

Epistles IV

James 1:2-3 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

EPISTLES IV

James-I & II Peter-Jude

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SOURCE CREDITS:

I do not know the original source of the class notes found in this study of **James**, however, where I have added additional material from other texts, it is indicated. My own additions are numerous, but not indicated. One source that is frequently quoted or paraphrased is “**The Communicator’s Commentary**” by Dr. Paul A. Cedar indicated by (CC), and published by Word Publishing, copyright 1984, used with their kind permission.

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Other significant sources of information for this course study include: “**Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible**” (**DARB**), by Finis Jennings Dake; published by Dake Bible Sales, Inc., PO Box 173, Lawrenceville, GA 30245, 1961; used by their kind permission. Also, **Unger’s Bible Dictionary (UBD)**, by Merrill F. Unger; published by Moody Press, Chicago, 1966; used by their kind permission.

Notes from the Appendix outline on “suffering” are entirely from the book, “**NIGHT SHIFT**” God Works in the Dark Hours of Life”, by David A. Shive; Back to the Bible Publishing, P.O.Box 82808, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501; copyright 2001.

Change note: July 2005, the following material was added to the teaching outline:

- James, I. Overview of the Book of James,
 - G. SIMPLE OUTLINE**
- 1 Peter, I. Overview of the Book of First Peter,
 - G. Notes on the Rule of Emperor Nero:**
 - H. 2 PETER KEY WORDS**
 - I. SIMPLE OUTLINE**
- 2 Peter, I. Overview of the Book of Second Peter,
 - G. SIMPLE OUTLINE**
- Jude, I. Overview of the Book of Jude,
 - G. SIMPLE OUTLINE**

In May of 2012 I corrected the outline format and changed the color of the scripture text for easy identification, but made no changes to the material.

EPISTLES IV INTRODUCTION:

James, Peter, Jude, and other leaders had the difficult job of overseeing the new Christian “Church”: nurturing and protecting the future “BRIDE OF CHRIST”. The Holy Spirit gave her LIFE and POWER; the apostles preached boldly and tirelessly to help the Bride grow.

- **But even in that first generation of believers, while those who had actually seen and heard and lived with Christ himself were establishing His Church, the Bride was in serious danger!**

The Church of Jesus Christ was being threatened from many sides.

- * **The power of the Roman Empire...and...**
- * **The hatred of the Jewish pharisees came against her with fearful persecutions.**
- * **At the same time, pagan influences from Roman, Greek, and Asian religions threatened to creep into the church and corrupt the truth about God’s Word: the gospel of Christ.**
- But the most critical danger to the Church, the Bride of Jesus, arose from within herself.

The Bride was in danger of dying from a type of “spiritual cancer”: “carnality”, which attacked Christ’s Church in two forms:

- **“legalism”:** Many Jewish members of the Body of Christ were warring with each other in legalistic disputes about whether Gentile believers must observe Jewish law in order to receive Christ’s salvation;
- **“lasciviousness”:** Many other believers, influenced by their pagan cultures, were forsaking their salvation by continuing to practice un-Christ-like, immoral (lascivious) behavior.

So the early disciples and apostles:

- labored to teach the young Bride how to “behave”, and how to receive the “gift of salvation” FREELY, through God’s GRACE.
- **But sometimes** they also argued among themselves over the issue of Jewish “rules” vs. Gentile “freedom”(should Gentiles eat meat offered to idols, or be circumcised as God had required of the Hebrews?) -- with destructive results: the Church was being divided and violence was breaking out. (Apostle Paul was beaten by an angry mob of Jews (unclear whether they were believers or not) and taken as a prisoner to Rome to escape being killed by them [Acts 15-24]).
- **Though they struggled with worldly issues; nevertheless, they were men chosen by Christ to “feed His sheep” (teach His Church; prepare His Bride), and they were faithful servants.**

- They submitted their differences to the Holy Spirit's guidance, with the result **that** their letters outlined the true teachings of God to believers throughout the world.
- James, Peter, and Jude were among the first church leaders to write instructions to believers **concerning the most basic of Christian life principles**:
 - James wrote to Jews explaining that “true” faith does not behave carnally, **but is proven by spiritual growth and good works**. He outlines the necessary maturity that Christians must achieve.
 - Peter and Jude wrote to warn of the dangers of “false teachers” promoting “false doctrines” of legalism and lasciviousness.

But in spite of the apostles' instructions and encouragement, **the Church continued to be divided and carnal**. Could it survive?

Jesus had said that the “gates of Hell would not prevail” against His Bride, the Church. **Rather than let her be destroyed by carnality,**

- Jesus allowed her to experience **the purifying and unifying “fire” of persecution**.
- And the Holy Spirit, through Peter's writings, **encouraged the Bride of Christ to endure persecution and receive its strengthening, purifying effect upon her faith**.

JAMES

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF JAMES

A. THEME: Spiritual Maturity; (“pure religion”) “faith without [good] works is dead”

KEY WORDS: Not Wanting or Lusting (contentment); Patience; Humility; Wisdom; Self-Control (discipline); Love (Agape)

B. KEY VERSES: 1:4 - **“But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”**

1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

C. AUTHOR: James, the half brother of Jesus.

1. He was the half-brother of Jesus.

Mat 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses (Joseph), and Simon, and Judas? (Mk.6:3)

a. others named “James” in the New Testament:

(I) James, son of Zebedee, brother of John, the first converts, one of the original 12 apostles, and first martyr (Matt. 4:21)

(II) James, called “James the less” (meaning ‘the little’), the son of Alphaeus, one of the original 12 apostles (Matt. 10:3)

b. He was not one of the original 12 apostles (Mat.10:2-4); he did not immediately believe in Jesus as Christ. (His brothers thought Jesus was “mad”. Mark 3:20-34)

John 7:2-5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

2. He and his brothers were first seen as disciples of Jesus in the upper room, after Jesus’ resurrection and return to heaven (note that none of Jesus’ brothers were chosen to replace the missing Judas Iscariot).

Acts 1:13-14 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. {14} These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Acts 1:26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

3. He was a witness of the risen Christ.

1 Cor 15:5-7 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: {6} After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. {7} After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

4. He eventually was known as an “apostle”, and was designated a “pillar” among the Jewish believers in Jerusalem.

Acts 15:6,13 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

(Acts 12:2 records that the original “apostle James” had already become the first martyred apostle when he was killed by Herod with the sword—about 44 A.D.)

Gal 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I (Paul) none, save James the Lord's brother.

Gal 2:9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Acts 21:17-18 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. {18} And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

5. According to Eusebius, James was called “the Just” by ancient church elders because of his great virtue.

6. He was martyred about 62 A.D.

D. DATE: The epistle of James was one of the first, if not the very first, writings of the N.T., written between 45-50 AD (about 10-15 years after Jesus returned to heaven); (before the first Jerusalem Council of 51 AD [Acts 15], which debated the question of “Gentile” believers’ obedience to Jewish Law).

E. AUDIENCE: It is written to all believers in all the churches, especially to all the Jewish Christians living in other nations (descendants of exiles in the Assyrian and Babylonian and Roman captivities, and of those who settled in the populated cities of the world). { * Remember that the first sermon, by Peter, was to the thousands of Jews from many nations who had gathered in Jerusalem on the holy day of Pentecost [Acts 2]. They eventually returned to their own countries taking their new Christian faith with them. }

F. PURPOSE: to discourage believers from “worldliness” while encouraging spiritual growth toward maturity:

As the first of the New Testament authors, James spoke of the “BASIC ESSENTIALS” of responsible Christian Life: Patience, Humility, Dealing with Troubles and Temptations, Good Works, Handling Money, The Virture of Listening, Disciplined Speech, Faith, Love, Resisting Satan, and Prayer,

(DARB) James is the most “Jewish” of all N.T. books: there are only 2 references to Jesus Christ (1:1; 2:1); no mention of the gospel, the incarnation, life or death or resurrection of Christ. The book agrees with O.T. doctrine and with Jesus’ teachings. (darb)

James recognized the faltering condition of **the young Bride of Christ who was not manifesting her “beauty of holiness”** (especially among those living

in the hedonistic cities of Asia Minor, away from the sanctifying influence of the church fathers and the foundations of Jewish culture).

- By 45 A.D., Jewish Christians had **10 years of freedom from the strenuous religious training for “holiness”** that they had always received from their former Jewish religious leaders;
- while at the same time, their fundamental religious training was likely **weakened by years of daily contact with Gentile believers, most of whom had been pagans** with no previous training in Godly behavior, but a long cultural history of hedonism and immorality.
- Furthermore, since Jesus’ return to heaven 10 years earlier, there was **now a new generation of adults who needed to be reminded of the vital truths of Godliness** that Jesus had taught. (How quickly we go astray!!!)

Besides issues of holiness, there were **also plenty of relationship problems among believers** in the early Church of Asia Minor. In that part of the world there was **confusion, mistrust, and resentments between the various nationalities, cultures, and social status groups:**

- Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, “foreigners”; aristocracy, military, international traders, peasants, slaves; observers of many forms of religious beliefs and practice, and unscriptural customs of family life and relationship (polygamy, promiscuity, homosexuality, incestuous interactions, children abandoned, sacrificed, given away, or sold into slavery...); severe persecutions, betrayals, imminent dangers from enemies and professing believers alike.
- In the Church, even **“worldly” Jewish believers may have proudly felt they were “better than” Gentile believers.**
- Some **“conservative” Jewish believers may have insisted that it was necessary for the Church to observe strict (legalistic) religious practices,** adding to the confusion and resentment in Church relationships.

These new believers needed constant instruction in Christ-like attitudes and behavior to live with each other, and to be “over-comers” in the pagan world.

- **Even their own Christian “leaders” weren’t always trustworthy or well trained** in God’s laws and ways.
- **Consequently, it was important for James to offer his weighty instruction on these vital matters of Christian living.**

James, in his very Jewish style, **emphasized the necessity of “righteous works”**, not as a **“means of salvation”**—as the Jewish religious leaders taught; but **as an “evidence of salvation”**, and therefore an absolute necessity in the believers’ lives. (Example: N. V. Nam believers)

(When some of the churches later shifted away from the carnality of worldliness, into the carnality of “legalism”, **apostle Paul** brought balance to the Church’s spiritual growth in his teachings emphasizing salvation by **grace**. It is interesting to note that James, the brother of

the Lord of Grace, taught about the importance of “works”, while Paul, the zealous Pharisee, taught about “grace”.)

G. SIMPLE OUTLINE

I. INTRODUCTION

II. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IN TRIALS, TESTING, IN DOING GOOD (Chapter 1)

A. Humble Greeting (1:1)

B. Turn trials into triumphs: Patience, Perfection, Faith, and Humility (1:2-11)

C. Trials develop patience. vs. 3

D. Let patience work “perfection” in you. vs. 4

E. Trials exercise our faith Vs. 5-8

F. Trials of Poverty Teach Humility 1:9-11

G. Dealing with Temptations (1:12-15)

H. Considerations in Overcoming Temptations (Vs. 16-18, 22-25)

I. The Maturity of Listening (Vs. 19-21)

J. The Maturity of Controlling the Tongue (Vs. 26-27)

III. MATURING IN FAITH → To Loving Action (Chapter 2)

A. Faith and Love (2:1-7)

B. Fulfilling the Royal Law of LOVE to “love your neighbor as yourself” (2:8-13)

C. Faith and Works (2:14-26)

IV. SPIRITUAL MATURITY = CONTROLLING THE TONGUE (Chapter 3)

A. Warning to Teachers (3:1)

B. Illustrations (3:2-12)

C. Evidenced by Humble Speech and Actions (3:13-18)

V. SPIRITUAL MATURITY: Focus on HUMILITY (Chapter four)

A. Cautions against corrupt affections, and love of this world

B. Four Enemies of Spiritual Growth (4:4-7)

C. How to Resist Satan (4:8-10)

D. We will Not Judge Others (4:11-12)

E. We Leave the Future to God’s Will (4:13-17)

IV. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IN DEALING WITH LIFE’S TROUBLES (Chapter five)

A. Troubles and Prayer

B. Troubles for the Rich: Reasons They should “Weep and Howl”. (5:1-6)

C. Spiritual Maturity Expressed in Patience (James 5:7-12)

D. Spiritual Maturity Expressed through Prayer (James 5:13-20)

COMPARE TO: Romans (60 A.D.; salvation by faith, not works); Ephesians (64 A.D.; about “faith”); Titus (67 A.D.; about “works”).

II. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IN TRIALS, TESTING, AND IN DOING GOOD (Chapter 1)

A. Humble Greeting (1:1)

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

James identified himself a bondservant. **He realized the full debt that God had paid through Christ for his redemption. He could be nothing less than God's servant. He avoided an "exalted" attitude in his role as a "pillar" of leadership in the church, and purposely preferred to be known as a "servant". Also remember that James is a brother of Christ, but was not a follower of Jesus in the beginning. Thus having come to faith, he realized fully who Jesus was (Lord, Messiah). We also see in vs. 1 that the twelve tribes were still identifiable, though scattered.**

B. Turn trials into triumphs: Patience, Perfection, Faith, and Humility: (1:2-11)

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

1. **Count it all joy** vs. 2 Keep in mind that James is writing to people who have faced some **very severe trials**. Many had lost their homes, jobs, and sense of being together in community. Being Christians, they had been forced to flee their homes for their lives, finding themselves in strange surroundings, totally separated from family and friends. Their common bond was their faith in Christ and membership in His body. Thus James writes to strengthen them in their suffering.

- a. **"Count it ALL joy."** We are encouraged to remember that **trials are not meant for our destruction but to bring us to maturity.** "Divers temptations" means various kinds of trials, not just temptations. God is doing a work in us, and therefore we should count it all joy! James is not talking about some "fake" type of joy, but a **pure joy that is real** through and through. This is **possible when we cast all our care on Jesus** (knowing He cares for us), **knowing God is working in us** and will faithfully **deliver us in His time and way.**

1 Cor 10:13 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.

2 Pet.1:3-4 tells us the "way of escape" is in God's "precious promises".

(I) We need to let the Spirit of God do His work in us by **co-operating with Him**. **“Yielding” and “learning” is the process of growing in Christ**. Keeping a positive outlook is very important, as often our “outlook determines our outcome”.

(II) (CC) The Greek word “peirasmos” is used for ‘divers temptations’ and includes the idea of “looking to prove something”. Whenever **God allows us to go through a problem** or temptation, it is not done to find our faults, but **to develop (prove) our strengths in an area**. It has been compared to a mother bird pushing her young out of the nest when it is time for them to test their wings. She would never do so without the knowledge that they were able.

(CC) As Christians we face at least **three types of trials**:

- **Cause-and-effect trials**—which comes from reaping what we have sown (Gal. 6:7). These trials come largely as a **result of our own disobedience**.
- **Spiritual trials**—Peter tells us, “do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you” 1 Peter 4:12. There are times when we are **called to suffer for being a Christian** (1 Peter 4:16). Other scriptures which support this idea are John 16:33, and John 15:20.
- **Mysterious trials**—those we face **without any logical reason**. This is the kind faced by Job. Other people thought it was a result of hidden sin, or God’s mistake; but Job never did fully understand the “why” of the matter. He came to the place of complete trust in his God, and there he found his comfort and joy.

C. Trials develop patience. vs. 3

James 1:3 **Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.**

1. Faith has nothing to do with what we see or feel in the natural. It does have to do with **what we see and feel in our spirit**. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb.11:1). So faith has to do with **believing in what we do not see**; but it goes beyond belief **to the point of “substance”**: putting that belief into action.
2. It is the “trying” (“proving”) of our faith that brings about patience. It is as if **God is allowing us to experience this pressure because of His desire to refine, in our faith, the patience we need to see the result**. Patience here has to do with **having “staying power”**. It is an active word, not one that means to be lazy or

unconcerned, but **actively involved in the exercising of our faith—through patience.**

D. Let patience work “perfection” in you. vs. 4

James 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

1. To “let” is to **surrender, submit.** We are to let God finish the work He is doing in us. **When we fight against Him we only prolong the process, and leave ourselves unfinished.**
2. **Three results of letting patience complete the process:**
 - a. “that we may be perfect” The **goal is perfection** (or “**completeness**”), something none of us can achieve on our own. Thus as we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit, He perfects, conforms, and molds us **into the image of Christ.** We become more Christ-like, more perfect. Paul, near the end of his life, realized he had not reached the ultimate goal, but he was still reaching for the mark of the prize of the high calling we have in Jesus Christ (Phil 3:12-14).
 - b. “**entire**” from the Greek word ‘holokleros’ meaning **perfect “in every part”.** The more we put on Christ the more perfect we become in every part. It is as if we were to look into a mirror, and instead of seeing our reflection we saw that of Christ. **The goal of the patience of faith is to find ourselves completely reflecting Christ until He is what others see.** When we arrive at this point of Christ-likeness, we embrace the third characteristic.
 - c. “**wanting nothing**”: what more is there? This is the state where **we lack nothing that is Christ.** We walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, **making no provision for the flesh** that would war against the Spirit.

1. having no desire for anything other than Christ

E. Trials that exercise our faith also give wisdom Vs. 5-8

James 1:5-8 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 1:7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 1:8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

In verses 5-8 we hear James set forth **how a man is to receive wisdom**. We should realize that **there is a wisdom that comes from the things we experience in life**. For example, a small child having touched a hot stove will quickly learn the wisdom of not doing so. Wisdom of this sort varies, as does our life's experiences. A person raised in a rural area will have gained wisdom in things a city dweller knows little about, and vice versa. **However, there is a wisdom that has God as its source**. Let's examine some things that James points out:

1. We are to **ask** for wisdom.

- a. We must **realize our need** for wisdom. We generally do not seek what we don't need. If we can't see our need, we will not be likely to ask. Sin darkens our vision, blinding us from the truth.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and **walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:**

(I) If we are to have the wisdom of God, we must seek to walk in the light.

1 John 1:7 But if we **walk in the light**, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

Many do not realize their state of need, considering themselves to be wise. They are wise in their own eyes, but not God's. As followers of Christ, **we must choose several times each day** whether we shall walk in our own strength, or in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In the same sense, we choose **to trust in our own wisdom, or we turn to God and seek His wisdom**. God gives us the freedom to choose.

(II) The second equally important aspect of verse 5 is that we "ask." We **receive as the result of asking**. Who we ask, and what we ask for, largely determine what we receive. If we ask God for something that He has already promised to give, then we can do so **with confidence**, knowing that because of His love for us, He would not promise to give and then withhold.

2. The next important point is that **God gives liberally**, never making us feel stupid for asking. It is **His will to encourage** and build us up. Therefore, as often as we see our need, we should turn to Him and ask, knowing that both He and we will be glad that we did.

3. In **verses 6-8** we see **the need to ask in faith**. The word of God teaches us that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). Faith then is **the "key" to receiving anything** from God. He rewards those who believe and seek Him.

Faith is alive and active. It gives substance to what is not, because **it moves God to respond**. Therefore, faith has nothing to do with doubt. We **must not waiver, being tossed about by our emotions or other influences**. Having begun in faith, we must continue in faith. What begins in faith must be borne by faith to the fulfillment of faith. Nor can a man be double-minded and think he will receive of God. **Double-minded** people are unstable in their ways, being **easily turned about in their thinking and doing by the latest wind of thought**. Jesus spoke of the double-minded when He talked about **trying to serve two masters**:

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

As believers we are to have our focus on God, being “single-minded”; realizing that He will deliver on His promises as we exercise faith.

Jesus reinforced this teaching in the following verses from **Matthew, chapter seven**. When we realize that God wants to cooperate with us in accomplishing His will, then we can come to Him in faith, trusting that if we ask of Him bread, He will not give us a stone. **God will give us what is in our best interest; and whatever that is, it will be perfect!!!**

Mat 7:7-11 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: **5:15** And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

F. (CC) Trials of Poverty Teach Humility 1:9-11

James 1:9-11 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: 1:10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. 1:11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

- 1. The love of God and the love of money are incompatible.** It is not the money that is the problem, but the “love” of the money that is the problem. We can **know if we have a problem in this area by examining where our heart is.**

“For where our heart is there will our treasure be also.” If our time and attention is all centered on getting money, then we have a problem.

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Mat 19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

a. Money can be a **problem for both the rich and the poor**. The rich because of their **hunger for more**, and the **fear of loosing** what they have; and the poor because of their belief that their **needs could be met** if they only had more money. Jesus contradicts this thinking in **Matt. 6:19-34**.

b. Only God can meet our deepest needs. This He will do as we “**seek first the Kingdom of God,**” then “**all these other things will be added to us.**” (**Mat.6:33**) The words of Jesus and James were strong words. This is especially true when we consider that many had lost everything they owned because of their faith in Christ. They were willing to suffer personal loss for the prize of Christ.

c. In verse 9 we see that the “**lowly brother**” is to “**rejoice in his exaltation.**” This means that the person who finds himself humbled by his position or financial situation should take comfort in the fact that **a high position awaits him in the Kingdom** of God. The Greek word for ‘rejoice’ is kauchaomai, which comes from the root word “aucheo” meaning “to boast.” This person should be boasting or rejoicing in the fact that their situation is only temporary. God has invited us to enjoy the riches of His kingdom. Though the children of Israel went through many hard years in the wilderness, they did eventually cross over Jordan into the **Promised land**. If our attitude does not stay focused on God, we are likely to fulfill the passage in Proverbs:

Prov 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

Mat 6:20-21 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- d. James speaks in verse 10 of the **poverty associated with riches**. The rich should not glory or boast in their riches, but rather in their humiliation. The rich man must **focus on the temporary nature of wealth** in this life. Our wealth is **nothing to us once we depart this life**. Wealth is like the attractiveness of a flower when in full bloom, which soon fades. Verse 11 warns us that the rich man will also fade away from his pursuit of wealth, leaving an eternity to be faced without his earthly treasure.
- e. Jesus spoke of **the deceitfulness of riches**: that they **could lead to covetousness**. This can be true **in the hearts of both the rich and the poor**.

Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

- f. Jesus went on to tell the **parable of the rich fool** who made plans to enlarge his warehouses to contain his riches, but the Lord required his soul of him that night. Thus **the warning, that if we seek to lay up treasure for ourselves we are not rich in God**.

Luke 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

- g. The word “**humiliation**” in verse 10 means, “**to be made low**”, and is seen in verse 9 describing the brother who is lowly (poor). To the poor man, **James encourages that he boast in his future exaltation in the Kingdom of God**, while to the rich man he encourages him to boast in his humble estate. Perhaps the thought here is, **whether we find ourselves rich or poor, we are to have the same priorities for living a godly life**. The rich believer has a tremendous responsibility as a steward of God’s money. He needs to be constantly reminding himself of his need to be humbled by his riches and not exalted. His **path to exaltation is humility**.

True wealth is found in serving God and finding contentment, no matter what our state.

Phil 4:11-12 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be **content**. 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

G. Dealing with Temptations (1:12-15)

James 1:12-15 **Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**

1. (CC) The word for “temptation” used here has its root in the Greek word “peirazo”, which means “to put to the test” or “to go through.” To tempt means to entice, examine, or try. Temptation, then, means “a putting to proof—for good” [by God] or “an evil solicitation—for bad” [by Satan].

This means that temptation can be used for our good or our harm; depending on our response. **Temptation in itself is not sin**; as we know, Jesus was tempted for 40 days in the wilderness, yet without committing sin.

2. We know from verse 13 that **temptations find their origin in Satan**, not God. Man has the tendency to blame others for his own weaknesses or sins. From the beginning we see Adam blame Eve, and Eve blame the serpent. **Sin is a choice**, and man could just as easily choose not to sin.

3. We said before that God is not the author of sin, as evil is contrary to the very nature of God, who is perfect. **Sin rises from the world and all its lusts**. Satan is the god of this world system. The scripture declares:

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, **is not of the Father, but is of the world.**

2 Cor 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4:4 In whom the **god of this world (speaking of Satan)** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

4. God allows His children to go through trials, but never with an evil or malicious intent. Rather, He allows us to experience temptation to prove us worthy of the test. In other words, **He permits Satan to tempt us, knowing we have the spiritual ability to overcome the temptation and disprove Satan's accusation against us.**

5. Let's look at the **4 stages leading to sin:**
 - a. **Desire.** Being drawn away, **attracted by, wanting.** Not bad, unless it leads us away from God. The **desire or lust lies within us.** We may not even realize it is present until the temptation is presented. It has been correctly said, "If temptation struck no responsive chord, it would not be temptation." That responsive chord lies within us in the form of desire.

 - b. **Deception.** Enticement, or bait. The word "**entice**" means, "**to entrap, allure, or beguile.**" It **works on our mind;** draws us closer to sin. Every sin issue starts in our mind. Satan knows our weaknesses, and therefore what bait to place before us .

 - c. **Disobedience.** The **decision, or choice;** the **use of man's will to contradict God's will.** A Spirit-led Christian will seek and follow God's will. Others follow their own will. As a person's lust conceives, sin is birthed. When we choose to follow the desire of the flesh, it will always lead us to sin and ultimately death.

 - d. **Death.** The **final consequence of sin.** Keep in mind that "the thought of sin" is sin. We do not have to commit the act of sin to be guilty of sin. Jesus pointed this out when He addressed the issue of adultery.

Mat 5:27-28 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

DESIRE → DECEPTION → DISOBEDIENCE → DEATH
 (emotions) (mind) (will) (body)

H. Considerations in Overcoming Temptations (Vs. 16-18, 22-25)

1. Look ahead. **Consider the consequences.** If we would take the time to consider all the possible consequences **of our sinful behavior, we would avoid sin and God's judgment.** Temptation presents the opportunity to **accomplish a good thing by resisting an evil solicitation.**

2. Consider God's goodness, compared to Satan's deception. (V. 16-18)

James 1:16-18 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 1:18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

- a. Vs. 16 (desire God, avoid deception) Because of God's love for me, I should **be desirous to avoid offending His love**. It is not just a matter of how sin can hurt me, but is also **a matter of how my sinful behavior hurts the heart of God who loves me**. Thus I must not be deceived by Satan, **I must not err by following after his evil temptations**. God is truth, and always deals with us in truth, whereas the Devil is "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).
- b. Vs. 17a (avoid deception) **Everything God does is good and perfect**. He only gives good gifts and His gifts are always perfect for us.
(III) **"Definition of SIN"**, according to Oswald Chambers: "The result of having the continual **suspicion that God is not Good.**"
- c. Vs. 17b (obedience to His will, which never changes, life—not death) **God never changes** in His desire to bless and build us up. He is not like the shadow that shifts about. Jesus is **the rock upon which we can build our lives**, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Mat 7:24-25 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

3. Consider God's divine nature. (V. 18) He "begot us", **referring to our "born again" experience**. This was a work of God's will, on our behalf. **We are saved by grace, not by good works nor by continuing to do extra good works after being saved**. As James has pointed out, our works are evidence of our faith. **Without works (obedient action) we see no faith. But it is God who has made salvation possible, and brought us forth to new life.**

John 1:13 Which were born (speaking of our "new birth"), not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- a. **We have become "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."** The idea of 'firstfruits' comes from the Levitical law of the Old

Testament.

Lev 27:30-33 And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD. 27:31 And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. 27:32 And concerning the tithes of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. 27:33 He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.

- b. God required the 1st tenth of everything produced by His people. The tenth or tithes of their live stock, crops, and fruit of the trees was to be selected from among that which was the best of each and given to God. As we come to faith in Christ we become a sort of “firstfruit” from among God’s creation.
4. Realize the danger of self-deception. Let’s skip down to verses 22-25 for this point (then we will come back to verses 19-21).

James 1:22-24 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

- a. (CC) There are many who faithfully attend church, and perhaps even have a regular time of prayer and Bible reading; yet do little to put the Word of God into action. They are spiritual spectators growing fat from watching and eating without working. They are deceived in how they see themselves, because they compare themselves with themselves. Like the man looking in the mirror and not truly perceiving what he sees or soon forgetting what he saw. **The problem lies in that their definition of what it means to live a godly life is quite different from God’s definition. James says we are to be doers, not just hearers.** In chapter 4:17 James goes a step further in stating that to know the Word of God and not live it, is sin.

5. Be a Doer of God’s Word (Vs. 25)

James 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

- a. James says we begin by looking intently at the “perfect law” of liberty. The law was given by God, and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Matt. 5:17). The law was summed up in the statement of Christ:

Mark 12:29-31 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 12:30 And 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: this is the first commandment. 12:31 And the second is like, namely this, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** There is none other commandment greater than these.

This is the perfect law to which James is referring. The closer we look into this law the more of God we see. The law is perfect, and liberating. Jesus fulfilled the law. As we come into Christ, we are set at liberty; we are made free.

John 8:32 **And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

Jesus is the personification of truth. We are to “know the truth” if we are to be made free. In other words **glancing at the Word of God is not enough. We are to “peer,” look deep into, the Lord and His Word each day.** Hear what He is saying and **then put it into action.** By faith be a doer of His word.

- b. The promise for being a “doer” is “to be blessed”. “Blessed” means, **happy, fortunate, or well off.** This is the same word He used for “Blessed” in the beatitudes. When we abide in Christ we are a blessed person.

Psa 1:3 **And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.**

I. The Maturity of Listening (Vs. 19-21)

James 1:19-21 **Wherefore [to be doers of the “perfect law of liberty”], my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness (overflow of wickedness), and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.**

1. Be swift to hear. **James admonishes believers to be quick to listen, but slow to speak. How many of us have this turned around? We are quick to speak, but tired of hearing. God is always ready to listen to His obedient children. Even though He knows our needs before we do, He still listens to us. We need to work on our listening skills, learning to truly understand what is being said, to hear what is not being said, and to hear the non-verbal communication that is present. Effective ministry meets the needs of others. This is hard to do if we have not taken the time to hear and understand the need.**

2. Be slow to speak. **James has much to say on the unruly tongue and the damage it does, later in chapter 3. In order to love others, and thereby love God, we must learn to control our tongue. This we shall later see is only possible by cooperating with the work of God's Spirit. Solomon also spoke about the wisdom of controlling our tongue:**

Prov 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

Prov 11:12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

Prov 13:3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

Prov 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

Prov 17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

1 Pet 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

3. Be slow to wrath (Vs. 19-20). **This word carries the meaning of : anger, indignation, vengeance, or wrath. It is the same word used in Colossians 3:8 as one of the qualities we should put off in our lives. because (vs. 20) our wrath does not accomplish the will of God. Wrath generally comes as a result of someone not getting their way. Our willful pride leads to wrath when we are opposed. Pride, contention and wrath seem to go together.**

- a. **How we avoid wrath is spelled out in verse 21. We are to lay aside all filthiness and wickedness. Receiving instead with meekness the engrafted word of God. In simple terms we are to lay aside the flesh and walk in the Spirit. The more of God's Spirit we have released in our lives, the more fruit of the Spirit will be manifested instead of the works of the flesh.**

J. The uncontrolled tongue is a sign of insincere religion; true religion is expressed in loving others. Vs. 26-27

James 1:26-27 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

1. James points out again the terribleness of the unbridled tongue. If our tongue is untamed, then our religious conception of ourselves is one of deception. (True religion is imparting an expression of our tongue as we bring worship and praise to God.) But how religious are we really, if the same tongue used to praise God on Sunday morning, murders His children (through wrath, slander, or other evil speaking that tears someone down) that same afternoon? After all, that is the work of Satan, the “accuser.”
2. If we are to be sincerely religious:
 - a. We need to **see ourselves as God sees us**. No pretense, **no self deception**; our heart open to examination by God.
 - b. We need to **demonstrate our faith through works** or personal ministry, led by the Holy Spirit.

1 John 3:16-18 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 3:18 My little children, **let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**

- c. We are to **remain unspotted from the world**. We are in the world but not of it. Therefore, we should not reflect this world or let it stain our testimony. We are to **love God, not the world**. A true spiritual person will genuinely love the Lord, and **realize the deception of the things in the world**.

1 John 2:15 **Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**

III. MATURING IN FAITH—Acting in Love to Others (Chapter 2)

A. Faith and Love (2:1-7)

James 2:1-7 **My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2:2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 2:3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 2:4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?**

2:5 Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? 2:6 But

ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? 2:7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

1. Treat people respectfully with LOVE, not FAVORITISM. **Love one another. Jesus is no respecter of persons. Members of the early church shared everything they had; they held everything in common (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32). The result of such behavior was that no one lacked anything that they needed (Acts 4:34).**

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Eph 3:16-19 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; {17} That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, {18} May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; {19} And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

James points out the problem of partiality through the treatment of two men:

- a. First was **the rich man**, who because of his appearance and money was **treated with honor**. To this he asks the question, Why? As it was the rich who oppressed those with less (vs. 6-7). James is trying to express the thought that **true value in the Kingdom of God has nothing to do with one's bank account or possessions**. Thus they should be accorded no more or less honor than anyone else.
- b. The second illustration was the **poor man** who because of his appearance and obvious lack of riches was accorded no honor, and in fact was **treated with dishonor**. James points out that the poor **who have a heart for God have been chosen to be heirs of His Kingdom**. Though they may have no riches in this kingdom it will not be so in God's Kingdom.

So how are we to understand what James is teaching in light of the **scripture that tells us to honor those to whom honor is due?** We are to give honor, without respect to appearance or possessions, in a godly manner that does not cause anyone else to feel dishonor. Even in showing honor we can do so **in humility**.

Rom 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

B. Fulfilling the Royal Law of LOVE (2:8-13)

James 2:8-13 If ye fulfil the royal law [the “law of liberty”] according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. **2:11** For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

2:12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. **2:13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

1. The royal law is to “love your neighbor as yourself,” **thus loving one another as we have been loved by God, without partiality. (v.8)**

a. Partiality is sin, (v.9). The solution to the problem is found in verse 8: Love is the key to overcoming the sin of partiality. When we choose to love others we no longer stand above them or beneath them. We see everyone on the same level. Remember God loves us all equally, and thus so should we be in the house of God. The church especially should be a place where all are loved, where everyone’s needs are everyone’s concern, and where each person can feel safe from the world outside. Remember that Jesus broke down the barriers which divide us; making us equal with each other. Let there be no partiality! Only love for one another!

b. Keep in mind that God showed His great love to us while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8). It was this same love that brought Jesus into the world, that the world through Him might have life (John 3:16). It is also by this “royal law” that others will know that we are His disciples (John 13:34-35). It is this “royal law of love” that overcomes all the degradation of this life. It is from the source of this love that we as believers in Christ cannot be separated (Rom. 8:35-39). Consider how great this love is! Thus James calls it “the royal law.”

2. **But all of us have broken the royal law of love (vs. 10), and so have become guilty as lawbreakers.** Man often tries in his own strength to somehow balance his good works against his evil works, thinking that if he is able to keep the scale tipped toward the good then he will find favor with God. We may fail to realize that, in the holiness of God, it takes but one sin to place

man outside of God forever. The wages of sin is death, and forever the scale is tipped toward death. No matter how much good work a man piles on the balance, the scale will never move. The problem did not lie in the law, as the law is good. It is man who is evil. Thus God sent the Savior.

Gal 3:10-11 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. {11} But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

3. Through the Savior we can be freed from our guilt of sin to walk in love. It is through the Savior that **we can fulfill the “royal law.”** When we come into Christ, and He abides in us, the very source of royal love lives in us. Now by the presence of Christ, through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, the flow of God’s love can work in and through us, enabling us to love one another as we love ourselves.

a. Christians Love God and Others; non-believers love self and the “world”. These are two separate worlds that cannot be joined together.

4. We will be judged by the “law of liberty.” (mercy in Christ) In verses 12-13 James admonishes us to speak, and act with the mercy we have received in Christ. By His mercy He has set us free from the law of “judgment”. We now have liberty as a right, and our freedom is a result of how we apply that liberty, as we walk in the Holy Spirit. His mercy triumphs, allowing us to walk in the law of liberty rather than the law of judgment.

Rom 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. {2} For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

5. Thus, in our actions toward others, we should also show mercy rather than judgment. James adds the warning: if we choose to judge others without mercy, we shall be also judged without mercy. **The Dake Bible makes the following comment:** “The ones who receive mercy and show mercy rejoice in the fact that they will not face judgment, because of obeying the law of liberty. They will be exalted by mercy above judgment. There is no mercy in the law. The meaning is that mercy through grace will triumph over law because the demands of the law have been met by grace and the lawbreakers are justified by it through faith to escape the judgment of the law (John 3:36; 5:24).”

C. Faith and Works (2:14-26)

a. Read “works” as “obedience”

James 2:14-26 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 2:16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 2:23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

1. Definition of Faith (CC)

a. From the Greek noun “pistis” meaning “firm persuasion, conviction, or trust.” The verb form, “peitho” is translated “**believe, have confidence, persuade, trust, and obey.**” This quality of “faith” is central to Christian living. In fact, “Without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6).

b. The teaching that the “**just shall live by faith**” is repeated in both Old and New Testaments:

Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but **the just shall live by his faith.**

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith.**

Gal 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, **The just shall live by faith.**

Heb 10:38 **Now the just shall live by faith:** but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

2. **James gives some vital characteristics of saving faith (CC)**
 - a. **Saving faith must include deeds or works (obedience)** (vs. 14) To James any faith without works is not saving faith.
 - b. Faith by itself without any works or action (obedience) is dead. (vs. 17). As the body without the spirit is dead so **faith without works is dead.**
Faith cannot be mere mental assent (agreement) or intellectual belief.
Even the demons have this kind of belief (vs. 19)

Mat 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

- d. **Biblical faith is best defined as “active obedience.”** This James demonstrates through the examples of Abraham (vs. 23-24) and Rahab, the harlot (vs.24). These hold consistent with all the other examples of those who demonstrated faith listed in Hebrews 11. **The common factor of every person in scripture who honored God by their faith is that they actively obeyed Him.**
- e. **“Only those who believe, obey.**
(Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
“Follow Me”; “Love not the world”; “Endure suffering”;
“Take up your cross”; “Die to yourself”, “Turn the other cheek”.
- f. **Only those who obey, believe.” [The “step of faith” (obedience) produces the “substance of things hoped for” (faith)].**
Abraham/promised land/sacrifice of son Isaac ; Moses/plagues, miracles; Israelites/Red Sea; priests/Jordan River;
Rahab/messengers; Esther/king’s favor; David/goliath; Elijah/fire from heaven; 3 Hebrews/fiery furnace; Apostles/follow Christ;
Peter/walk on water; Jesus/resurrection;
- g. **(only those who live an obedient life are truly saved (?)**
Is “obedient” belief necessary for salvation???

New International Version:

Romans 10:8-18 But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,”⁸ that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”¹² For there is no difference between Jew and

Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” ¹⁶But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. ¹⁸But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:

3. Further insight to the nature of “works” is provided by Paul. (CC).

a. The **works of the flesh**: listed by Paul in Gal. 5:19-21:

Gal 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

New International Version:

Galatians 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul teaches that we are saved by grace/ (through faith)/ and not by our works. Eph. 2:8-9.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 2:9 **Not of works**, lest any man should boast.

b. The **works of the Spirit**: These do not originate with us. They **do not come out of our flesh**; rather **they flow from God** the Holy Spirit through us **as we cooperate with Him by walking in the Spirit**. It was for this, Paul says, “that we were created” (Eph 2:10).

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

c. The **works of the Spirit** are manifested in the “fruit of the Spirit.” It is to these that James is directing our attention. **Our faith should be manifested through the fruit of the Spirit in our daily living.**

Galatians 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law [“law of liberty”, “royal law”].²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

4. James gives us three examples concerning faith and works. (CC)

a. Our faith must include appropriate works. Here James uses the example in vs. 15-16 of a destitute brother who has great need yet his brother in Christ is unwilling to give out of his supply to meet the needs of his brother. How can we say we have faith in Christ and not respond? **James contends that a truly saved person would respond with an appropriate work (an act of love), putting his faith into action, not mere words.**

b. Our faith must be accompanied by action. In vs. 18-19 James indicates that true faith is demonstrated in our works, and that **mere belief in God is not sufficient for salvation** as the demons know who God is but that does not save them. **Saving faith involves obedient action.** If we are saved then our obedience to God will be manifested through acts of faith.

(I) Vs. 25 the action of **Rahab, the harlot**, who received the spies and sent them out another way (Joshua 2). **Her faith was put into action** protecting the spies, which led to the saving of her family when Jericho was defeated.

(II) Vs. 26 is the illustration of the **body being without the spirit.** Death is the separation of the body and spirit of man. James uses this truth as an illustration of the importance of faith & works going together. **Where faith and works are together there is life, just as where the body and spirit are united there is life.**

(III) For James there is no compromise on this point. **True saving faith will be demonstrated in active obedience to God manifesting the works of the Spirit.** Mere intellectual belief is not enough. It is as dead as works done in the flesh.

5. (RevC) Are works required to be saved? Are we not saved as Paul stated in Eph. 2:8-9 by “grace through faith, and not of works”? Is this teaching in James a contradiction? Was Abraham saved by his works as James seems to elude to in verse 21? As always we should look to all of what the Bible says about a subject in completing our understanding.

Rom 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Rom 3:10-24 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. {12} They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one... {19} Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. {20} Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. {21} But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; {22} Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: {23} For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; {24} Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Rom 3:27-31 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. {28} Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law...{31} Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Rom 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

Rom 4:13-25 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith... {15} Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. {16} Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,... {20} He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; {21} And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. {22} And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. {23} Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; {24} But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; {25} Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Rom 6:11-14 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. {12} Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. {13} Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. {14} For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Rom 6:18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Rom 7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

- a. We know that Jesus turned to **the thief on the cross** who **acknowledged who Jesus was, and promised him that he would be with Christ that day in Paradise.** Certainly, this was very simple saving faith without the opportunity for works. Nevertheless, the man entered Paradise on the basis of his simple faith and testimony in Christ alone. However, this man had no opportunity for obedient acts of faith as he was nailed to a cross.

