with perfect confidence in the hands of a faithful Creator' (Pulpit Com.).



## Chapter 5

- In view of the fact that Christ, the Chief Shepherd, is soon to return, believers are called to 'Christian service'.
- V.1.** 'The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder'. The idea of the 'elder', in New Testament times, was brought into church life from Jewish culture (**Exo.3**), and speaks of the shepherd (pastor, or overseer). Too, the word 'elder' has to do with the spiritual maturity and wisdom of a person rather than a specific age. And since this is a circular letter, intended for several different congregations, Peter includes all the elders of the various churches in his exhortation. Note: Times of persecution and sufferings in the church call for the noblest of leadership.
- 'Who am also an elder' (who am a fellow-elder; an elder serving along with you who are elders). Note: Even though Peter was clearly the prominent one among the band of disciples, he neither claimed nor assumed any higher position in the Church than that of an ordinary elder.
  - 'And a witness of the sufferings of Christ'. There are two schools of thought concerning the word 'witness' here, as it relates to the crucifixion of Christ: (1) An individual who actually saw what took place, or, (2) Someone who testifies to the truth and meaning of what happened. It's likely that Peter was in the latter category. 'Peter was with Christ in the garden, he was with him when he was apprehended, and, he was with him in the high priest's hall. But whether he followed Jesus to the cross we know not' (Adam Clarke).
  - 'And also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed'. No doubt, the basis of this anticipation by Peter was his experience of observing the 'Transfiguration of Christ' (**cf. Matt.17:1-8**). On that outstanding occasion he was a 'partaker' of the Lord's glory. Too, the phrase, 'the glory that shall be revealed', is believed by some to be the prophesied blessings of salvation to the Gentiles.
- Vs.2,3.** 'Feed the flock of God (shepherd the flock by preaching and teaching the sincere Word, and ruling them according to the directions and disciplines outlined in God's Word) which is among you, taking the oversight thereof (referring to the spiritual care of the flock), not by constraint, but willingly (not because you must do them, but from a willing mind that takes pleasure in the work); not for filthy lucre (shameful gain), but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over (lording it over) God's heritage (that portion of God's flock that had been assigned to them), but being ensamples to the flock'.
- Four exhortations to elders: (1) Feed the flock of God. And remember, it's God's flock. It does not belong to the pastor (leader). (2) Take oversight of the flock willingly, with an eagerness to serve, and not because you feel an obligation to do so. (3) Minister because of what you can give, and not for what you can get; not for personal gain. (4) Lead by example, and not by force. Note: Pastors are examples to the flock whether they intend to be or not. It's been said that a congregation takes on the personality of its pastor in both good ways and bad ways.
  - In essence, the elders have two major responsibilities: They are to 'feed' and to 'lead' (shepherd the church). Too, pastors and church leaders must be aware of two dangerous sins: 'greed for money' and 'desire for power'.
- V.4.** 'And when the chief Shepherd (Jesus Christ) shall appear (is manifested), ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away'. A day is coming when all pastors and religious leaders (shepherds of God's flock) will answer to their Chief Shepherd, with those having been found faithful promised a 'crown of glory'. (Weymouth calls it 'a never-withering wreath of glory'). Note: The 'crown' given to victors in athletics or war was made of oak or ivy leaves, while the festal garlands of the marriage

feast was of flowers. These would wither and fade. But the victor's crown which the Lord Jesus will give to His faithful under-shepherds will never wither nor fade.

- Interesting thoughts concerning Christ, the Shepherd; He is:

- 1) The Good Shepherd . . . Jn.10:11,14
- 2) The Great Shepherd . . . Heb.13:20
- 3) The Chief Shepherd . . . I Pet. 5:4

- Ps.22 . . . Good Shepherd, dying for us.
- Ps.23 . . . Great Shepherd, taking care of us.
- Ps.24 . . . Chief Shepherd, coming for us.

**V.5.** 'Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto (be subject to) the elder'. There are differences of opinion as to the full meaning of the word 'younger', mentioned here in this context. I will list four which have been suggested. (1) It is used by the apostle, here and in **Acts 5:6**, of assistant-ministers who were employed to help the presbyters (pastors; religious leaders of the church). (2) It had a meaning nearly equivalent to the 'laity'. (3) Peter is simply speaking of respect due to age. (4) The 'younger', here, refers to younger associations or societies organized within the church; brought into existence to assist in fulfilling the 'Great Commission' of carrying the gospel to all the world. Note: I'm not sure but lean toward number three. Inasmuch as 'respect for experience' is becoming in the young, they are to submit themselves to their elders, for 'the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness' (**Prov.16:31**).

- 'Yea, all of you be subject one to another'. Peter says all believers, young and old, should submit to each other; and all should submit to God. 'Strive all to serve each other; let the pastor strive to serve the people, and the people the pastors; and let there be no contention, but who shall do most to oblige and profit all the rest' (Adam Clarke).
- 'And be clothed with humility'. The word 'be clothed' (*Gr. engkomboomai*) means literally to 'tie on' an apron, such as was worn by slaves; that which was tied around them when at work in order to keep their clothes clean. And, this 'apron' speaks of the believer's humility (being humble). 'Indeed, you must all put on the apron of humility to serve one another' (Moffatt). Note: Christians should be ready to submit to the humblest works of charity for others just as Jesus laid aside his outer garment and put on a towel to become a servant, so each of us should have a servant's attitude and minister to each other. Humility is not demeaning ourselves and thinking poorly of ourselves. It is simply not thinking of ourselves at all.
- 'For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble'. God resists the proud because he hates the sin of pride. 'Grace and pride are eternal enemies. Pride demands that God bless me in light of what I think I deserve. Grace deals with me on the basis of what is in God, not on the basis of anything in me' (Gusik).