Luke 23:39-43 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**

- b. The balance of this teaching lies in **which comes first, faith or works?** To me **it must be faith**, we are saved by our faith alone, just as it was the faith (belief in the saving power of God) of Abraham that was accounted to him for righteousness (vs. 23). **Works of faith are the evidence of saving faith.** As James points out, where true saving faith lives, there will be a natural outflow of active obedience which manifests itself in appropriate works of the Spirit. Therefore, to answer our question: **We are saved by faith alone, but such faith cannot exist where there is no (works of the Spirit) active evidence of its presence any more than we can exist without breathing.** As James might say, “faith without works is dead faith.”

2 Tim 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

IV. SPIRITUAL MATURITY REQUIRES CONTROLLING THE TONGUE (Chapter 3)

A. Warning to Teachers (3:1)

James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

- 1. In Eph. 4:11 teachers are named among the leadership gifts to the body of Christ:**

Eph 4:11 And he [Jesus] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

- 2. In Jewish culture, teachers were highly educated and trained and very highly respected. But in the new Church, that tradition was radically changed, as many of the “teachers” were fishermen, tax-collectors, common laborers who taught with authority and power by the Holy Spirit. There was apparently some confusion about who was qualified to teach, and perhaps many who desired the respected position who were not truly called to be teachers. James recognized the need to instruct them about the standards for teachers of God’s Word.**
- 3. James indicates that there is a higher standard of spiritual maturity and responsibility for Church leaders and teachers. Some persons may have displayed natural talents for instructing or “preaching”, or directing people who had not learned to control their tongues in their own daily lives, and thus James issues this warning. He later explains (vs. 13-18) that those who are truly qualified to share God’s knowledge and wisdom are those who show evidence of spiritual maturity in meekness, humility, and peacefulness. It is interesting that this is the only verse concerning teachers in his entire letter. From this we see the importance of being what God has called us to be, and not seeking a position we are not called to.**

2 Tim 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

1 Pet 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

4. All Christians are teachers **to some degree**. **It is necessary for all of us** to be mindful of our responsibility to grow spiritually for the sake of others.

Luke 17:1-2 Then said he unto the disciples, **It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! {2} It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.**

B. Illustrations (3:2-12)

James 3:2-12 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

3:3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. **3:4** Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. **3:5** Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! **3:6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

3:7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: **3:8** But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

3:9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. **3:10** Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. **3:11** Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? **3:12** Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

1. **Vs. 2** James asserts that though all Christians stumble in many things, the man who is able to bridle his tongue (his speech) is able to also bridle his whole body—a “perfect” (complete, or mature) man. As the tongue is our most unruly member, the person who is able to control his tongue should have no problem bringing the rest of his body, and life, into subjection.
2. The critical importance of the tongue (all that we say) is that it is symbolic of the attitude of our heart, the spiritual condition of our “inner man”: a small but accurate representation of the whole person.

Mat 15:16-18 And Jesus said, **Are ye also yet without understanding? {17} Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? {18} But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.**

Luke 6:44-45 For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. {45} A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

3. **Vs. 3-6** The horse's bit, the ship's rudder, and the spark of fire are all small objects in comparison to what they control. In much the same way the tongue is very small, but extremely powerful. The tongue is a like a fire, able to bring about tremendous destruction, defiling the whole body. In other words, the tongue not only corrupts the body; it sets on fire the entire course of one's life.

As a symbol of our spiritual condition, if our speech reveals spiritual carelessness, it is apparent that the course of our lives is headed for destruction.

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

4. **Vs. 7-8** Here we see that though man is able to tame almost any beast God has created, he is unable to tame his own unruly tongue. James sees the tongue (like our "natural man") as being evil and full of poison. Since we know Satan is the source of evil, we would realize that he is behind the evil that plagues our tongue. The tongue is "unruly" indicating that it is aggressive in releasing its poison.
5. **Vs. 9-12** James has shown us that no man can control his tongue by his own effort because of his sinful nature. The same tongue that gives praise to God will curse man who was made in God's image. This goes against nature as God created us to be: a spring does not yield both sweet and bitter water any more than a fig tree bears olives, but the tongue is able to issue both blessing and cursing out of the same mouth.

Though James does not say it directly, it is inferred that **though man cannot tame his tongue, God can**. When we yield our members to the control of God the Holy Spirit, and walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, He is able to control our tongue.

Mat. 7:15-20 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. [16] Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? [17] Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. [18] A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. [19] Every tree that bringeth not forth

good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. [20] Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

2 Cor 5:7-10 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) {8} We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. {9} Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. {10} 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.

6. Three reasons why a person's speech may be "spiritually immature":

- a. **a new believer:** has not yet learned the discipline of the spirit.
- b. **a carnal or disobedient believer:** is ignoring or resisting responsibility to grow and obey God. God will **not** allow the Christian to stay in this condition, but will chastise him until he repents and changes.
- c. **Not a true believer; spiritually dead in sin,** even though he may pretend to be a Christian. Only God can judge a man's soul.

Mat 7:21-23 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. {22} Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? {23} And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

C. Mature Wisdom is Evidenced by Humble Speech and Actions (3:13-18)

James 3:13-18 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

3:14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 3:15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 3:16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

3:17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

3:18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

1. **(vs.13)** James says if a man is knowledgeable (especially if he would be a teacher), then surely there will be evidence of wisdom in his actions. Remember that James deals with the practical side of Christianity. He is always looking for indications of the true experience with God. Here he sets the stage for understanding that knowledge is not wisdom, and that there is a difference between wisdom that comes from God and wisdom that is earthly.

2. (vs. 14-16) The wisdom that is earthly, man's wisdom, is described as being: earthly (from this world system), sensual (fleshly), devilish (from Satan himself), filled with envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work.
 - a. the "fool" in Proverbs

3. (vs.17-18) In contrast the wisdom that comes from above is Godly wisdom, which is pure (coming from the same root word as holy),
 - a. **peaceable** (puts things at rest),
 - b. **gentle** (considerate of others),
 - c. easy to be entreated (**willing to yield**),
 - d. full of **mercy** (a quality of God),
 - e. full of **good fruits** (manifestations of the Spirit),
 - f. **without partiality** (no favoritism),
 - g. **without hypocrisy** (no pretense, only truth),
 - h. it is **sown in peace** by those who make peace.

Mat.5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Notice that, just as in the book of Proverbs, the name of Jesus can be substituted for any of the qualities of Godly wisdom, because He IS Wisdom.

V. SPIRITUAL MATURITY: Focus on HUMILITY (Chapter 4 notes from CC)
(see also scriptures concerning "Wants and Desires" in the appendix)

A. Warning against earthly affections: (love of this world = enmity toward God)
(4:1-3)

James 4:1-3 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

1. (v.1) Our desires for pleasure (or lusts) create conflicts within our very selves. We are at war inwardly so it is natural for us to be at war outwardly.
 - a. **pride:** we believe we are entitled to have what we want, and that we are entitled to get it for ourselves

2. Vs. 2 We are aggressively desiring, but never getting all that is desired. This is a description of the dilemma of sin—always seeking but never finding, always desiring but never being fulfilled, you are always left seeking for more.
3. The word “lust” in the Greek is, “epithumeo” which means “to long for or to set one’s heart’s desire upon something or someone.” (“idolatry”) This can be good or bad depending upon the object of our desire. To lust after another woman is bad whereas to lust after more of God is good. When we lust for something and do not receive it, we will usually take the initiative to get it, which is what James speaks of when he says, “Ye kill, and desire to have.” When we covet we will often use evil means to get what we want. He goes on to say, “and cannot obtain” which speaks of the futility of sin. It promises so much but gives so little. Though sin has its pleasure for the moment, it can never bring lasting fulfillment. Thus the battle rages on. James closes this verse by simply stating that the reason we do not have is that we do not ask, according to His will. We are to take our needs to God. One of the great problems among Christians is that we simply do not take the time to pray and bring our petitions before God.
4. God desires to be Lord in our lives. Lordship places Him first, but also makes Him responsible for us. He desires to be Lord not just in word but also in deed. We don’t need to fight and worry for our needs, but simply ask. He has promised to supply all our needs and will do so. But He does not give us everything we want because He knows what is best for us. (Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all things will be added to it) In verse 3 we see that the only reason for not receiving from God is that we ask “amiss”, which is the Greek word, “kakos” meaning “sick or diseased.” The idea is that when we ask amiss we do so with sick or diseased motives. Thus the remedy for this is to pray as John instructs in 1 John 5:14: to “ask according to His will...” If we will submit our needs to the Lordship of Christ, wishing only His will for us, then we can pray with confidence— knowing that He not only hears our prayer, but that He will indeed answer our prayer according to His will for us.

1 John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

Example: open hands; flowing river

B. Four Proud Enemies of Spiritual Growth (4:4-7)

James 4:4-7 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1. The “friendship of the world” vs.4 is the first enemy. The word “friendship” is “phileo” which means “affection”. Society is in conflict with God because of its love for the things of the world.

a. “adulterers/ adulteresses” means in the “spiritual” sense. James’ Jewish readers would have understood his meaning because of the many O.T. uses of this symbol for “idolatry”. He is speaking of people who abandon their union with God because of their affection for His enemy and the world.

b. The Greek word for “enmity” is “echthra” which means, “hatred.” James is saying that whoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God or hates God.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2. The “spirit” of man” vs. 5 is the second enemy. It is bent toward lust because of the sin nature that is in him. This presents a constant struggle for the believer who has God the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. The Spirit of God wars against man’s natural bent toward sin. Man cannot serve two masters, and will therefore choose to walk in the Spirit of God or in his sinful flesh. Only one brings life and lasting fulfillment.

3. “Pride” vs. 6 is the third enemy. James quotes from Proverbs 3:34

Prov 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

(NIV: Prov 3:34 He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.)

The idea is simply that God opposes the proud. You cannot be living in pride and be accepted by God! But the opposite is also true, God gives grace to the humble. His grace is always available to those who trust in Him.

4. “The devil” vs. 7 is the fourth enemy. James has already pointed out that friendship with the world is enmity with God vs.4. This means we must also

resist the devil who controls this world's system. The word "resist" means "stand against". The promise to us is that if we resist, he will flee. In the following two verses James gives some very specific suggestions regarding how we should resist the devil.

C. Humility to Resist Satan (4:8-10)

James 4:8-10 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. 4:9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1. Submit yourself to God (v.7 above) to receive His grace and help.
Satan intimidates and deceives us with "power and control". Because he is far more powerful than us humans, we must not try to fight him with our strength. But when we humble ourselves to God, we have His strength, which is far greater than Satan's. Humbling is the key.
2. Draw near to God. Seek Him earnestly. We should never take our relationship with the Father lightly. If we will draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. Remember, He stands at the door and knocks; we must open the door and invite Him into our lives.
3. Cleanse your hands. Means remove any entanglements we have with ungodliness and the lusts of the flesh for earthly things. (an ancient Jewish symbolic act of purification) Our outward lifestyle should reflect the presence of God the Holy Spirit that dwells within each believer. Our conduct is our testimony. "Our actions shout so loud that people cannot hear what we say." People (and demons) believe what they see much more than what they hear.
4. Purify your hearts. We must examine the motive behind our actions because our heart can deceive us. It is always wise to ask God to deal with our heart and prove our motive. ("Tell me where I'm wrong.") To pray as David in Psalms 139

Psa 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

We cannot be double minded, or have false or conflicting motives in our walk with God. We must have purity of heart.

5. Be afflicted, mourn, and weep. This is a reference to the act of repentance. We must acknowledge (confess) our sin, feel sorry for it, and be determined to put it out of our lives. Confession involves more than merely feeling sorry, it agrees with God on all aspects of the sin. God hates sin; so must we if we are

to truly repent. Thus when our heart truly realizes the terribleness of sin it should move us to strong remorse, feeling afflicted in our soul which would bring genuine tears of sorrow for our transgressions.

6. Let your laughter be turned to mourning. James continues his call to repentance by saying that we should forsake the temporary pleasure of sin for true repentance. We are encouraged to stop playing games with the devil concerning sin, and get serious about forsaking sin and the devil.
7. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. We should live realizing that we are always “in the sight of the Lord.” He said He would never leave or forsake us. That thought should in itself bring humbleness to our spirit. God is always watching over us, nothing is hidden from Him who holds my breath in His hand.
8. He shall lift you up. The Dake Bible states that in the times of James “mourners and penitents used to lie on the ground, and roll themselves in the dust. When forgiven, the penitents arose from the earth and clothed themselves in clean and better garments.” If we truly repent of our sin and humble ourselves before God, He will lift us up out of the dirt and clothe us with robes of righteousness.

1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: ⁷Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

D. With Spiritual Maturity, We Humbly Decline to Judge Others (4:11-12)

James 4:11-12 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

1. James warns us against speaking evil against or judging others. When we speak evil against someone we are judging them. We no longer are doers of the law, but judges, and there can be only one rightful judge—God Himself. When we speak evil against another we engage in the act of building ourselves up at the expense of another. Jesus said:

Mat 7:1-5 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

2. We are to be judged in the same manner with which we judge others. Only the one who gives the law is qualified to judge the law. It is the sin of PRIDE that motivates a person to think that he is capable of judging another. It is by God's mercy that we are not judged (2:13).

To judge, or speak evil of, another is to take the role of Satan, the "Accuser". This is a serious matter and must be repented.

E. With Spiritual Maturity, We Humbly Leave the Future to God's Will (4:13-17)

James 4:13-17 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 4:16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

1. As our life is in God's hands, it is presumptuous for us to make future plans without seeking the will of God, or waiting for His leading. in the matter. Who are we to think that we control the future? After all life is like a vapor, which passes away very quickly.
2. We are not to boast (vs. 16) of things we do not control, like a man who boasts in his plans to go from city to city making financial deals that will bring him increase, yet not realizing that he does not control tomorrow—God does. Realize that all boasting is evil, prideful, if not in the Lord!
3. In vs. 17 "Therefore" could be read as "likewise". James is contrasting those who act too independently with those who know they should act, but don't. He says both are sinful. In either case, sin is missing the mark, not only by doing what is wrong, but by failing to do what we know is right. It is prideful disobedience to the Royal Law. In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) we saw that the man with one talent who was afraid and therefore hid the talent had displeased his master, and was punished. This is a great sin in the church. God has given us so much yet we often do so little with it. God help us!

VI. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IN DEALING WITH LIFE'S TROUBLES

(Chapter 5: Notes from Warren Wiersbe's "Be Collection" Commentary)

A. Troubles and Prayer

1. **One of the themes that runs through James, chapter 5, is trouble.**
 - a. He speaks of **poor** people deprived of their wages (James 5:4),
 - b. and those who are **physically afflicted** (James 5:13-16),
 - c. and the **spiritually backslidden** (James 5:19-20).

2. **A second theme that James introduced is prayer.**

The poor laborers **cry out to God** (James 5:4).
The sick and afflicted should pray (James 5:13-16).
He cited Elijah as an example of one who believed in prayer (James 5:17-18).

3. By joining these two themes, James reveals another mark of the mature Christian: he is prayerful in troubles. Instead of giving up when troubles come, the mature believer turns to God in prayer and seeks divine help. The immature person trusts in his own experience and skill, or else turns to others for help. While it is true that God often meets our needs through the hands of other people, this aid should be the result of prayer.

B. Troubles for the Rich: They should “Weep and Howl”. (5:1-6)

James 5:1-6 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. 5:3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. 5:4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. 5:5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. 5:6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

1. The Way They Got Their Wealth (James 5:4, 6a)

a. **James** did not say it was a sin to be rich. After all, Abraham was a wealthy man, yet he walked with God, and was greatly used of God to bless the whole world. James was sternly condemning the selfishness of the rich, and predicting how they would “weep and howl on the day of their judgment.” They were guilty of violating the very Royal Law of love which James has been writing about.

- b. The Bible does not discourage the acquiring of wealth. The Jews in Canaan owned their own property, worked it, and benefited from the produce. In the Law of Moses, specific rules are laid down for getting and securing wealth. In several of Jesus' parables, He indicated His respect for personal property and private gain. There is nothing in the Scriptures that contradicts the right of private ownership and profit.
- c. What the Bible does condemn is acquiring wealth by illegal means or for illegal purposes. The Prophet Amos thundered a message of judgment against the wealthy who robbed the poor and used their stolen wealth for selfish luxuries. Isaiah and Jeremiah also exposed the selfishness of the rich and warned that judgment was coming. It is in this spirit that James wrote. He gave two illustrations of how the rich acquired their wealth:

(I) Holding back wages (v. 4). Laborers were hired and paid by the day and did not have any legal contracts with their employers. The Parable of the Laborers in Matthew 20:1-16 gives some idea of the system in that day. In the Law, **God gave definite instructions concerning the laboring man in order to protect him from the oppressive employer.**

(Deut. 24:14-15, NASB) “You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns. You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he may not cry against you to the Lord and it become sin in you”

(Lev. 19:13, NASB) “You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning”

(Jer. 22:13) “Woe to him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work”

(A) These rich men had hired the laborers and promised to pay them a specific amount. The men had completed their work but had not been paid. The tense of the verb “kept back” in the original Greek indicates that the **laborers never will get their salaries.**

(B) “Thou shalt not steal” is still the law of God, and it is a law He will enforce. As Christians, it behooves us to be faithful to pay our bills.

(II) Controlling the courts (v. 6a). It is often the case that those who have wealth also have political power and can get

what they want. (“What is the Golden Rule?” asked a character in a comic strip. His friend answered, “Whoever has the gold makes the rules!”) James asked, “Do not the rich men oppress you and draw you before the judgment seats?” (James 2:6)

(A) When God established Israel in her land, He gave the people a system of courts (see Deut. 17:8-13). He warned the judges not to be greedy (Ex. 18:21). They were not to be partial to the rich or the poor (Lev. 19:15). No judge was to tolerate perjury (Deut. 19:16-21). Bribery was condemned by the Lord (Isa. 33:15; Micah 3:11; 7:3). The Prophet Amos denounced the judges in his day who took bribes and “fixed” cases (Amos 5:12, 15).

(B) **The courts in James’ day were apparently easy to control if you had enough money.** The poor workers could not afford expensive lawsuits, so they were beaten down every time. The workers had the just cause, but they were not given justice. Instead, they were abused and ruined. (“Killed” should probably be taken in a figurative way, as in James 4:2, though it is possible that the rich men could so oppress the poor that the poor would die.) The poor man did not resist the rich man because he had no weapons with which to fight. All he could do was call on the Lord for justice.

- d. “Wealth obtained by fraud dwindles, but the one who gathers by labor increases it” (Prov. 13:11, NASB). It is “the hand of the diligent that makes rich” (Prov. 10:4). “Do not weary yourself to gain wealth” (Prov. 23:4). We must put God first in our lives, and He will see to it that we always have all that we need (Matt. 6:33).

- 2. The Way the Rich Used Their Wealth (**James 5:3-5**) It is bad enough to gain wealth in a sinful way, but to use that wealth in sinful ways just makes the sin greater.

- a. **They stored it up (v. 3).** Of course, there is nothing sinful about saving.

2 Cor 12:14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

1 Tim 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Mat 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

(I) But it is **wrong to store up wealth when you owe money to your employees.** These rich men were hoarding grain, gold, and garments. They thought that they were rich because they had these possessions. Instead of laying up treasures in heaven by using their wealth for God's glory (Matt. 6:19), they were **selfishly guarding it for their own security and pleasure.** Not more than ten years after James wrote this letter, Jerusalem fell to the Romans, and all this accumulated wealth was taken.

Mat 6:19-21 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: {20} But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: {21} For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(II) **What did Jesus mean by “laying up treasures in heaven”?** Did He mean we should “sell everything and give to the poor” as He instructed the rich young ruler? (Mat. 19:16-30; see also Lk. 6:13-34) Probably not. He spoke that way to the rich ruler because covetousness was the young man's besetting sin, and Jesus wanted to expose it. To lay up treasures in heaven means to use all that we have as stewards of God's wealth. You and I may possess many things, but we do not own them. God is the Owner of everything, and we are His, and God keeps the books and pays the interest. What a tragedy it is to see people “heap up treasures for the last days” instead of “laying up treasures in heaven.” The Bible does not discourage saving, or even investing; but it does condemn hoarding.

b. They kept others from benefiting from it (v. 4). By fraudulent means, the rich men robbed the poor. The rich men were not using their own wealth, but they would not pay their laborers and permit them to use the wealth. Perhaps they were waiting for salaries to go down. Since we are stewards of God's wealth, we have certain responsibilities toward our Master. **We must be faithful to use what He gives us for the good of others and the glory of God.** “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2). Joseph was a faithful steward in Potiphar's house, and Potiphar prospered. There are ways that we can use God's wealth to help others.

c. They lived in extravagant luxury (v. 5). “You have lived in high style on the earth!” (James 5:5, literal translation) **Luxury is waste, and**

waste is sin. Jesus said, “Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions” (Luke 12:15, NASB). These rich men James addressed were **feeding themselves on their riches and starving to death spiritually**. The Greek word pictures cattle being fattened for the slaughter.

There is a **great difference between enjoying what God has given us (1 Tim. 6:17) and living extravagantly on what we have withheld from others**. Even if what we have has been earned lawfully and in the will of God, we must not waste it on selfish living. There are too many needs to be met.

Luxury has a way of ruining character. It is a form of self-indulgence. If you match character with wealth, you can produce much good; but if you match self-indulgence with wealth, the result is sin.

3. The Consequences of Misusing Their Riches (James 5:1-4)

James 5:1-4 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 5:2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 5:3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. 5:4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

The rich thought they were blessed and secure because of their wealth, but God says “Howl for your miseries that shall come upon you” (James 5:1).

- a. **Riches will vanish** (vv. 2-3a). Grain will decay (“corrupted” in James 5:2); gold will rust; and garments will become moth-eaten. **Nothing material in this world will last forever**. The seeds of death and decay are found in all of creation.

Paul says it is a great mistake to think there is security in wealth.

1 Tim 6:17 “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited, or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches”

- b. **Riches are uncertain**. The money market fluctuates from hour to hour, and so does the stock market. Actually, gold does not rust the way iron does; but the idea is the same: the gold is losing its value. Add to this the fact that **life is brief, and we cannot take wealth with us**, and you can see how foolish it is to live for the things of this world. God said to the rich man,

Luke 12:20 “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”

c. Misused riches erode character (v. 3). “Their corrosion . . . will eat your flesh like fire” (James 5:3, NIV). This is a present judgment: the poison of wealth has infected them and they are being eaten alive. Of itself, money is not sinful; it is neutral. But “the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). “Thou shalt not covet” is the last of the Ten Commandments, but it is the most dangerous. **Covetousness will make a person break all the other nine commandments.** Abraham was a rich man, but he maintained his faith and character. When Lot became rich, it ruined his character and ultimately ruined his family. **It is good to have riches in your hand, provided they do not get into your heart.**

Psalms 62:10 “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them”

Proverbs 22:1 “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold”

d. Judgment is a certainty (vv. 3, 5). James not only saw a **present judgment** (their wealth decaying, their character eroding), but also a **future judgment** before God. Jesus Christ will be the Judge (James 5:9), and His judgment will be righteous.

(I) Note the **witnesses that God will call** on that day of judgment.

(A) First, the rich men’s **wealth** will witness against them (James 5:3).

(B) Their **rotten grain, rusted gold and silver, and moth-eaten garments** will bear witness of the selfishness of their hearts. There is a bit of irony here: the rich men saved their wealth to benefit them, but their hoarded riches will only testify against them.

(C) The **wages they held back** will also witness against them in court (James 5:4a). These **stolen salaries cry out to God for justice** and judgment. God heard Abel’s blood cry out from the ground (Gen. 4:10), and He hears this stolen money cry out too.

(D) The **workers** will also testify against them (James 5:4). There will be no opportunities for the rich to bribe the witnesses or the Judge. God hears **the cries of His oppressed people** and He will judge righteously.

(II) This judgment is a serious thing. The **lost** will stand before Christ at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). The **saved** will stand before the **Judgment Seat of Christ** (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:9-10). God will not judge our sins, because they have already been judged on the cross; but He **will judge our works and our ministry**. If we have been faithful in serving and glorifying Him, we will receive a reward; if we have been unfaithful, we shall lose our reward but not our salvation (1 Cor. 3:1-15).

e. **The loss of a precious opportunity** (v. 3). “The last days” indicates that James believed that the coming of the Lord was near (see James 5:8-9). We must **“buy up the opportunity”** (Eph. 5:16, literal translation) and work while it is day (John 9:4). Think of the good that could have been accomplished with that hoarded wealth. There were poor people in that congregation who could have been helped (James 2:1-6). There were workers who deserved their wages.

(I) It is **possible to be “poor in this world”** (James 2:5) and yet **rich in the next world**. It is also possible to be “rich in this world” and poor in the next world. The return of Jesus Christ will make some people poor and others rich, depending on the spiritual condition of their hearts.

Matt. 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”

1 Tim 6:17-19 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; {18} That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; {19} Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

(II) What we keep, we lose. What we give to God, we keep, and He adds interest to it. A famous preacher, known for his long sermons, was asked to give the annual “charity sermon” for the poor. It was suggested that if he preached too long, the congregation might not give as much as they should. The preacher read his text from **Proverbs 19:17**—“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.” His sermon indeed was brief: “If you like the terms, then put down your money.” Yes, money talks. What will it say to you at the last judgment?

C. Spiritual Maturity Expressed in Patience (James 5:7-12)

Just as James counseled the saints at the beginning of his letter (1:3-4) to be patient in trouble, this is also his counsel as his letter came to a close. Mature Christians must patiently endure hardships and heartaches until Jesus returns.

1. James used **two different words for patience**.

- a. In James 5:7-8, 10, it was the word **“long-tempered.”**

The words “endure” and “patience” in James 5:11 literally mean **“to remain under”**, and speak of **endurance under great stress**.

Patience means: “to stay put and stand fast when you’d like to run away.”

- b. Many Greek scholars think that **“long-suffering” refers to patience with respect to persons**, while **“endurance” refers to patience with respect to conditions or situations**.

2. But the **QUESTION we must answer IS: HOW** can we Christians experience this kind of patient endurance as we wait for the Lord to return? To answer that question (and need), James gave **three encouraging examples** of patient endurance.

a. The Farmer as an Example (James 5:7-9)

James 5:7-9 Be patient therefore [even though some ungodly rich men offend you], brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 5:8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. 5:9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

(I) The farmer must have patience with the seed and the crop, for it **takes time for plants to grow**. Jewish farmers would plow and sow in what to us are the autumn months. The “early rain” would soften the soil. The “latter rain” would come in the early spring (our February-March) and help to mature the harvest. The farmer had to wait many weeks for his seed to produce fruit. Why did he willingly wait so long? **Because the fruit is “precious”** (James 5:7). The harvest is worth waiting for.

Gal. 6:9 “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not”.

Mark 4:28-29 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 4:29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

(II) James was also encouraging those who were counting on the Lord's return to deliver them from the present oppression; that God, as the "husbandman" of his field or vineyard, was only delaying His return until the precious fruit of souls was ready to be harvested, when the "latter rain of the Holy Spirit's work is done.

(III) The secret of endurance when the going is tough? God is producing a harvest in our lives. He wants the "fruit of the Spirit" to grow, and the only way He can do it is **through trials and troubles**. Instead of growing impatient with God and with ourselves, **we must yield** to the Lord and permit the fruit to grow. **Patience is the vehicle that brings forth the fruit.** We are like "spiritual farmers" looking for a harvest.

(IV) You can enjoy this kind of a harvest only if your heart is established (James 5:8). One of the purposes of the spiritual ministry of the local church is to establish the heart (Rom. 1:11). Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to establish the young Christians in their faith (1 Thes. 3:1-3); and Paul also prayed for them that they might be established (1 Thes. 3:10-13). The ministry of the Word of God and prayer are important if the heart is going to be established. **A heart that is not established cannot bear fruit.**

Keep in mind that the farmer does not stand around doing nothing: he is constantly at work as he looks toward the harvest. **"Keep working and waiting"** was his admonition.

Luke 12:43 "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing"

(V) Farmers don't have much time or energy for disputes with the neighbors. To the believers who must have been angry and looking for revenge against their rich oppressors, James said: "Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged" (James 5:9, NIV). **He warned them not to become part of the sinful problem by holding grudges.** If we start using the sickles on each other, we will miss the harvest!

b. The Prophets' Example (James 5:10)

James 5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

(I) They were in the will of God, yet they suffered. They were preaching “in the name of the Lord,” yet they were persecuted. Sometimes a faithful Christian will suffer because of his faithfulness. **Not all suffering comes as a result of sin:** ask Job, Joseph, Jesus, Stephen, Paul and countless others! We must **never think that obedience automatically produces ease and pleasure.** Our Lord was obedient, and it led to a cross!

2 Tim. 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”

(II) The prophets encourage us by reminding us that God cares for us when we go through sufferings for His sake. Elijah announced to wicked King Ahab that there would be a drought in the land for three and one half years; and Elijah himself had to suffer in that drought. But God cared for him, and God gave him victory over the evil priests of Baal. It has been said, **“The will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.”**

(III) Why is it that those who “speak in the name of the Lord” often must endure difficult trials? It is so that their lives might back up their messages. The impact of a faithful, godly life carries much power. We need to remind ourselves that **our patience in times of suffering is a testimony to others around us.**

Rom. 15:4 NIV “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope”

(IV) The better we know the Bible, the more God can encourage us in the difficult experiences of life. The important thing is that, like the farmer, we keep working, and, like the prophets, we keep witnessing, no matter how trying the circumstances may be.

c. Job’ Example (James 5:11-12)

James 5:11-12 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. 5:12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

- (I) **The Book of Job is filled with speeches that, to the Western mind, seem long and tedious.** The first three chapters tell of Job's distress: he loses his wealth, his family (except for his wife, and she told him to commit suicide), and his health. In chapt. 4-31 we read Job's defense, as he debates with his three friends and answers their false accusations. Job 38-42 presents Job's deliverance: first God humbles Job, and then He honors Job and gives him twice as much as he had before.
- (II) In studying the experience of Job, it is **important to remember that Job did not know what was going on "behind the scenes" between God and Satan.** Job's friends accused him of being a sinner and a hypocrite. "There must be some terrible sin in your life," they argued, "or God would never have permitted this suffering." Job disagreed with them and maintained his innocence (but not perfection) during the entire conversation. The friends were wrong: **God had no cause against Job (Job 2:3), and in the end, God rebuked the friends for telling lies about Job (Job 42:7).**
- (III) It is difficult to find a greater example of suffering than Job. Yet, Job endured. **Satan predicted that Job would get impatient with God and abandon his faith, but that did not happen.** It is true that **Job questioned God's will, but Job did not forsake his faith in the Lord.** Job was so sure of God's perfections that he persisted in arguing with Him, even though he did not understand all that God was doing. That is endurance.

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

- (IV) **God had made a covenant with Israel that He would bless them if they would obey His Laws (see Deut. 11). This led to the idea that, if you were wealthy and comfortable, you were blessed of God; but if you were suffering and poor, you were cursed of God.** Sad to say, many people today have that same erroneous idea. **When Jesus said it was difficult for a rich man to enter heaven, the disciples were shocked. "Who then can be saved?" they asked (Matt. 19:23-26).** "The rich are especially blessed of God," they were saying. "If they can't make it, nobody can!"

The Book of Job refutes that idea; for Job was a righteous man, and yet he suffered. God found no evil in him, and even Satan could not find any. Job's friends could not prove their accusations. **Job teaches us that God has higher purposes in suffering than the punishing of sin.** Job's

experience paved the way for Jesus, the perfect Son of God who suffered, not for His own sins, but for the sins of the world.

- (V) **What did Job's story mean to the believers James wrote to, and what does it mean to us today?** It means that some of the trials of life are caused directly by satanic opposition. **God permits Satan to try His children, but He always limits the extent of the enemy's power** (Job 1:12; 2:6). When you find yourself in the fire, remember that God keeps His gracious hand on the thermostat!

Job 23:10 "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"

- (VI) **Satan wants us to get impatient with God, for an impatient Christian is a powerful weapon in the devil's hands.** You will recall from our study of **Moses** that his impatience robbed him of a trip to the Holy Land; **Abraham's** impatience led to the birth of Ishmael, the enemy of the Jews; and **Peter's** impatience almost made him a murderer. When Satan attacks us, it is easy for us to get impatient and **run ahead of God and lose God's blessing as a result.**

- (VII) **What is the answer? "My grace is sufficient for thee!"** (2 Cor. 12:7-9) Paul's thorn in the flesh was a "messenger of Satan." Paul could have fought it, given up under it, or tried to deny that the thorn existed; but he did not. Instead, he trusted God for the grace he needed; and he **turned Satan's weapon into a tool for the building up of his own spiritual life.**

When you find yourself in the furnace, go to the throne of grace and receive from the Lord all the grace you need to endure (Heb. 4:14-16). **Remind yourself that the Lord has a gracious purpose in all of this suffering, and that He will work out His purposes in His time and for His glory.**

- (VIII) The exhortation in James 5:12 seems out of place; for **what does "speaking oaths" have to do with the problem of suffering?** If you have ever suffered, you know the answer: **it is easy to say things you do not mean, and even make bargains with God, when you are going through difficulties.** Go back to Job for an example. The patriarch said,

Job 1:21-22 "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly"

(A) Job did curse the day he was born (Job 3:1), but he never cursed God or spoke with a foolish oath. Neither did he try to bargain with God.

(B) **James is reminding us of our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount** (Matt. 5:33-37). The Jews were great ones for using various oaths to back up their statements. They were careful, however, not to use the name of God in their oaths, lest they blaspheme God. So, they would swear by heaven, or earth, or Jerusalem, or even by their own heads! **But Jesus taught that it is impossible to avoid God in such oaths.** Heaven is His throne, earth is His footstool, and Jerusalem is the "city of the great King." As for swearing by your head, what good is it? "Thou canst not make one hair black or white" (Matt. 5:36)—or even keep one hair on your head.

(C) It is a basic principle that **true Christian character requires few words.** The person who must use many words (including oaths) to convince us has something wrong with his character and must bolster this weakness by using words. **If you are a true Christian, with integrity, then all you have to say is yes or no and people will believe you.** Jesus warns us that anything more than this is from the evil one.

D. Spiritual Maturity Expressed through Prayer (James 5:13-20)

In this section, James encourages us to pray by describing **four situations in which God answers prayer.**

1. Prayer for the Suffering (James 5:13)

James 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

a. The word **afflicted** means "**suffering in difficult circumstances.**" The phrase "**in trouble**" is a good translation. Paul used this word to describe the circumstances he was in as he suffered for the Gospel's sake (2 Tim. 2:9). As God's people go through life, they often endure difficulties that are not the results of sin or the chastening of God.

b. **What should we do** when we find ourselves in such trying circumstances? We must not grumble and criticize the saints who are

having an easier time of it (James 5:9); nor should we blame the Lord. **We should pray, asking God for the wisdom to understand how the situation could be used for His glory** (James 1:5).

- c. James indicated that **everybody does not go through troubles at the same time**: “Is any merry? Let him sing psalms” (James 5:13). God balances our lives and gives us hours of suffering and days of singing. The **mature Christian knows how to sing while he is suffering**. (Anybody can sing after the trouble has passed.) God is able to give “songs in the night” (Job 35:10). He did this for Paul and Silas when they were suffering in that Philippian jail (Acts 16:25).

2. Prayer for the Sick (James 5:14-16)

James 5:14-16 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

- a. James describes one method for healing the sick. (There are several ways described in scripture that healing is obtained):
 - (I) miracles of “signs and wonders” Heb.2:4
 - (II) “gifts of healing and miracles” 1 Cor. 12:7-10
 - (III) “laying on of hands” Mk.16:18; Heb.6:2
 - (IV) miracles of “anointing” Acts 10:38; Isa.10:27
 - (V) anointing with oil James 5:14-15
 - (VI) miracles of “deliverance” Luke 4:18
 - (VII) miracles by accepting the “atonement of Christ” 1 Pet.2:24
 - (VII) the “spoken word” Ps.107:20; Mat.8:8
- b. What are the **special characteristics of this case** that James is describing?

(I) The person is sick because of sin (vv. 15b-16). The Greek text says, “If he has been constantly sinning.” This parallels **1 Corinthians 11:30**, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (have died). **James has described a church member who is sick because he is being disciplined by God.**

In the early church, the believers practiced church discipline. Those who did not repent of their sins, but proudly persisted in their carnal behaviors, were cast out of the fellowship, hopefully to learn the folly of forsaking God. Often they became sick as God dealt with them. First Corinthians 5 is a good example. Paul told the believers at Corinth to dismiss the sinning member from the assembly until he repented of his sins and made things right.

1 Cor 5:1-5 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. {2} And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. {3} For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, {4} In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, {5} To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject;

1 Tim 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

This explains why the elders of the assembly are called: the man cannot go to church to confess his sins, so he asks the **spiritual leaders to come to him.** (The leaders would be in charge of the discipline of the congregation.)

(II) The person confesses his sins (v. 16).

The little word “therefore” belongs in James 5:16—“Confess your (sins) (therefore) to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (literal translation). **The word “faults” gives the impression that the man’s deeds were not too evil;** they were only faults. But it is the word hamartia that James used, and this **word means “sin.”** It is the same word used in James 1:15, where the subject is definitely sin. (Wiersbe indicates the correct Gr.

word is “hamartia” meaning “sin” not faults; the Dake Bible says the word used is “paraptoma” meaning “a falling aside when one should have stood upright.

(III) The death of Jesus Christ gives us the ability to pray for God’s forgiveness of our sin, and to receive it.

Isa 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

2 Cor 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 Pet 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

(IV) The death of Jesus also provides the power for our healing.

Isa 53:3-7 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. {4} Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. {6} All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. {7} He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

(A) “griefs” (vs 4) is “kholee”, more accurately translated “sickness” (weak, sick, or afflicted) as in Deu. 7:15; 1 Ki.17:17; 2 Ki.8:8.

(B) “sorrows” is “macob”, more accurately translated “pain” as in Job 33:19; Jer.51:8

(C) The gospel writer Matthew referred to Isa.53:4 when he wrote:

Mat 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

(D) In Hebrew teaching there was **no distinction made between physical and emotional pain and suffering.** They saw **all suffering to be a result of the sinfulness of man.** That is why when Christ came to defeat Sin, this was evidenced also in episodes of physical and emotional healing.

c. **The person is healed by “the prayer of faith” (v. 15).** It is not the anointing that heals, but the praying. The Greek word translated “anointing” is a medicinal term; it could be translated “massaging.” This may be an indication that James suggests using available means for healing along with asking the Lord for His divine touch. God can heal with or without other means; in each case, **it is God who does the healing.**

(I) But what is “the prayer of faith” that heals the sick? The answer is:

1 John 5:14-15—“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have desired of Him.”

The “prayer of faith” is a prayer offered when you know the will of God. The elders would seek the mind of God in the matter, and then pray according to His will. We do not always know how to pray for the sick. Is it God’s will to heal? Is God planning to call His child home? I do not know; therefore, I must pray, **“If it is Your will, heal Your child.”** Those who claim that God heals every case, and that it is not His will for His children to be sick, are denying both Scripture and experience. (The powerful, miracle working prophet Elisha died of a sickness: 2 Kings 13:14)

But when we have the inner conviction from the Word and the Spirit that it is God’s will to heal, then we can pray “the prayer of faith” and expect God to work.

Keep in mind that it is not one individual who is praying: it is the body of elders—spiritual men of God—who seek God’s will and pray.

(II) The “confessing” that James wrote about is done among the saints. He was not suggesting confessing our sins to a preacher or priest. We confess our sins first of all **to the Lord** (1 John 1:9), but we must also confess them **to those who have been affected by them.** We must **never confess sin beyond the circle of that sin’s influence.**

3. Prayer for the Nation (James 5:17-18)

James 5:17-18 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six

months. 5:18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

- a. **The background of this incident** is found in **1 Kings 17-18**. Wicked King Ahab and Jezebel, his queen, had led Israel away from the Lord and into the worship of Baal. **God punished the nation by holding back the rain that they needed** (see Deut. 28:12, 23). For three and one half years, the heavens were as brass and the earth unable to produce the crops so necessary for life.
- b. Then **Elijah challenged the priests of Baal** on Mt. Carmel. All day long the priests cried out to their god, but no answer came. At the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah repaired the altar and prepared the sacrifice. He prayed but once, **and fire came from heaven** to consume the sacrifice. He had proven that Jehovah was the true God.
- c. But the nation still needed rain. Elijah went to the top of Carmel and **fell down before the Lord in prayer**. He prayed and sent his servant seven times to see if there was evidence of rain; and the seventh time his servant saw a little cloud. Before long, there was a great rain, and the nation was saved.
- d. **“Elijah was a man just like us,”** stated James (5:17, NIV). He was **not perfect**; in fact, right after his victory on Mt. Carmel, Elijah became afraid and discouraged and ran away. **But he was a “righteous man,”** that is, obedient to the Lord and trusting Him. **God’s promises of answered prayer are for all His children, not just for ones we may call the spiritual elite.**
- e. **Elijah prayed in faith**, for God told him He would send the rain (1 Kings 18:1). You **cannot separate the Word of God and prayer**, for in His Word **He gives us the promises that we claim when we pray.**
- f. Elijah not only prayed in faith, but **he was persistent**. “He prayed . . . and he prayed again” (James 5:17-18). On Mt. Carmel, Elijah continued to pray for rain until his servant reported “a cloud the size of a man’s hand.” **Many times we fail to get what God promises because we stop praying.** It is true that we are not heard “for our much praying” (Matt. 6:7); but there is a difference between vain repetitions and true, believing persistence in prayer.
- g. **Elijah was determined and concerned** in his praying. **“He prayed earnestly”** (James 5:17). The literal Greek reads “and **he prayed in prayer.**” Many people do not pray in their prayers, but just lazily say religious words, and their hearts are not in their prayers.