**V.6.** 'Humble yourselves (suffer yourselves to be humbled) therefore under the mighty hand of God'.

When we consider the omnipotent hand of God it should make us humble in all that he allows to come our way. 'Bow down, then, before the strong hand of God' (R. Knox). Note: The humbling process which God was using was the persecution and suffering through which these Christians were going.

- 'That he may exalt you in due time'. 'If you are willing to be nothing God will make something of you' (Spurgeon). God does not promise to exalt those who have been humbled, but he will exalt all who humble themselves, in 'due time'. Too often, we think we know that particular time better than He does. Some believe this 'due time' means a specific and designated time, referring to the second coming of Christ. Note: When speaking of Christ Jesus (**Phil.2:8,9**), Paul said, 'And being found in

fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name'.

- V.7.** 'Casting (to throw something on something, as to throw more wood on the fire due to the cold) all your care (anxieties, worries, concerns about things of the world) upon him: (the person who heeds the command given in **v.6**, truly humbling himself under the mighty hand of God, will have far fewer 'cares' to cast upon Him) for he careth for you' (because you are His concern). Note: The Lord said, 'Take no thought . . .' (**Matt.6:25,31,34; 10:19**). He is more concerned about our welfare than we could ever possibly be. Surely, no one ever cared for us like Jesus.
- V.8.** 'Be sober (be mentally self-controlled, clear-headed), be vigilant (be wide awake and watchful); because your adversary (one who resists, an enemy, opponent in a lawsuit) the devil (Satan, slanderer, false accuser), as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour'. Note: We are told in **Rev.20:1,2** that there is coming a time when the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, will be confined in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. But we must understand until that time he walks about looking for opportunities to overwhelm believers with temptation, persecution, and discouragement. Yet, although he is pleased to make Christians miserable, that's not his ultimate goal. He is out to destroy and will not be content until the believer is utterly devoured.
- V.9.** 'Whom resist (stand up against) steadfast in the faith' (remain firm in your Christian faith; continue to live in accord with the truth of God's word). The believer is to stand firm against the onset of the devil, not in himself, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle James said, 'Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you' (**Ja. 4:7**). Note: Unless we first submit to God, it would be foolishness to think the devil will flee from us. Although no one should ever underestimate the devil, our God is greater. Amen!
- 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world'. Peter wanted his readers to know that they were not alone in their spiritual warfare, as others in Christ were fighting the same battles. Jesus said (**Jn.16:33**), 'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world'. And in **I Cor.10:13**, the Apostle Paul said, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it'.
- V.10.** 'But the God of all grace (all grace is from God; **cf. II Cor.1:3**, 'The God of all comfort'), who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus (this 'call' is more than just an invitation, it is a 'divine summons'), after that ye have suffered a while (the sufferings are here but for a short time; the glory is eternal) make you perfect (shall himself make you perfect), stablish, strengthen, settle you' (God will bring to completion that which is lacking in the character of His chosen). The apostle has concluded his exhortations; he has informed his readers as to what they must do; now, he entreats them, saying, 'look to God'. It's in Him they will find that which is needed to produce strength of character. Note: 'Christians are to live with the understanding that God's purposes realized in the future require some pain in the present. While the believer is being personally attacked by the enemy, he is being personally perfected by the Lord' (John MacArthur).

**V.11.** 'To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen'. Peter closes his message with a benediction, reminding his readers that the God who can do this great work in our lives, mentioned above, is certainly worthy of our praise.

**Vs.12-14.** 'By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand' (that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein). It's believed that this portion of the letter was written by Peter, himself, after he (according to the custom of that day) had dictated the bulk of the letter to Silvanus (undoubtedly the one known as Silas in many of Paul's letters). He traveled with the Apostle Paul on Paul's second missionary journey, was known to the churches of Asia Minor as a faithful brother, was a Roman citizen, is believed to have been the writer of this letter (an 'amanuensis'; one who writes from dictation), and later, was the courier who took this letter to its intended recipients.

- 'The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son' (John Mark, my spiritual son). The words 'church that is' are in italics, and, therefore, are not a part of the early manuscripts. The American Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible, and possibly other, have substituted the words 'The church that is at Babylon' with 'She that is in Babylon'. Note: Some have even suggested that 'She' is speaking of Peter's wife, or some other well-known Christian woman in the church at Babylon. (I disagree completely with this thinking.) Therefore, to remove confusion as 'to whom', or 'what', this 'She' might represent, I prefer to stay with the wording of the translators in the KJV of the Bible.
- 'Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity' (of love, of fellowship, of peace). In the early days of the church this practice seems to have been universal. Note: Religious rituals, rites, and ceremonies may change according to the differences of countries, times, customs, and manners; but the sacredness of brotherly love will remain unchanged forever.
- 'Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen'.