4. Prayer for the Straying (James 5:19-20)

James 5:19-20 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

- a. These verses deal with our ministry to a fellow believer who **strays from the truth and gets into sin.**

The verb “err” means “to wander,” and suggests a **gradual moving away from the will of God.** The Old Testament term for this is “backsliding.”

- b. **Such a condition is, of course, very dangerous.**

(I) It is dangerous to the offender because **he may be disciplined by the Lord** (Heb. 12).

(II) Backsliding is **also dangerous to the church.** A wandering offender can **influence others and lead them astray.** “One sinner destroys much good” (Ecc. 9:18, NASB). This is why the spiritual members of the church must step in and help the man who has wandered away.

- c. **The origin of this problem is** found in the statement “err from the truth” (James 5:19). The truth means, of course, the Word of God. **Unless the believer stays close to the truth, he will start to drift away.**

Heb 2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

- d. **The outcome of this wandering is “sin” and possible “death”** (James 5:20). The sinner here is a believer, not an unbeliever; and sin in the life of a Christian is worse than sin in the life of an unbeliever. We expect unsaved people to sin, but **God expects His children to obey His Word.**

- e. **What are we to do when we see a fellow believer wandering from the truth?**

(I) **We should pray for him,** to be sure;

(II) but we must also seek to help him. He needs to be “converted”—turned back into the right path again.

If a brother has sinned against us, we should **talk to him privately and seek to settle the matter.** If he listens, then we have gained our brother (Matt. 18:15). That word gained means “won.”

(III) If we are going to help an erring brother, we must have an attitude of love, for “love shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

(A) This does not mean that love “sweeps the dirt under the carpet.” Where there is love, there **must also be truth** (“speaking the truth in love” says Paul in Eph. 4:15); and where there is truth, there is **honest confession of sin and cleansing from God.**

(B) Love not only helps the offender to face his sins and deal with them, but love also assures the offender that those sins, once forgiven, are remembered no more.

APPENDIX

“DESIRING; WANTING”

Psa 23:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

James 1:4 - "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

James 1:13-17 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: {14} But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. {15} Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. {16} Do not err, my beloved brethren. {17} Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

James 5:7-10 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. {8} Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. {9} Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. {10} Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

James 3:13-18 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. {14} But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. {15} This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. {16} For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. {17} But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits,

without partiality, and without hypocrisy. {18} And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

James 4:1-10 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? {2} Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. {3} Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. {4} Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. {5} Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? {6} But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. {7} Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. {8} Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. {9} Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. {10} Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

James 5:1-3 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. {2} Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. {3} Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

James 5:7-10 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. {8} Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. {9} Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. {10} Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

1 Pet 1:6-9 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: {7} That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: {8} Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: {9} Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

1 Pet 1:13-25 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; {14} As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: {15} But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; {16} Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. {17} And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: {18} Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; {19} But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: {20} Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, {21} Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. {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: {23} Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. {24} 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: {25} But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1 Pet 2:11-19 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; {12} Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. {13} Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

{14} 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. {15} For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: {16} As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. {17} Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. {18} Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. {19} For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

1 Pet 4:1-10 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; {2} That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. {3} For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: {4} Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: {5} Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. ...{7} But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. {8} And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. {9} Use hospitality one to another without grudging. {10} As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

2 Pet 1:3-4 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: {4} Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Pet 2:9-10 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: {10} But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

2 Pet 2:17-21 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. {18} For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. {19} While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. {20} For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. {21} For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Jude 1:17-21 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; {18} How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. {19} These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. {20} But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, {21} Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

FIRST PETER

The following notes were compiled by Rev. Dick Christensen from “Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament” Volume 2, by Kenneth S. Wuest. Published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942.

[Please notice that there is also a detailed outline study of A BIBLICAL VIEW OF SUFFERING, TRIALS, and TRIBULATION available for further study in the Appendix at the end of this Epistles IV file. It can be taught in connection with the study of First Peter, or taught at the end of the course, if time permits; or not taught at all in this course. Feel free to use this excellent study in any way you feel led by the Holy Spirit.]

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF I PETER

- A. **THEME: Victory over Suffering, through Hope in Christ;**
the word “suffering” is used at least 15 times in this book. It confirms that Christians can expect to suffer.

1. Paul expected to suffer for the Lord

Acts 21:10-14 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. {11} And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. {12} And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. {13} Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. {14} And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

2. Peter expected to suffer for the Lord

John 21:17-19 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. {18} Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. {19} This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Luke 22:28-33 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations...{31} And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you

as wheat: {32} But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. {33} And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

3. **VICTORY in suffering** comes from our **HOPE** in **SALVATION** to **ETERNAL LIFE**, provided in Christ. Christians are “strangers”, “sojourners” in the earthly life; in the sin-filled world there will be suffering. HOPE looks to the promises of God for **SALVATION**.

Peter begins his comforting message to suffering Christians by reviewing the “basics” of Salvation. We can rejoice in this hope, regardless of life’s circumstances.

1 Pet 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Mat 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (Jesus)

Mat 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Mat 24:9,13 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake...But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Luke 21:17-19 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. {18} But there shall not an hair of your head perish. {19} In your patience possess ye your souls.

John 15:18-21 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. {19} If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. {20} Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. {21} But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

Rev 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Rom 8:17-18 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. {18} For I reckon that

the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Apostle Paul)

Phil 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

2 Tim 2:8-10 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: {9} Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. {10} Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

2 Tim 3:12-15 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. {13} But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. {14} But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; {15} And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

B. KEY VERSES & Key Word: 1 Pet 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

1 Pet 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

KEY WORDS: Suffering

C. AUTHOR: THE "ROCK-MAN"
Simon Peter - from Fisherman to Shepherd

1. Name, Family & Place of Residence:

a. His given name was **Simon**, or more properly "Simeon" (a Hebrew name). We know only that he was the son of Jonas (John 1:42), and that he had a **brother named Andrew**.

Mark 1:16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. (also John 1:40)

b. He is first mentioned as living (along with Andrew) in **Bethsaida**, located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44), but later seemed to be residing about 5 miles away, in **Capernaum**, with Andrew (Mark 1:21,29).

- c. The writer of this letter was originally named "Simon", but his name was changed by Christ upon their meeting

John 1:42 "And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." (Mk.3:16)

- d. The word "**stone**" is from the Greek word "petros" which literally means "a detached but large fragment of **rock**". The term was used by Christ to describe Peter in terms of **what he would become**, as well as his strength of soul. Peter was the only man in the New Testament called by this name.

When Peter had confessed the deity of Christ:

Matthew 16:15-18 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (petros), and upon this rock (petra), I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- **Petros = "a detached large fragment of (rock)"**
- **Petra = "the massive (living rock)"**

- e. It is **Jesus Christ "the massive living rock"** upon which the foundation of the church rests. Peter and all other believers are but fragments of that "massive living rock". In that sense Peter speaks of believers as "living stones":

I Peter 2:4-5 [Jesus] To whom [you are] coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed [rejected] indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 2:5 Ye also, as "living stones**", are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.**

- f. As "**living stones**" we are fragments of "**the living rock**," and are to live as a **remembrance** of the life that Christ is, as a witness to all those who we encounter in the course of our walk.

2. Education:

Peter most likely received the normal elementary education given to Jewish boys of his day, but was **not expected to possess understanding of the scriptures, being a simple fisherman.** (Thus

the religious leaders were taken back at the boldness and understanding of both Peter and John, who lacked rabbinical schooling, and therefore were considered to be "**unlearned and ignorant men**") (Acts 4:13).

3. Occupation:

Both Peter and Andrew were **fishermen** by trade (Mat.4:18). As young boys generally learned the trade of their father, it is reasonable to assume that was the trade of their father as well. Peter and Andrew were **partners in the fishing business with** a man named Zebedee and his sons, **James and John** (later to be apostles), (Lk.5:10).

As Peter's father is not mentioned in this partnership it is likely that he was deceased by this point, or no longer able to work with them.

We know that Peter's home in Capernaum was quite large, as it accommodated not only his family, but also the Lord and disciples (Mark 1:29-34). Thus we expect Peter had done very well financially in his business. Nevertheless, when Jesus met Simon and his brother Andrew, and invited them to become "**fishers of men**" (Mat.4:19-20; Lk.5:10), they quickly left their nets to follow Him.

Even before Jesus appeared, Peter (along with Andrew, James, and John) had been a **disciple of John the Baptist**; indicating a sincere **interest in the coming of Messiah** (Jn.1:35-41).

4. Marital Status

One of the early miracles of Christ was the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mat.8:14-15; Mk.1:29-31; Lk.4:38-40), and we know that his wife traveled with him in his ministry (1Cor.9:5).

5. His Position

Peter was **one of the original 12 apostles** chosen by Jesus (Mat.10:2-4; Mk.3:13-19). He, like all the apostles, was "ordained" to "be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:..." (Mk. 3:14-15).

Wherever the disciples names are listed in the New Testament, Simon Peter's name always appears first. This could be a result of his being among the first to follow the Lord, or more likely it could be because of his natural aggressiveness as a leader. He often spoke on behalf of the disciples, and at times was addressed by Jesus as representing all the disciples; however, the disciples never gave Peter that place of leadership, as witnessed by their continual arguments over greatness (Mat.20:20-28; Mk.9:33-34; Lk.22:24-26).

He was one of the "inner circle" of 3 disciples; Peter, James, and John were the only disciples permitted by Christ to share **3 special experiences**:

- a. When Jesus raised to life the daughter of **Jairus** (Mk.5:37; Lk. 8:51)
- b. Mount of transfiguration (Mat.17:1-9; Mk.9:2-10; Lk.9:28-36)
- c. Garden of Gethsemane (Mat.26:37; Mk.14:33)

6. His Spiritual Insight

- a. **He clearly recognized and declared Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of God”, the Messiah** (Mat.16:13-19; Mk.8:27-29; Lk.9:18-20)
- b. **He joined Jesus walking on the sea** (Mat.14:29-33)

7. His Mistakes

Being an impulsively out-spoken disciple, Peter **often made mistakes as he learned about spiritual leadership**:

- a. He rebuked Jesus for talking about dying, and was therefore rebuked by Jesus:

Mat 16:21-23 ... {22} Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. {23} But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. (Mk.8:31-33)

- b. He refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet (Jn.13:6-9), but later asked Jesus to wash him “completely”.
- c. He rashly attacked the high priest’s servant in the Garden of Gethsemane, and cut off his ear; Jesus rebuked him again (Mat.26:51-54; Jn.18:10-11).
- d. He swore that he would never forsake Jesus (Mat.26:33-35; Mk.14:29-31; Lk.22:31-33; Jn.13:37); but in fact, he did deny Christ (Mat.26:58, 69-75; Mk.14:66-72; Lk.22:55-62; Jn.18:15-27).

8. Restored to Fellowship and Service

- a. After his panicked denial of Christ, and weeping repentance, Peter was the first to enter the empty tomb (Lk.24:10-12; Jn.20:1-8).
- b. Peter was the first apostle to see the resurrected Jesus (Lk.24:34).

9. Commissioned to Shepherd Jesus' "sheep"

After the crucifixion of Christ and the 3 denials of Peter, Christ restored him to fellowship, and then commissioned Simon Peter to "feed" his "sheep" (preach to, and care for, His followers).

John 21:15-17 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these [disciples or fish?]? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, {Feed my sheep. 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, [son] of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Peter was the impulsive disciple who's desire of heart often got ahead of his faithfulness in practice, yet he was the one who was willing to lay down his life and defend the Lord when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus. It was Peter who so quickly drew his sword and severed the ear of the High Priest's servant. It was also **Peter who so shamefully denied the Lord three times, learning the inadequacy of the flesh.** Now with the authority of an apostle of Jesus Christ, Peter addresses this letter (1 Pet) to the "strangers or sojourners."

These were **believers that were scattered, in need of shepherding.** He writes, as a shepherd, to bring a message of comfort and encouragement during a time of persecution and suffering.

10. Some of Peter's "Shepherding" Experiences

- a. Jesus warned Peter that he would be **taken prisoner in his old age, suggesting a martyr's death** (Jn.21:18-19).
- b. After Jesus returned to Heaven, **Peter is recognized as the leader of the apostles**, though he did not aspire to be, and did not act in an authoritarian manner.
- c. **He initiated the replacement for Judas Iscariot** (Acts 1:15-22).
- d. **He preached the "Pentecost" sermon in which 3000 were saved** (Acts 2:14-41); and from his second sermon **5000 were saved** (Acts 3:11-4:4).
- e. **He manifested the first miracle of the apostles' ministry** by healing the lame man at the gate (3:1-10).
- f. **He challenged the sin of Ananias and Sapphira** (5:1-11).
- g. **He rebuked Simon the sorcerer** (8:14-24).
- h. **He was the first apostle, along with John, to be imprisoned and threatened by the Sanhedrin for boldly preaching**

(4:1-21; 5:17-18).

- i. He was imprisoned several times, and miraculously rescued by the “angel of the Lord” (5:19-20).**
- j. After Herod killed apostle James, Peter was also imprisoned, chained to two guards; but was again delivered by angels (Acts 12:2-17).**
- k. Peter met apostle Paul (Acts 9:26-28; Gal.1:17-18); and visited many of the churches Paul established (Acts 9:32).**
- l. He clearly instructed other Jewish Church leaders to welcome Gentiles into the Church, without imposing legalistic Jewish standards upon them (Acts 10:1-48).**
- m. In AD 51, Peter led discussion at the first Jerusalem Council, urging others to accept Gentile believers without adding the legalistic burden of circumcision. (Acts 15:1-11).**
- n. Peter also had occasions of cultural conflict with Paul and other Gentile believers (Gal.2:11-14), but remained in fellowship with Paul to the end of his life (II Pet.3:15-16).**

11. His death: UBD) Writings of the early Church fathers indicate that Peter was crucified in Rome (probably upside-down) during the persecutions of Emperor Nero, at about the same time that Paul was beheaded.

12. There is no evidence that Peter was ever the bishop of the Church at Rome (ubd).

D. DATE & PLACE of WRITING:

1. The date is generally agreed to be around early A.D. 65, as it was written around the same time as the persecutions of Nero, which began in A.D. 64, and were spreading throughout the empire. Nero blamed the fire of Rome (July, A.D.64) on the Christians, using them as a scapegoat for the citizens’ anger. Peter was most likely in Rome at that time, and was slain by Nero, who also killed Paul. Though Nero's persecution was local at first, it no doubt was spreading, prompting Peter to prepare the churches.

2. As to the place of writing there is general consensus that it was written from Rome, and not Babylon as indicated in:

I Peter 5:13 The [church that is] at Babylon, elected together with [you], saluteth you; and [so doth] Marcus my son.

It is believed that “Babylon” was a term used among the Christians at that time to describe Rome. This may have been used either as a “code” word, or simply to

imply the state of degradation to which Rome had fallen. It also could have been used to conceal where Peter was at the time of this writing. It is believed that Silas may have been the bearer of this letter to the provinces, and the secretary who wrote the epistle.

E. AUDIENCE: to believers (primarily Jews) in Asia Minor (the churches established primarily by apostle Paul).

F. PURPOSE: to encourage those who were suffering, and to prepare them for increasing suffering that would be coming under the insanely cruel Roman emperor Nero. Some of Peter's **teachings about suffering include:**

1. the example of **Jesus' sufferings** (1:11; 2:21; 4:1-2)
2. suffering is **to be expected** (4:12)
3. suffering is **within the will of God** (4:19; 5:10)
4. it **should be borne patiently** (2:23; 3:9), and **with rejoicing** (4:13)
5. Christians suffer the **same afflictions as the world** (5:9)
6. Suffering **has value** (1:6-7; 2:19-20; 4:14)

["**Yet if any man suffer as a Christian**" should be understood in its historical background. (from Wuest pg.121) The **Cult of the Caesar** was the state religion of the Roman Empire, in which the **emperor was worshipped** as a god. This served two purposes. First, the subjects of Rome gave obedience to the laws of the empire, not only as a political, but as a religious duty. Secondly, it was the unifying factor which bound the many different peoples of the empire into one, and made the military task of holding together its far-spread domain an easier one.

The Greek word for Caesar is **Kaisar**. Those who worshipped the Kaisar were called **Kaisarianos**. Christianity appeared as a rival claimant to worship and dominion. The Lord Jesus was looked upon, in the Christian Church, as the One who would some day come back and take the government of the world upon His shoulder. Those who worshipped Him as God were called **Christianos**, worshipers of the Christ as opposed to the Kaisarianos, worshipers of the Caesar. Rome saw that Christianity was striking at the very vitals of the empire. It answered this by the bloody persecutions which followed. It truly meant something to be a **Christianos** in those days.]

G. Notes on the Rule of Emperor Nero:

EMPEROR NERO 37-68 A.D.

[SHORT PROFILE]

Nero (pronounced NEER oh) was a **Roman emperor who reigned from A.D. 54** (age 14) until his death 14 years later.

Nero's father was a nobleman, who died when Nero was still a child. His **mother, Agrippina the Younger, was the great-granddaughter of Emperor Augustus**. She **married Emperor Claudius** in A.D. 49. Claudius adopted Nero as his eldest son, naming him Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus.

In A.D. 53, **Nero married Octavia, Claudius' daughter** by a previous marriage. The **next year, Claudius died**. Many historians believe that **Agrippina poisoned him so that Nero could become emperor**.

In A.D. 59, **Nero had his mother Agrippina murdered**. (His **half-brother, Britannicus, also died mysteriously**.) Soon afterward, **Nero divorced Octavia and then had her killed so he could marry Poppaea Sabina**. Poppaea was the former wife of a Roman military officer. **Nero killed her a few years later**. He also **executed many Roman senators** because they questioned his actions.

His rule is best known for a **fire that destroyed much of Rome in A.D. 64**. Much of the city was destroyed including Nero's palace. The story, probably true in part, goes that **Nero fiddled while Rome burned**. Nero took measures to provide relief for those affected by the fire. Still he could not dispel the rumor that he had the fire set. People knew that he planned to build a much larger palace for himself and they reasoned that he used the fire to clear off the land. **Nero built the Golden House, a colossal palace, in the center of the burned-out area**, then felt the need to divert suspicion to another group. He **selected the Christians, then an unpopular group in Rome, as his scapegoats, claiming that they had set the fire**. A **systematic persecution of the Christians followed**. Because of his life-style and the persecution, **many Christians viewed him as the antichrist**.

The numerous executions and Nero's scandalous life finally made him increasingly unpopular with the upper classes. **A plan to overthrow Nero failed**. As a result, more aristocrats were killed in A.D. 65. By then, **military commanders in the provinces had begun to fear Nero's cruelty and wild suspicions**. In A.D. 68, **they revolted, and Nero took his own life** soon afterward, by stabbing himself. His last words were said to have been, "Alas, what an artist is dying in me."

[World Book Encyclopedia, 1999: Contributor: William G. Sinnigen, Ph.D., Prof. Of History, City Univ. of New York Hunter College. See also AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER; PETRONIUS; SENECA, LUCIUS ANNAEUS.]

[Gary Poulton: *Holman Bible Dictionary*; GENERAL EDITOR: Trent C. Butler, Ph.D; Source: Quick Verse 7.]

[FURTHER DETAILS OF NERO'S REIGN]

[INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA, JAMES ORR, M.A., D.D., GENERAL EDITOR; PARSONS TECHNOLOGY, INC.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa]

Agrippina, having seated her son on the throne, **intended to rule along with him**. And at first Nero was very devoted to her. But **when she threatened to present Britannicus** (Nero's half-brother) **as the rightful heir** to the throne, **Britannicus died mysteriously** after drinking a cup of wine laced with poison. All eyes fastened on Nero in suspicion, but he boldly asserted that the death was due to a fit of epilepsy. **Agrippina next took up the cause of Nero's despised**

and ill-treated wife, Octavia, which so incensed her son that **he removed his mother from the palace**.

His government advisers, perceiving the bent of his evil nature, allowed him to indulge in **low pleasures and excesses with the most profligate companions**, thinking, perhaps, either that the young ruler would in this way prove less harmful to the public, or that, after sowing his wild oats, he would return to the serious business of government. But in both ways they were sorely disappointed, for Nero, having surrendered himself to the **basest appetites, continued to go from excess to excess**. He surrounded himself with the most dissolute companions, and **took Poppea Sabina**, the evil wife of one of them as his new mistress. **Under her influence he shook off all restraints**, turned a deaf ear to his best advisers and plunged deeper into immorality and crime. She allowed, if not persuaded, Nero to give her husband a commission in a distant province.

Then **she plotted the death of Agrippina**, easily persuading Nero to consent. They instructed an admiral of the fleet to construct a vessel that would sink. Then Nero invited his mother to his villa and later persuaded her to return home by the vessel prepared. But the plan did not succeed, and Agrippina saved herself by swimming ashore. She pretended to treat the matter as an accident. Soon after, she was murdered, and Nero reported that she died by suicide.

Next **Poppea plotted to remove Nero's wife Octavia**. She convinced Nero **to divorce her** because of barrenness. Then the innocent Octavia was **accused of adultery and banished** to an island, where a little later she was **executed** at Poppea's orders and her head brought to her rival. **Poppea became empress, but died two years later during pregnancy, of a cruel kick inflicted by Nero in a fit of rage**. He pronounced a eulogy over her and took a third wife, Statilia Messalina.

Having by **his extravagance exhausted the well-filled treasury of Claudius**, he **began to confiscate the estates of rich nobles**. But even this did not prevent a financial crisis. The provinces were now plundered; **heavy new taxes** were imposed. Worst of all, the gold and silver coinage was depreciated.

Great Fire (July, 64):

This difficulty was much increased by the great fire which was **destructive to both private and state property, and necessitated providing thousands of homeless with shelter**, and lowering the price of corn. On July 18, 64, this great conflagration broke out in Circus Maximus. A high wind caused it to spread rapidly over a large portion of the city. At the end of six days it seemed to be exhausted, when another conflagration started in a different quarter of the city. **Suspicion seemed to fix upon Nero**. (Rumor had it that on hearing the Greek verse, "When I am dead let the earth be wrapped in fire," he interrupted, "Nay rather, while I live"; that he had often deplored the ugliness of the city and wished an opportunity to rebuild it; that he purposely set it on fire in order to find room for his magnificent "Golden House"; that when the city was burning he gazed upon it from the tower of Maecenas delighted with what he

termed “the beauty of the conflagration”; that he recited in actor’s costume the sack of Troy.) In spite of all these reports Nero must be absolved of the guilt of incendiarism.

Persecution of Christians:

Such public calamities were generally attributed to the wrath of the gods. Everything was done to appease the offended deity. Yet, suspicion still clung to Nero. “Wherefore in order **to allay the rumor he put forward as guilty those who were hated for their abominations and called ‘Christians’** by the populace. Christus, from whom the name was derived, was punished by the procurator Pontius Pilatus in the reign of Tiberius. Therefore first of all **those who confessed to being Christians were arrested**, and then **as a result of their information, a large number were implicated**, not so much on the charge of burning the city, as **for hating the human race**. (As Christianity formed a society apart from Roman society, all kinds of crimes were attributed to its followers, including nightly orgies, hostility to temples and images. They were easily selected as being so numerous and making most progress in a line **opposed to Roman spirit** {*Cor* 1:6, compare also “great multitude” of *Rev* 7:9; 19:1}. No doubt, too, early Christian enthusiasm was unequivocal in its expressions, especially in **its belief of a final conflagration of the world, and its serene faith amid the despair of others.**)

They died by methods of mockery; some were covered with the skins of wild beasts and then torn by dogs, [or lions or tigers] some were **crucified**, some were **burned as torches to give light at night**. **Nero offered his own gardens** for that spectacle, indiscriminately mingling with the common people in the costume of a charioteer, or else standing in his chariot; whence a feeling of compassion arose toward the sufferers, because (after scenes of extreme cruelty) **men felt that their destruction was not on account of the public welfare but to gratify the cruelty of Nero**” (Tacitus: a non-Christian). Another Roman historian, Suetonius (Nero, xvi.), says of him: “He likewise inflicted punishments on the Christians, a sort of people who hold a new and impious superstition”.

But **why were the Christians selected as scapegoats?** Why not the Jews, who were both numerous and had already offended the Roman government and had been banished in great numbers? Or why not the many followers of the oriental religions, which had proved more than once obnoxious? (1) **Poppea was favorable to Judaism** and had certainly enough influence over Nero to protect the Jews; she was regarded by them as a proselyte and is termed by Josephus “god-fearing.” When the populace and Nero were seeking victims for revenge, the **Jews may have been glad of the opportunity of putting forward the Christians** and may have been encouraged in this by Poppea. Farrar (*Early Days of Christianity*, I, chapter iv) sees “in the proselytism of Poppea, guided by Jewish malice, the only adequate explanation of the first Christian persecution.” (2) Closely connected with this was doubtless the **observation by the Roman government that Christianity was an independent faith from Judaism**. This may first have been brought home to the authorities by the trial of Paul before Nero. **Judaism was a recognized and tolerated religion, and Christianity when divorced from Judaism became an illegal religion, punishable by the state**, for Christianity first rose “under the shadow of licensed Judaism” (Tertullian).

- **Under the rule of Nero, Jesus prediction was fulfilled concerning the outbreak of the insurrection in Judea (66 AD), which led to the siege by the Roman general Titus, (Luke 21:5-36) and ended in the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD—one year after Nero’s death).**
- **In reading Jesus’ words in Luke 21, note the troublesome world events:**
 - World-wide famine 50’s – 60’s
 - Great earthquake in Phrygia 61 AD
 - Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in Pompeii, Italy 63AD
 - Fire of Rome 64 AD
 - War in Parthia and Palestine
 - During siege of Jerusalem 66 AD: 1,000,000 died and over 97,000 were enslaved.
 - After Nero’s death, there were 4 Roman emperors in 69 AD

Death of Nero:

Nero was a coward, both in life and in death. While he wrestled with the question of how to appease his military generals, and of whether the public would forgive his past if he showed penitence enough, a comforter asked him in the words of Virgil, “Is it then so wretched to die?” He **could not summon the courage for suicide, nor could he find one to inflict the blow for him:** “Have I then neither friend nor foe?” Phaon a freedman offered him the shelter of his villa a few miles from Rome. Here he prepared for suicide, but with great cowardice. He kept exclaiming, “What an artist I am to perish!”. **On learning that he was condemned to a cruel death by the senate, he put the weapon to his throat and was assisted in the fatal blow by Epaphroditus his secretary.** A centurion entered pretending he had come to help: “Too late—this is fidelity,” were Nero’s last words. His remains were laid in the family vault of the Domitii by his two nurses Ecloge and Alexandria and his concubine Acte. Thus perished on July 9, 68 AD, **the last of the line of Julius Caesar, in his 31st year and in the 14th of his reign.**

VIEW OF NERO AS ANTI-CHRIST

Whether from the strange circumstances of his death, or the subsequent terrible confusion in the Roman world, or from whatever cause, there soon arose a **belief that Nero had not really died, but was living somewhere in retirement, and that he was destined in a short time to return and bring great calamity upon his enemies** or the world. In the confusion of the year of the four emperors, Greece and Asia were disturbed by the report of the advent of Nero. This belief was **taken up by the Jews and amalgamated with their legend of Antichrist.** In Ascension of Isaiah 4 (1st century AD), the Antichrist is clearly identified with Nero: “Belial shall appear in the shape of a man, the king of wickedness, the matricide.” It occurs again and again in **both the Jewish and Christian** sections of the Sib Or (3:66 ff; 4:117 f, 135 ff; 5:100 f, 136 f, 216 f). How far Nero was regarded by the Christians as the historical personage of Antichrist is a disputed point. That the common belief of the revival or advent of Nero should **influence contemporary Christian thought in days of social and political turmoil is highly probable.** Bousset (*Commentary*) regards the beast of Rev 13 as Rome, and the smitten head whose “deathstroke was healed” as Nero, and some scholars take Rev 17:10 as referring to Nero. The “scarlet-colored beast” of 17:3 may be intended either for the Roman government in general or for Nero in particular. That the number **666 (Rev 13:18) represents in Hebrew letters the**

numerical equivalent of *Neron Kesar* is significant, for the Jewish Christians would be familiar with the numerical equivalent of names. There was an alternate theory that Nero had really been killed, but that he would rise again (Sib Or 5:216 f; Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xx.19)

Nero and the New Testament:

The name Nero does not occur in the New Testament, but he was the **Caesar to whom Paul appealed** (Acts 25:11) and at whose tribunal Paul **was tried** after his first imprisonment. It is quite likely that **Nero heard Paul's case in person**, for the emperor showed much interest in provincial cases. It was **during the earlier "golden fifth year" of Nero's reign that Paul addressed his epistle to the Christians at Rome**, and probably in the **last year of Nero's reign (68 AD) Paul suffered death** near the city, though Harnack (*Chronologie*) places his death in the first Neronian persecution of 64.

Although the New Testament gives no hint of a possible visit or sojourn of **Peter in Rome**, **such a sojourn and subsequent martyrdom** are highly probable and **almost certain** from the early persistent tradition, especially in Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Papias, and later in Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria and the *Liber Pontificalis* (catalogue of popes). His **execution at Rome under Nero** is practically certain.

- "NERO" Occurs only in the superscription (which is probably spurious, and is altogether omitted in the R.V.) to the Second Epistle to Timothy.
- Nero is **repeatedly alluded to in Scripture** (Acts 25:11; Phil. 1:12, 13; 4:22).
-

Acts 25: 10-11 (BKJV) So Paul said, "**I stand at Caesar's judgment seat**, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. ¹¹For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. **I appeal to Caesar.**"

The Holy Bible, New King James Version

Philippians 1:12-14 (NKJV) ¹²But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³so that it has **become evident to the whole palace guard**, and to **all the rest**, that my chains are in Christ; ¹⁴and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

The Holy Bible, New King James Version

Philippians 4:22 (NKJV) ²²All the saints greet you, but especially **those who are of Caesar's household**.

H. PETER'S KEY WORDS

GOD 38), DEVIL 1), CHRIST / JESUS 20), BLOOD OF CHRIST 2), HOLY SPIRIT 4-5), PRAISE 4), GLORY 12), GLORIFIED 4), HONOR 4) WILL OF GOD 4), WORD , WORD OF GOD 7), SCRIPTURE 1), GOSPEL 4), GRACE 8), MERCY 3), PRECIOUS 5), CALLED 5), ELECTED 3), CHOSEN 2), FOR-ORDAINED 1), STRANGERS 2), PILGRIMS 1), PECULIAR PEOPLE 1), CORRUPTIBLE 3), INCORRUPTIBLE 2), FADE NOT AWAY 2), HOPE 4), SALVATION 3), SAVE 3), RESURRECTION 2), INHERITANCE 1), INHERIT 1), HEIRS 1), ETERNAL 1), FOR EVER 5),

LIFE 3), LIVING 1), LIVELY 2), QUICK 1), QUICKENED 1), DEATH, DEAD 6), SACRIFICE/SUFFER 13), TRIAL 2), AFFLICTION, FEAR 4), AFRAID 2), FLESH 7), SPIRIT 2), HEART 2), LOVE 6), CHARITY 3), MEEKNESS 2), HUMBLE 2), HUMILITY 1), MIND 4), SOBER 3), CONSCIENCE 3), HOLY 7), SANCTIFY 1), CHASTE 1), OBEDIENT 1) OBEY 2) / DISOBEDIENT 3), SUBMIT 2), SUBJECT 3), COMMIT 2), SERVANT , WELL DOING 3) / WRONG - EVIL DOING 1), RIGHTEOUSNESS 3) / SIN 2), JUST 1) / UNJUST 1), GOOD 9) / EVIL 10), JUDGE 2)

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4. **perfect example** (2:21)
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6. **sin-bearer** (2:24)
7. **shepherd of souls** (2:25)
8. **exalted Lord** (3:22)

II. CHAPTER ONE (1 Pet. 1:1-2)

A. Greeting to the Chosen Strangers: (1:1-2)

I Peter 1:1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1. **"Apostle"** = apostolos, made up of apo, "off", and stello, "to send", it is a technical word used of one sent from someone else with credentials on a mission. Peter was one sent by Jesus Christ, with credentials = miracles, on the mission of proclaiming the good news of salvation.

2. **"Strangers"** = pareidemois, used here to refer to Christians who have settled alongside the unsaved. Peter does not want us to forget that we live in the world, but are not of it. While those who are of the world are right next door, and are constantly observing our behavior.

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Phil 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. {17} And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

3. **"Scattered"** = (diasporas) used also in John 7:35 and James 1:1 referring to Jews who were living outside of Palestine. Here it is used in the same way as Paul writes to Christian Jews living throughout Asia Minor.

Note: diaspora is from diaspeiro which is made up of dia = through, and speiro = to sow or to scatter seed. These believers were scattered by their own choice,

originally for business reasons, and recently because of the heavy persecutions. They didn't realize that God had providentially placed them as seed sown among the unsaved, living in Satan's territory (the god of the world system), in order to win the lost.

(Suggestion: use map to show the areas referred to in verse one. This is our present day Turkey.)

- Pontus, Cappadocia, and Asia provinces were represented when Peter preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:7-12)
- Galatia and Bithynia was visited by Paul (Acts 16:6-7)

1:2 Elect [chosen] according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience [to] and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ [“salvation”]: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

4. "Elect" = eklektois, meaning to "**pick out**" or "select out of a number".

5. "**According to**" = a translation of "kata" whose root meaning is "down", which is meant to give the idea of domination.

In other words this "election" or **choice among many was dominated by the foreknowledge of God** the Father. This is the first step in bringing a sinner to salvation. God the Father chooses him out as determined by His foreknowledge.

This idea repeats the Old Testament teaching that God's people are a "special, chosen people":

Deu 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

6. The process of election:

a. “according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father;

Foreknowledge is a translation of "prognosim" which here refers to the **counsel of God the Father**, in which after deliberative judgment, certain individuals from among mankind are designated to a certain position. Thus we are “elected” (chosen) to the position of salvation through the foreknowledge of God. (like “God’s chess game”; like “Michelangelo choosing certain sketches’ to paint on the ceiling)

b. "through sanctification of the Spirit" Sanctification (hagiasmos)

comes from the same root as our **"holy"** (hagios), and means **"to set apart"**. This act of sanctification is done "through", which literally means "in." This indicates that it is during the process of the Holy Spirit "setting apart", that the sinner is chosen.

God the Father chooses the sinner out from among mankind to be the recipient of the setting-apart work of the Spirit, in which the **Holy Spirit sets the sinner apart from his unbelief**, to the act of faith in the Lord Jesus.

c. "unto obedience" this is not speaking of the obedience of a saint, but rather the **obedience of a sinner to Faith in Christ** Jesus. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring the one chosen to the act of faith in Christ as Savior.

d. "and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" in this act the precious blood of Christ is **applied to the life of the sinner** who has acted in faith. Thus he is cleansed!

In the O.T. there were four occasions in which there was the "sprinkling of blood":

(I) Cleansing - when a leper was healed, they were sprinkled with the blood of a bird (Lev. 14:1-7).

(II) Purification from sin – with every burnt offering, the priests were to sprinkle some of the blood of the animal sacrifice against the altar. (Lev.1: 1-17)

(III) Setting apart for service to God - Aaron and the priests who were to serve in the tabernacle were sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificial lamb (Exod. 29:20-22, Lev. 8:30).

(IV) Obedience to God's covenant - when the people of Israel responded to God's invitation to enter into covenant with Him, Moses sprinkled half the blood of an oxen on the people and the other half on the altar (Exod. 24:1-8). The **key word in the covenant was their promise to "obey"**.

7. So we see the act of election is multi-faceted, and involves the complete trinity of God.

II Thessalonians 2:13-14 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation **through** sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Keep in mind: as far as **God the Father is concerned, you were saved when He chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world.** As far as **the Son is concerned, you were saved when He died for you on**

the cross. But as far as **the Holy Spirit is concerned, you were saved the day you acted in obedience to faith.** It was then that it all came together, but **it required the work of all three members of the Godhead to make it a reality.**

Does this mean then that we have no need to witness or share the gospel, if salvation is a work of God? Definitely not, remember the **same God who ordains the end - our salvation -also ordains the means to the end--the preaching of the gospel.**

8. "**Grace**" here refers to the enabling grace given for daily Christian living to the saint who is yielded to the Holy Spirit.

B. Living Hope—Inheritance of Salvation: (1:3-5)

I Peter 1:3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1. "**according to his abundant mercy**" - according, again, is from kata indicating "domination" with the idea being that God was compelled by His merciful heart to make atonement for sinners.
2. "**mercy**" is a key word which is tied to the phrase "hath begotten us" referring to receiving the "new birth". In that our new birth experience is a result of His mercy. Mercy is God not giving us the punishment we deserve.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

I Peter 2:10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

Paul in his letter to Titus makes it known that we were **not saved by our works but by the mercy of God.** Peter reminds all of us that without God, as sinners, we were without mercy--which we now have.

3. "**a living hope**" - in some translations it is a "lively hope" which carries the thought that our hope is not only living but **actively alive and working in the life of the believer.**

Hope for the Christian is more than wishful thinking. Our hope is a living hope, and therefore **has life in it and can give that life force to us.** Our hope is **based on a person** not a wish. That person just happens to be **THE LIVING**

GOD who just happens to have demonstrated his power by raising from the dead. **Our hope flows from the life that God is and lives.** Therefore, it **grows stronger over time** unlike most people's hopes which generally fade over time. As a child of God we should keep a positive outlook, knowing we are the object of God's love and care.

Proverbs 4:18 But the path of the just [is] as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you declares the LORD, plans to prosper you, and not to harm you...NIV

SONG: 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. **CHORUS:** On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand. All other ground is sinking sand.

I Peter 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

4. "an inheritance" - this inheritance has already been put on deposit and has four characteristics:

- a. incorruptible** - in that it will never perish
- b. undefiled** - not polluted, will never spoil or decay
- c. unfading** - not able to wither away as a flower
- d. reserved** – (tereo, meaning to “guard” or to “keep”) God's promise is that He will guard, keep, and reserve our inheritance for us under constant surveillance.

I Peter 1:5 [you] Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

5. "Kept" - is from “phrouomenous” implying action that is constantly going on. It is a **military term meaning to guard or protect; to shield.** Just as our inheritance is being guarded, so are we being garrisoned about by God's protecting care.

6. Our faith lays hold of God's power, which in turn strengthens our faith, and thus **as we walk in faith we are preserved.** God does not give us a spirit of fear or weakness:

II Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

C. Joy in Trials: (1:6-9)

I Peter 1:6 Wherein (salvation) ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [trials]:

1. **"Wherein" (or "In this")** - refers to verse 4: **the receiving of our heavenly reward** in the last time when the Lord comes for us. In this we will rejoice as we get our glorified bodies and know our trials are over.

2. **"now for a season"** – “season” is from “oligon” meaning "little, small, or few". The idea here is that **this life is but a vapor in relation to eternity**. Though our trials and suffering at times seem lengthy to us, they are minor in the true scheme of things. As the phrase says "it came to pass" used 457 times in scripture, it did not “come to stay”, “it came to pass”.

The length of that season is sometimes up to the believer: whether or not he submits to the purpose of God in the trial, or if he rebels and resists the work of God--therefore prolonging the process. ("unto full stature" diagram)

3. **"if need be"** - It is not God's desire that there always be dark days or constant trials; yet it seems **some people experience more trials than others**, which may be **due to**:

a. **a consequence of our own foolish actions**

b. our resistance to the lesson God is trying to teach us

c. **God's need to discipline us for sin in our life**

d. **general problems of living** as Christians among non-Christians where the philosophical attitudes and values greatly differ

e.) **persecution** for taking a public stand for Christ

f. **"the trial of our faith"** (verse 7) is sent our way to prove the genuineness of the faith that lies within us, with the intent of showing us approved. If faith is not real, trials may destroy us.

g. **the greater purpose or glory God has in mind** - as we must be “ground between the millstones of suffering before we can become bread for the multitude”

Sometimes God takes us through great suffering because of the character it will build in us, that will lead to greater ministry afterward. We must keep our focus off our suffering, and on the ultimate revelation of the Glory of Jesus Christ.

h. **the deepening of our personal joy and relationship with Jesus as Lord**: most of us surrender the throne of our hearts only when pressed to do so. When we do, the Holy Spirit can produce His “fruit” in us, (Gal.5:22-23), and we then realize the JOY of the lord.

4. **"ye are in heaviness"** - trials more often than not bring heaviness or **grief**. Peter was a man who knew what it meant to face temptation, and the pain of failing, as when he denied his Lord. Grieving is **a process of healing the inner being**, and **should not be viewed as a sign of weakness** in a believer. Remember, **Christ identified with the feeling of our infirmities**, and was tempted in every way which we are (Heb. 4:14-16). At the death of his dear friend Lazarus we know Jesus wept (John 11:35).

5. **"through manifold trials"** – “manifold” (“poikilos”) means "many colored, variegated (variety)", emphasizing the **diversity** of form, rather than the number of trials. It is comforting to know that not only are trials multi-faceted, but so is God's grace, as the same word "poikilos" is used in 4:10 describing God's **"manifold grace"**. God is able to match the supply of grace to the need of the trial.

Depending on the translation you select, the word used here is either "trial" or "temptation", as both come from the Greek word "peirasmos" which refers both to **trials and testing**. Here it speaks about trials that are **undeserved, unexplainable**, that come from outside, rather than “temptations” to do evil, which come from within ourselves.

I Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

6. **This verse offers the ultimate reason or purpose behind these trials**, namely, that it might result in "praise, honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The purpose of trials then is **to ultimately bring glory to God**.

- a. **"trial"** here is from “dokimion” (noun) and “dokimazo” (verb), referring to the act of **putting someone or something to the test**, in order to determine whether it is worthy of being approved or not.
- b. **The idea here is that of the ancient eastern goldsmith** who would keep the metal in the furnace until he could see his face clearly reflected in the metal. It was then that he knew all the impurities were removed and what was left was of greatest value. So it is with God and his children as he skillfully places us in the crucible of suffering, increasing the heat until the impurities of sin and self are put out of our lives, leaving the reflection of Jesus Christ in the character of the Christian. **Christ-likeness** is the final goal of every believer, and suffering is "one" of the most effective means to that end.

I Peter 1:8-9 [Jesus Christ] Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see [him] not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 1:9 Receiving the end of your faith, [even] the salvation of [your] souls.

7. We must remember that the **individuals to whom Peter writes had never seen Christ in the flesh**, as they were converts of the apostles. The Greek says, "Of whom not having had a glimpse."

- a. Though they had not seen Christ in the flesh, **yet they believed and rejoiced with a joy that is produced by the Holy Spirit**. This joy defies circumstance as the believer focuses on the person of Jesus Christ as savior and Lord, having the fruit of the Spirit grown up within, namely: **"joy unspeakable."**
- b. Peter speaks about the **love of the believer for the Savior**. How does someone love another unless they know that person? This knowledge **must come from the understanding the Holy Spirit produces through the Word of God**, which enables us to love Him.

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

8. Verse 9 shows us that we experience today some of the future glory provided by the salvation of our souls through faith. Charles Spurgeon used to say, "Little faith will take your soul to heaven, but great faith will bring heaven to your soul."

It is not enough that we long for heaven during times of suffering. Anybody would do that. What Peter encourages here is that we **exercise love, faith, and rejoicing, so that we can experience some of the glory of heaven in the midst of suffering now**.

D. Salvation—Prize of the Ages: (1:10-12)

I Peter 1:10-12 Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [that should come] unto you: 1:11 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. 1:12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

1. The O.T. prophets longed to understand the “salvation” by grace which they prophesied about. They saw the sufferings of the Messiah, (Isa.53:3-5) and also the glory that would follow (Ps.16:9-11); but they could not fully understand the connection and what took place in-between.

They sought to know what time or circumstances would bring in this salvation of which Peter speaks. They diligently searched for this understanding that now has been revealed to us by those who preach the gospel.

2. Even the angels who are daily in the presence of God desire to better understand how those who were so lost could now be enjoying the manifold grace of God. “Look into” means to stoop down with head bent forward, and to look into carefully.

E. Therefore, be Holy: (1:13-16)

I Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1. Peter turns his attention again to "hope" by reminding us of our responsibility to "be holy", because hope and holiness go together.

I John 3:3 "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure."

If our minds are not focused on God' holiness, how can we focus on the hope of His Salvation? **In times of trial and trouble, holiness is as important as ever.**

2. "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind", refers to the Eastern custom of men to wear long flowing robes. If they had to run or do physical work they would lift the robe, and secure it with a belt or girdle around their waist thus freeing them to move about feely. Likewise, we are to put out of the way any thinking or attitude that would impede the free interaction of our mind with the working of the Holy Spirit. Such feelings as worry, fear, jealousy, hatred, un-forgiveness, or impure, un-Christ-like thinking hinder the Holy Spirit's work.

a. "gird up" is in the tense which refers to a past, once-for-all act. Thus to paraphrase, "Wherefore, having **put out of the way, once for all, everything that would impede the free action of your mind...**" It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to **exert our will** in putting such hindrances out of our mind to allow Him freedom to work in us.

b. Outlook determines outcome; attitude determines action. Scientists believe that much of one's behavior is determined by his "habitual" thinking patterns. The scripture puts it this way:

Proverbs 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

c. When our motivation is fixed on our heavenly reward, instead of on earthly gain, our actions will reveal it. This is evident in the contrast between Abraham and Lot (Gen. 12-13; Heb. 11:8-16). Abraham had his eyes of faith fixed on a heavenly city, so he had no interest in the world's real estate. But Lot, who had tasted the pleasures of the world, gradually moved toward Sodom. The result was blessing to Abraham's house, and judgment to Lot's. Outlook determined outcome! Abraham's outlook was more of an "uplook".

d. Looking to the return of Christ strengthens our faith and hope during difficult times, which in turn imparts more of the grace of God for holiness.

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

3. "be sober" carries the meaning "to be calm and collected in spirit, controlled, to weigh matters, to act circumspectly." The idea being that such a person is able to see things without the distortion caused by fear, worry or unChrist-like attitudes spoken of above. Worry, fear, and unholiness can distort our knowledge of the truth.

I Peter 1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

4. In verses 14 & 15 we are admonished, as God's children, to be holy as God is holy, demonstrated by our living sanctified lives, showing the holy nature of

God that dwells within us by the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is possible because we have been made partakers of the divine nature:

II Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

a. Before Christ, we were the children of disobedience:

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **2:3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

b. Now, as children of God, we inherit His nature and should no longer be "fashioning ourselves according to our former lusts".

(I) "fashioning" refers to the act of taking on an outward appearance, patterned after something which does not come from, and is not representative of, one's innermost and true nature. This case involves **taking on an outward expression or behavior that reflects the world out of which he has been saved**, thus not giving a true expression of being a cleansed, regenerated child of God.

(II) The cause of this, according to verse 14, is "ignorance". Ignorance leads to worldly behavior, which is evident in the life of the unsaved, who through ignorance of spiritual understanding, give themselves to all kinds of fleshly and worldly lusts. An unsaved person's nature is to sin, as we were born with a sin nature. However, as children of God, we have partaken of the divine nature, which should now be evident in our living.

Mark 8:34 And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. {17} And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

I Peter 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

5. "called" - Peter remembers being called of God to become a fisher of men, and the total change that came into his life as a result. Here in this letter he uses the word "called" at least five times: (the meaning seems to carry the idea of being **designated for a specific purpose**)

- a) **1:15 called to be holy**
- b) **2:9 called out of darkness into His glorious light**
- c) **2:21 called to suffer and follow Christ's example of meekness**
- d) **3:9 called to inherit a blessing**
- e) **5:10 called to His eternal glory**

6. "be" - is from "ginomai" which is not a verb of being, but of "**becoming**"; signifying **entrance into a new state**. Those who were at one time wholly controlled by their evil cravings had, through salvation, entered into a new state of being. This new state of inward holiness, due to the presence of the Holy Spirit, should be finding expression outwardly in our daily lives.

7. "holy" - the Hebrew word "gadosh" translated "holy" in **Leviticus 19:2** (Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God [am] holy) denotes "apartness", or "sacredness". Here Peter uses the Greek word, "hagios", which also means **to be without sin, or separated from uncleanness**.

Thus the **idea of holiness is one of separation or the responsibility to live lives that are truly separated from the world**. As saints we like to focus on our privileges, but too often neglect our responsibilities.

Holiness is clearly a responsibility:

II Corinthians 6:14-7:1 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 6:17 Wherefore come out

from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

8. **"conversation"** - means "manner of life, or behavior" Our responsibility of holiness extends to all manner of life and behavior.

I Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

9. **"it is written"** speaks of a past completed action having present results. Wuest translates it, "It has been written and as a present result is on record."

- a. **The word reveals God's mind, so we should learn it;** God's heart, so we should love it; God's will, so we should live it. In other words **our whole being should be controlled by the Word of God.** But remember, we study to know the Word of God, but this should help us better know the God of the Word.

Psalms 103:7 "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel."

- b. It is one thing to see God's power in His acts, but it is quite another thing to **know His ways.** There is no shortcut to intimacy with God; if we want to know God, we must spend time with Him.

F. Live Like Strangers on Earth: (1:17-21)

I Peter 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear:

1. **"if"** you call on God as "Father", you are regarded as His children, and thus the objects of His special love and care. Knowing this brings perhaps a different understanding of this verse: that God looks to **reward**, not condemn, His own.
2. **"without respect of persons"** - in the Greek means literally, "does not receive face." That is, He is impartial; outward appearance, wealth, upbringing, position, education, all things which normally matter to the opinion of man, do not count with God when evaluating a person's character or worthiness.

I Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the

height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

3. "judges" - Three times in this letter, Peter reminds us of God's role as judge:

* 1:17 God judges without partiality

* 2:23 in His crucifixion, Jesus committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.

* **4:5 warning those who would live according to the flesh.**

a. Our heavenly Father is a holy and righteous Father who will not compromise with sin. He is merciful and forgiving, but cannot permit His children to enjoy sin. It was because of sin that Christ went to the cross. Here Peter speaks of **the judgment of a believer's works**, which are an evidence of salvation ("faith without works is dead" **James 2:20, 26.**) Also:

Titus 1:16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny [him], being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Romans 14:10-12 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 14:11 For it is written, [As] I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

II Corinthians 5:9-10 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 5:10 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.

b. At this judgment, each of us will give account of his works, and receive an appropriate reward. There are two Greek words which mean "**to put to the test:**"

"peirazo" means "to put to the test to discover what evil or good there may be in a person;"

"dolimazo" means "**to put to the test in order to sanction or approve the good one finds in a person.**" (for more see Wuest vol. 3 Treasures....pg 126 "Two Kinds of Testing").

Peter is referring to the latter meaning, in that God will search into our motives and examine our hearts with the purpose to glorify Himself in our lives and ministries, and to issue to us an appropriate reward.

4. **"pass the time of your sojourning here in fear"** - means to "order one's conduct or behavior" (pass), with the constant remembrance of our God being reflected in our every action during the period of our residency on earth as strangers (while we have temporary homes alongside those who are not of our kind: unbelievers).

"Fear" here means a "loving reverence" of a child for his Father, reflected in a manner of conduct that in every way wants to please the Father. (Fear of this nature, for example, would be most careful of the manner in which the Heavenly Father was even referred to. Many people have a careless attitude about how they speak of God. We should remember that the O.T. Jew so feared & revered God, that they would not even attempt to pronounce His holy name.)

I Peter 1:18-21 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, [as] silver and gold, from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

5. **To redeem** means to **"set free by paying a price"**. Redemption had a special meaning to those who lived in the first-century Roman Empire. There were estimated to be 50 million slaves who could only find freedom by saving the money (which was most unlikely) necessary to purchase their own freedom from their master, or by being sold to someone who would set them free. However, the eternal slavery we all were sold into by Satan could not be redeemed with the corruptible silver and gold coins of the day. **Rather we were redeemed with that which is so precious that all the gold and silver in the world could not purchase it: the blood of Christ.**
6. **We were redeemed from our former "conversation"** meaning the manner of life (our behavior) which was passed down to us by our fathers, who were also born in bondage to sin.
7. **Peter also reminds us of the doctrine of substitution** (whereby an innocent victim gave his life for the guilty) when he referred to Christ as the "Lamb." This doctrine had its beginning in Gen. 3, when God killed animals to clothe Adam & Eve. Later a ram was offered for Isaac in Gen. 22:13; the passover lamb was instituted for each Jewish household in Exodus 12; in Isaiah 53 we see the Messiah as the innocent Lamb; and then John the Baptist pointing to Jesus when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (**John 1:29**). When we receive Christ we accept Him as the substitutionary payment for our sin

nature.

8) For this purpose Christ was "foreordained before the foundation of the world." This means He was designated beforehand to this purpose. Even before the world (kosmos) was put in order. (Kosmos refers to the earthly social system which was corrupted by Lucifer, bringing about the chaos (a rude unformed mass) we see in Gen. 1:2.) He was foreordained before the foundation of the world for this purpose of our redemption, demonstrating His love for us. In the course of time he was revealed to mankind, so that through His death and resurrection we could have faith and a living hope in God our Father.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

G. Love (agape) with a Pure Heart: (1:22-25)

I Peter 1:22-25 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: 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1:24 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: 1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever". And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

1. The first use of "love" in verse 22 is found in the words, "unfeigned love." Unfeigned means "without hypocrisy, to be genuine, sincere, no pretense, but rather totally authentic." The word translated "love" is "phile" meaning a love called out of one's heart by the pleasure one takes in the person loved. The word we commonly use to express special friendship.

The context in which it is used here indicated the presence of **two problem attitudes** some had toward their fellow Christian brothers.

- a.** The first problem was that some of the believers were guilty of putting on the **pretense of love** when actually they preferred the company of their former associates in the world.
- b.** The second problem, was brought about by the various different grades or classes of society which were represented in the early Church. As slaves and freemen, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, were being saved and added to the Church, often the

privileged were slow to take in the under-privileged in a Christian brotherly way. Thus Peter speaks to their present condition which seems to be free of these attitudes. He said they "have purified" which here has the meaning of a "past completed process." Their **habitual obedience to the Word, had resulted in the purifying of their souls. Therefore, now they were loving without pretense, with true brotherly love.**

2. **The second use of the word "love"** in verse 22 is found in the phrase, "love one another fervently with a pure heart". Now that they are loving one another, God exhorts them **to love ("agape")** with a pure heart, fervently. "Agape" means to love a Christian brother\sister because he\she is precious to God, and to love them with a love that is **willing to sacrifice one's self for the benefit of the brother\sister in Christ.**
3. Additionally, this agape love is to be done **"with a pure heart": by the presence, and work of the Holy Spirit in the yielded and willing believer.** **Proverbs 20:9** says "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" This condition of purity must be accomplished by the Holy Spirit as we walk in obedience to the Word and His leading.
4. We are to **love "fervently"** (ektenos) which is an athletic term meaning to "strive **with all one's energy**". Loving is something we have to work at, just as the athlete must work on his skills. For the Christian, **love is not a matter of feeling, but of willing.** If we are filled with the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, how can we help but manifest the love of God?
5. **In closing the passage,** Peter again reminds us that the **quality of loving,** as described in verse 22, **flows from the experience of being "born again."** This did not come about cheaply, but through the living and abiding Word of God, namely, our Lord Jesus Christ.

To illustrate the permanence of God's Word, Peter **quotes Isaiah 40:6-8.**

III. CHAPTER TWO

A. Spiritual "New Birth" is Nurtured by the "Milk of the Word":
(2:1-3)

I Peter 2:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

1. **"Wherefore"** looks back to the previous verses (about salvation) and the fact of the new life being imparted to the believer, and argues therefore, that **a new manner of behavior is demanded of the believer.**
2. **"laying aside"** comes from "apotithemi" which means in an urgent way "to get rid of or put away once and for always" any sins that are present in one's life. This is stated also in:

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

How often we play with sin, seeing how close we can get without being burned. This robs us of God's blessings as sin is never without consequence.

Galatians 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

3. Five sins which believer's were guilty of (based on deceit and untruth):

- a. **Malice** - (kakia) any kind of wickedness or depravity, most often thought of in one's actions toward another
- b. **All guile** - (dolos) to catch with bait, using deceit, or craftiness to get what we want (manipulation)
- c. **Hypocrisy** - (hupokrisis) acts of impersonation or deception, hiding one's true identity
- d. **Envy** - (phthonos) jealousy or ill will which often leads to
- e. **Evil speaking** - (katalalia) a defamation of character or slander of every kind, speaking against another

Because of the salvation we received (Chapter one), this deceitful manner of behavior was to be put out of one's life once and for always. This act of separation from sin was to be a complete about face (turning around). The Christian life is to be genuine and transparent, open to inspection, easily read, not hiding true identity. Remember, we have been made partakers of the divine nature; no longer are we citizens of this world, our citizenship is in heaven, and our earthly behavior should reflect that. When a person makes the decision to follow Christ, all other decisions in his life are made at that very moment. From then on **our choice is to follow Christ. What ever does not lead us on in that objective is not what we decided.**

I Peter 2:2-3 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord [is] gracious.

4. "Newborn babes" is from (brephos) speaking of just-born infants who should have a "desire" (epipotheo) which means an intense yearning or craving, for the "pure" or "sincere" (undeceitful) milk (that which has nothing added to it).

1 Cor 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

5. "That you may grow..." we must take spiritual nourishment, because we must grow spiritually.

Eph 4:13-16 Till 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: {14} That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; {15} But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: {16} From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

6. The prerequisite to the act of intensely yearning for the Word of God is the act of once and for all **putting sin out of our lives**. Sin in our life destroys the appetite for the Word. A spiritually healthy Christian is a hungry Christian. Why is it then that so many children of God have so little hunger for the Word?

7. "If" in verse 3 is a fulfilled condition. Thus they had tasted the Word of God and found it literally to be "excellent".

B. Growing up into "Living Stones": (2:4-8)

I Peter 2:4 [Jesus] To whom [you are] coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious,

In O.T. days, King David and King Solomon prepared for the building of God's Temple of stone. In N.T. days Jesus builds His own "Temple" from living stones: his own people. **Jesus himself is the Cornerstone of this living temple.**

1. "To whom coming" refers not to the initial act of salvation, but rather the act of one who habitually seeks communion and fellowship with his Lord.

2. "living" is (zao) the same word used by Jesus in:

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Christ is the Living Stone, the chief Cornerstone, of which we are lively fragments.

Peter himself had been called "Cephas" (a stone) in Jn.1:42;

3. **The word "chosen"** is not a verb in the Greek text but a noun, literally "a chosen-out one" or "elect". Christ was chosen by God though rejected by man. **"Precious"** means "honored"; "prized".

I Peter 2:5-6 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

4. A **"cornerstone"** = a stone that lies at the corner of two walls and unites them; the actual starting point in the building.

Isa 28:16 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Eph 2:20-22 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; {21} In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: {22} In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

5. **In the O.T. period, God's people had a priesthood;** but you had to be born into the tribe of Levi to serve at the altar. Today God's people are a priesthood as each individual believer has the privilege of coming into the presence of God. Just as the priests in the O.T. had different ministries to perform, yet had to work together under the direction of the high priest, so we today as a "holy priesthood" need to work together at the direction of our great High Priest,

Jesus. Our position of service needs to be by God's appointment not our arrangement. Each ministry that we perform for His glory is a service to God.

We are priests in a spiritual house, which is being built by God. We should therefore **live as priests in a temple**. Realize that the O.T. priests had three distinctives:

- a. they had direct access to God**
- b. they represented the people of Israel to God**
- c. they brought offerings to God for the people**

The great fact is that we don't need anyone to represent us to God. We have access to Him through Christ.

6. Thus as priests we should continually offer up "spiritual sacrifices" acceptable unto God.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name.

As it is God's desire that we be "living sacrifices"

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

We can learn a valuable lesson from Israel. God wanted Israel to become a spiritual influence for godliness to the nations; instead they were influenced by the nations and came under God's judgment. Today Israel has no temple or priesthood. Priests were to be sanctified, separated out for service to God. **Separation is not isolation; but rather is contact without contamination.** We are not to avoid the lost, rather reach out to them, without becoming involved in their sinful activity.

Eph 4:11-13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; {12} For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: {13} Till 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:

I Peter 2:7-8 Unto you therefore which believe [he is] precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, [even to them] which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

7. The idea here is that Christ is precious to those who believe, but though He was rejected by the disobedient, He is still available as the "head of the corner" to those who would repent.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Psa 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

8. "a stone of stumbling" (lithos) meaning "a loose stone in the path", and (proskommatos) meaning "to cut against" which together mean "an obstacle against which one strikes."

Isa 8:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

9. "a rock of offense" is from "petra" meaning "a ledge rising out of the ground" and "skandalou" meaning "a trap set to trip one."

10. "disobedient" is literally "non-persuadable". Those who are not persuadable are appointed to stumble at the presentation of the Cornerstone, which is the penalty for refusal to believe it. In very simple terms, the unsaved will face the penalty for their disbelief in Christ.

C. Becoming God's "Peculiar People" (2:9-10)

I Peter 2:9-10 But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: 2:10 Which in time past [were] not a people, but [are] now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

1. We are a "chosen generation" - generation meaning "a race, a body with a common life". God did not choose Israel because they were a great people, but because He loved them:

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye [were] the fewest of all people: 7:8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondsmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

In the same manner we have been chosen because of His love for us:

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...

2. **"royal"** is a translation of the Greek word for "king". The Levitical priesthood were only priests, yet believers in this dispensation are king-priests, associated with the Lord Jesus who is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, a king-priest. Melchisedec was King of Salem, and priest of the Most High God.
3. **"peculiar"** or "special people" comes from a Greek word meaning literally "to make around," that is, to make something and then to surround it with a circle, thus indicating ownership. This is the unique, private and personal ownership of the saints by God; each saint being a unique possession, just as if that saint were the only human being in existence.

Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

2 Cor 6:16-17 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. {17} Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

Lev 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Jer 32:38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:

Ezek 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

4. **Again the privileges received also carry a responsibility to "shew forth"** meaning to "tell out, or to advertise" the praises of God, who has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

D. Becoming Witnesses by "peculiarly" good behavior: (2:11-17)

I Peter 2:11-12 Dearly beloved, I beseech [you] as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by [your] good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of

visitation.

1. Live good lives:

a. **Abstain from fleshly lusts:** they war against (corrupt) the soul

1 Th 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

"**abstain**" is literally, "hold yourself constantly back from".

As dearly loved-ones of God, even though you are residing among non-believers, you should continue to hold yourself back from the fleshly desires that are battling to bring down your spiritual being. God is not merely concerned about our profession but also our lifestyle.

b. **Have honest ("honorable") conduct among Gentiles:** to display God's glory in contrast to their pagan, self-pleasing conduct.

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

(I) "**honest**" speaks of goodness which is beautiful, an outer goodness that strikes the eye. Our conversation (manner of behavior) demonstrates the beauty of God to the unsaved world (Gentiles), who actively criticizes you (speak against), that they would view carefully your personal witness (behold), to the extent that they also would be able to glorify God in the day that He looks upon them as overseer (day of visitation). By our manner of behavior (witness), the lost may come to want Christ, and be found in Him on the day of visitation.

(II) "**Visitation**" is a translation of a Greek word that is also rendered "bishop, overseer" meaning to "observe, inspect, oversee, look upon".

I Peter 2:13-17 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 2:14 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. 2:15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 2:16 As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 2:17 Honour all [men]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

2. Live as servants of God:

a. **"Submit yourself to every ordinance of man"** (vs.13) Peter writes during the reign of Nero who severely persecuted Christians. Even so, God instructed believers to "submit" to their authority!

(I) **"Ordinance"** refers not to each individual law, but rather to the institutions which make and enforce the laws. Whenever possible, so long as not to violate the higher law of God, we should seek to obey civil authorities. (but) When the law of man is found in opposition to the law of God, then Peter's words before the Sanhedrin are our guide:

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

(II) **Put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:** (vs.15) even those who hate Christians cannot argue or complain against truly Christ-like behavior. It is a powerful witness, and may win some "ignorant" souls.

b. **Honor all people** (vs.17) "Honor" is "timao", the same word used by Christ when he expressed the need to honor our father and mother (Matt. 15:4). It means that we are **never to violate others or use them as objects.**

c. **Love the brotherhood** (vs.17) "Love" here is **"agape"**. We are to exercise our will to love the brotherhood as Peter has already admonished us in 1:22. And as Jesus said:

John 13:35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

d. **Fear God** (vs.17) To fear God (phobeomai) is **"to revere or reverence Him"--"to be in awe in His presence"**. It means "to be put in fear or fright," "to be afraid." It is the word which describes the fear of the disciples when the storm arose, and they were alone in the boat:

John 6:19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

It is like the fear felt by Israel when they were encamped before Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19 & 20. When the presence of God came on the mountain in thundering, lightning, smoke and fire the people backed away from the mountain. At this point they decided to have Moses

be their representative, though God wanted to enter into relationship with all the people.

Unfortunately, today in the Church believers often view Him too casually, or in human perspectives, instead of as the awesome Holy God that He is.

- e. **Honor the king** (vs.17) “Honor” here is same as before. It is quite natural for us to honor a good ruler, but Peter was speaking to Christians who were feeling the persecution of Nero; asking them to honor him as well. This is another mark of a Christian lifestyle: to love and honor even the tyrants of our society, those who would abuse and persecute us.

Matthew 5:43-44 **Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**

3. Live "as free" persons (vs. 16) The freedom that comes from Christ is not to be used as "a cloak for vice" -- excuse or covering for sin. The highest calling of life is to use our liberty as servants of Christ. Liberty misused is like a mighty river flooding its banks, and bringing terrible destruction upon everything in its path. But liberty in Christ should give us the will and power **to Love as Jesus Loved**. Paul said:

Gal 5:13-14 **For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. {14} For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

Galatians 5:1 **Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith ,Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**

E. Serving God in Suffering: (2:18-25)

I Peter 2:18-25 **Servants, [be] subject to [your] masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 2:19 For this [is] thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.**

- 1. **"servants"** - the particular Greek word here indicates that Peter specifically turns his attention to the **Christian slaves** who were for the most part serving in the homes of pagan masters. Some good and some not so.

2. "subject" - (hupotasso) or "submit", is instructed several times by Peter:

a. vs 13. **Christians are to be subject to every ordinance of man**

b. vs 18. **Christian servants are subject to their masters**

c. 3:1. **Christian wives are to be subject to their husbands**

d. 5:5. **Young Christians are to be subject to their elders**

e. 5:5. **All Christians are to be subject to one another**

3. "good" vs. 18 - refers to inner goodness; **good at heart**. Some masters were inclined to treat their servants with "**gentleness**" meaning "that instead of strictness of legal right, **consideration for one another was their rule of practice**". To these masters it was easy to submit, in fact, it would be tempting to take advantage of such employers. To this Paul spoke about serving, not to just "get by", but as unto the Lord Himself.

Ephesians 6:5-6 Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

4. "**froward**" - is from the Anglo-Saxon word "from-ward," meaning "averse", "harsh". Peter was speaking to those who had masters who were dead set against their Christian manner, as it brought conviction on them. Realizing that some are being beaten unjustly for their Christian manner, Peter reminds them in vs. 21-23 that **Christ also suffered unjustly, yet kept a submissive attitude**. This is "thankworthy" or "**commendable**" behavior, as it requires that our motivation is only to please God. We are "**called**" to follow His example; it is not an option, but expected of us by our Lord. Disobeying a harsh master is sin; obeying with bitterness or grudging is also sin. **Love is the only motive which is Godly.**

1 Cor 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

2:20 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.

2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 2:22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously:

2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 2:25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

5. **"buffeted"** - the act of striking with the fist. Some slaves were literally being severely beaten by their masters. So was Christ, according to Isaiah:

Isaiah 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

The literal Hebrew rendering of this is: "So marred from the form of man was His aspect that His appearance was not that of a son of man," namely, not human. Peter's intent here is that when these slaves are being severely beaten by their unjust masters that they **remember how the Lord Jesus was severely beaten for them, and to react toward their masters as Jesus did** to those who mistreated Him.

6. **"by whose stripes ye are healed"** – “stripes” refers to the picture of our Lord's lacerated back after the scourging He endured at the hands of the Roman soldiers. They used a scourge of cords to which were attached pieces of lead or brass, or small, sharp-pointed bones. The victim was stripped to the waist and bound in a stooping position, to a post or pillar, with his hands behind his back. His back was so torn that his veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and bowels exposed. His face had been so severely beaten by the crowd's fists that it did not look like a human face anymore, and on His bleeding, lacerated back was laid the wooden cross for Him to bare.

This was strictly a judicial matter. One goes to a hospital when one is ill, and to a court to take care of legal matters. Here mercy is offered to mankind based on the justice satisfied at the Cross. The issue of bodily illness is not mentioned here in this context. **The Greek word used here is not used elsewhere to allude to physical healing, and thus should not be so used here.** The context in which the word is used here clearly has to do with the purchase of our **salvation**, “spiritual healing”, not physical healing.

(RevC) Therefore, it would be out of context to pray for someone's physical healing by saying, “by His stripes we are healed.” There are many examples of Christ healing those who were sick throughout the gospels. He gave authority to heal the sick to the 12 disciples, and has passed on that authority to His church by the laying on of hands and praying the prayer of faith, as seen in James 5:13-16. It is therefore, not

right to use 2:24 out of context to support physical healing. Quoting 2:24 for physical healing would suggest that physical healing is guaranteed in the atonement. However, I do not see where healing is guaranteed in the same manner as my salvation, and certainly experience bears that out, as often we pray for people who either do not receive healing or are not healed by spiritual power. Healing seems to be a function of God's mercy and grace coupled with our faith, and God's greater purpose in our lives. Certainly God cooperates with man through the prayer of faith to release His healing power according to His word in James 5.

The one confusing point I have yet to reconcile is the passage in Matt. 8:17 which seems to apply to physical healing, and references Isaiah 53:5. Other commentaries I researched did not comment on the passage in Matthew leaving that connection yet unresolved in my thinking. For now I rest in knowing that God heals, and I can call for the elders, if need be, to agree with me in faith for healing according to James 5.

7. vs 25. **In the O.T. the sheep died for the shepherd; but at Calvary, the Shepherd died for the sheep.** Every sinner is like a sheep gone astray: ignorant, lost, wandering, in danger, away from a place of safety, unable to even help himself. Our Shepherd went out to find the lost sheep and died that they might live. Jesus speaking to the Pharisees and scribes said:

Luke 15:4-7 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 15:5 And when he hath found [it], he layeth [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing. 15:6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together [his] friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

IV. CHAPTER 3

A. Witnessing to the Non-believing Husband: (3:1-2)

I Peter 3:1-2) Likewise, ye wives, [be] in subjection to your own husbands; that, [even] if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 3:2 While they behold your chaste conversation[coupled] with fear.

Peter now turns his attention to another large group of individuals within the early Church: those Christian wives who were married to unsaved husbands. These women were seeking to win their husbands through the gospel, but were going about it the wrong way.

1. **"if"** should have been translated "even if".
2. **"obey not"** speaks of a state of unbelieving disobedience; it literally means **"not to allow one's self to be persuaded."** These husbands were the **stubborn, non-persuadable** type that would not listen to reason.
3. **"they also may without the word be won"** - Their wives had often given them the gospel, meeting with stiff-necked resistance. Peter now exhorts these wives to stop talking about it, and just live a Christ-like life before them. Now they were to be won by the **Christian example** of their wives before them, without another word being said.
4. **"behold"** refers to the act of **viewing attentively**. We need to be mindful that the unsaved are always carefully viewing the Christian's walk.
5. **"fear"** speaks of **reverence**, to treat with **deference** or reverential obedience. The wives were to realize that their husbands would be carefully examining their pure manner of behavior and reverent attitude.

B. The "Beautiful" Wife: (3:3-4)

I Peter 3:3-4 Whose adorning let it not be that outward [adorning] of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 3:4 But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, [even the ornament] of a meek [gentle] and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

1. **Not outward adorning** - Peter speaks against extravagance in the area of outward appearance. These women were trying to win their husbands by adorning themselves in the manner of the world, which only appealed to the husband's depraved nature and appetite to sin. The adornment of the Christian woman is to be in keeping with what she is as a Christian. Peter was not saying that she could not dress well or beautifully, as the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 had clothing of silk and purple. Whether it was their hair, jewelry, or clothing, the teaching is consistent: lavish displays were strictly forbidden; wives were not to be conformed to the world.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world....

2. **Peter now turns his attention to how a Christian wife is supposed to adorn herself.** If her desire is to be pleasing to God, then her "adornment" will draw attention to the beauty of her inner person which is not corruptible as are worldly adornments.
3. **In a fuller translation of Romans 12:2, Paul says,**

"Stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from, and is not representative of, your inner being: an expression patterned after the world; but change your outward expression by **giving outward expression of your inner being.**" This is the principle upon which every Christian should act in their adorning.

C. "Wives' Holy Adornment" Includes a Submissive Attitude: (3:5-6)

I Peter 3:5-6 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

1. **"holy women"** - "holy" is translated literally, **"set-apart ones"**, as these women lived holy lives because they lived separated lives: separated from the world that God had saved them out of. As a part of the separated life of a wife in times past, these women lived in submission to their husbands.
2. **To submit is not to be inferior.** Jesus, Himself was equal with God but emptied Himself in submission becoming a servant.

Matthew 20:26-28 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

3. **"obeyed"** speaks of an action going on over a long period of time. Sarah's whole life was one of obedience to her husband, calling him "lord" (kurios), which is translated in several ways, all of which denote a place honor and respect. (Even in submission, Sarah was a strong-minded woman, often speaking assertively to Abraham about her wishes.)

Peter admonishes Christian wives to follow Sarah's example.

4. **Nor were they to give way to fear** - one translator puts this, "As long as the believing wives are doing good, they need not be afraid with any sudden terror on account of what their unbelieving husbands may require from them."

When we understand the depth of God's love for us, then we will not walk in fear, but faith.

John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

D. The Attentive, Respectful Husband: (3:7)

I Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

1. "knowledge" (gnosis) also translated as "understanding" refers to the need for husbands to recognize the dynamics of the marriage relationship. This is **one of the most vital factors in a successful marriage**, that of **developing a close interpersonal ("intimate") relationship**. To truly "know" another requires time, honesty, openness and willingness, patience, thoughtfulness, and especially LOVE.
2. **Christian husbands were to deem the helpmeets which God has given them as someone to be "honored" or "precious", to be treated with honor**. This admonition was especially needed at the time this letter was written because of the low place in general which was accorded womanhood.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

3. Prayers "hindered" in the Greek means "to cut in, to interrupt." The effectiveness of our prayers is "cut in on" when we fail to treat our wives as chosen instruments of God that are special in His sight.

E. Summary of Qualities Necessary in All Relationships: Love; not Hatred; (3:8-9)

I Peter 3:8-9 Finally, [be ye] all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, [be] pitiful, [be] courteous: 3:9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

1. "Be ye all of one mind" - refers to being "like-minded", not to the extent of minute details, but unity on the major and important points of Christian doctrine and practice. "To live in harmony with one another," "unity," "in one accord". Unity is a primary measurement of spirituality and Christ-likeness.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Eph 4:13 Till 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:

2. **"having compassion"** - means "sympathy", "to have a fellow-feeling"; in other words to feel for others whether it be sorrow or joy.

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Sometimes it takes at least as much grace to rejoice with someone in the way God has blessed them, as it does to sympathize with someone in sadness.

3. **"love, as brothers"** – (philadelphos) means **"brotherly love"** (not **"agape"**) as in **"family love"** in the family of God .

Rom 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

4. **"pitiful"** - (eusplanchnos) is actually, "full of pity" and means to be **"tenderhearted"**. This attitude was much different than the cold hearted attitudes that prevailed in days of the Roman Empire.

Eph 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

5. **"courteous"** - (philophron) (from the same root word meaning "friend") means **"to be friendly of mind"**; **"humble-minded, having a modest opinion of one's self."** The realization that without Christ we are nothing; and at our best only vanity.

Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

6. **"blessing"** - is actually, **"be constantly blessing"**, not seeking revenge. The Christian is to always be looking for the opportunity to minister blessing, especially to our enemies, when the natural man would do just the opposite. The New English Bible translates it, **"Do not repay wrong with wrong, or abuse with abuse; on the contrary, retaliate with blessing."**

F. Qualities Necessary for those who “Will Love Life” and “See Good Days”:
(3:10-12) **“Will”** - speaks of action going on in the present time. "He who is loving life and wishes to continue to do so," should practice the following:

I Peter 3:10-12 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 3:11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord [are] over the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil.

1. **"refrain his tongue from evil"** - Man naturally tends toward evil. We must learn to control (“refrain”) our tongue, as it is our most unruly member.

James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion [is] vain.

James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

James 3:6 And the tongue [is] a fire, a world of iniquity:so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

James 3:8 But the tongue can no man tame; [it is] an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

2. **"his lips that they speak no guile"** - "guile" ("dolos") means a bait, snare, deceit, speaking mixed with evil intent. We must speak honestly and sincerely.
3. **"let him eschew evil"** - "eschew" refers to the act of bending aside from one's path at the approach of evil. In other words, taking whatever steps are necessary to avoid involvement with evil.
4. **"let him do good"** - Not only are we to avoid evil, but to give our attention to doing good. Most often, people tend to return evil for evil. Christians can show forth the character of Christ when we return good for evil.
5. **"let him speak peace"** - instead of allowing circumstance and situations to stir up anger and wrath, rather speak God's peace into an otherwise grievous situation.

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

6. "let him ensue peace" – "ensue" means to "eagerly seek after;" and "peace" describes a **harmonious relationship between men**. If we want to enjoy the Christian life, we should eagerly seek a harmonious relationship with all mankind.

Mat 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

(the eyes of the Lord are)"**over**" is literally "**upon**", indicating that for the righteous, the eyes of the Lord are directed in a favorable sense for their good. "**Unto**" is actually "**into**." God's ears are "into" our prayers. What a picture, God bending down into the prayers of His children, earnestly listening to our petitions, eager to answer them.

I Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of [them] whose heart [is] perfect toward him....

I John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

G. In Doing Good, We Gain Hope and Lose Fear: (3:13-16)

I Peter 3:13-16 And who [is] he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy [are ye]: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1. "**followers**" is the translation of a Greek word meaning "zealots" or "**to burn with zeal, to desire earnestly**." Peter takes the stand that, if we seek to do good, even in the face of those who would do wrong, we can break the cycle of evil and provoke others to do good.
2. "**but and if ye suffer**" constructed in the original Greek to reference a **a possible but not a probable happening**. Relatively few are called upon to actually suffer for Christ's sake, but it is something we **should be willing** to do, for Jesus warned us of the possibility.

John 15:17-21 These things I command you, that ye love one another. {18} If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. {19} If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. {20} Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also

persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. {21} But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

Phil 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

3. "happy" (vs.14) means "prosperous", indicating that those who are called upon to suffer for righteousness sake prosper spiritually.

2 Cor 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

4. "be not afraid" - Peter exhorts his readers **not to give in to the fear that evil doers would strive to instill** in our hearts; nor are we to be "troubled" which means to be "agitated." When we understand the **depth of God's love for us, we will not give way to fear.**

John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: **3:16** Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

5. Rather we are instructed, in vs. 15, to "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts"—speaking to our need to **give our Lord first place** in our hearts; being **obedient to His voice**, and not that of the evildoer. "Sanctify" is from the same root word as "holy".

1 Pet 1:15-16 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; {16} Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

1 Pet 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

6. **"be ready to give an answer" - or "defense" (apologia) "to give reasons or rationale for what you believe."** It means literally "to talk off from," as an attorney would talk his client off from a charge against them. Our answer will express our **HOPE in the redeeming power of God in our lives.**

Acts 22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

Acts 25:16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

7. Such a defense **must be presented with meekness and a sense of humility**, not wanting in any way to dishonor God. "Meekness" can be translated **"gentleness"**. "To be meek is to have the spirit of 'one beggar sharing a piece of bread with another'." **"Fear"** means **"respect"**

Mat 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

8. **have a good "conscience" - (suneidesis) we can have a good conscience before God when our "conversation" (manner of behavior) in ALL our relationships is also good.**

I John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, [then] have we confidence toward God.

God has called us to a life of transparency and authenticity, which we cannot have without a clear conscience. This we cannot have without "sanctifying Christ in our hearts": being led by the Spirit and not the flesh. It is one thing to be falsely accused by evil doers but quite another thing to be guilty of living a secret or double life, knowing we do not have a clear conscience before God, giving validity to the accusations of those outside Christ, and bringing the whole body under condemnation. "When one suffers, the whole body suffers" can be taken many ways.

H. Even In Doing Good, We May Suffer: (3:17-18)

I Peter 3:17-18 For [it is] better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

1. There is a **kind of suffering that is a logical consequence to sin.** It is a matter of "sowing and reaping".

Galatians 6:7-8 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

2. On the other hand when **suffering for doing good**, for righteousness' sake we can expect **blessing and reward** for so doing.

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2 Tim 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

1 Pet 4:19 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.

- a. **Joseph suffered at the hands of his jealous brothers** who sold him into slavery. But later he became prime minister of Egypt, and was used of God to rescue his father, brothers, and their families from starvation. Joseph said:

Genesis 50:20-21 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; [but] God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as [it is] this day, to save much people alive. 50:21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

- b. In suffering for doing good, we can **more closely identify with Christ** (just as He suffered for doing good).

1 Pet 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Rom 8:16-17 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: {17} And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

1 Pet 4:16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

- c. **"quicken"** - (zoopoiethis) meaning **"to make alive."** The word does not mean to energize (energeo) as a living person can be energized, but only a dead person can be made alive.

I. Examples: (3:19-22) of Noah's Suffering for Doing Good; his Contemporaries' Suffering for Doing Wrong; and the "Glory" Which Came from All Their Suffering (God's defeat of His enemies, our salvation and baptism):

I Peter 3:19-22 By which (the Holy Spirit) also he (Jesus) went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

1. 'Who' Did Christ Preach To? (From "The Bible Knowledge Commentary" New Testament pg. 851)

The phrase: "by which (the H.S.) also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" has been subject to many interpretations. As to which view is most accurate is difficult to say with certainty. Perhaps one day soon Peter himself can explain the meaning to us.

- a. Some believe Peter here referred to the **descent of Christ's Spirit into Hades, between His death and resurrection**, to offer people who lived before the Flood a second chance for salvation. This has **no scriptural support**.
- b. Others believe this passage refers to **Christ's descent into hell after His crucifixion to proclaim His victory to the imprisoned fallen angels** referred to in:

II Peter 2:4-5 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast [them] down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth [person], a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

Peter seemed to be equating these **fallen angels** with **"the sons of God"** Moses wrote about in:

Genesis 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they [were] fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

Genesis 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare [children] to them, the same [became] mighty men which [were] of old, men of renown.

- c. Though there is support for that view, others believe the context seems more likely to be referring to **humans rather than angels**.

The "spirits" (pneumasin, a term usually applied to supernatural beings but also used at least once to refer to human "spirits"):

Hebrews 12:23 [To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,]

are described in 1 Peter 3:20 as those who were disobedient when God waited patiently for Noah to finish building the ark. Since the entire human race except Noah was evil (see Gen. 6:5-9), God determined to "wipe mankind...from the face of the earth." The "spirits" referred to here in 3:20 may be the souls of the evil human race that existed in the days of Noah. Those "spirits" are now "in prison" awaiting the final judgment of God at the end of the Age.

2. The problem remains as to **'when' Christ preached to these "spirits"**. Peter's explanation of the resurrection of Christ (3:18) "by the Spirit" brings to mind that the **pre-incarnate Christ was actually in Noah, ministering through him, by means of the Holy Spirit**.

Peter (1:11) referred to the "Spirit of Christ" in the O.T. prophets.

Later he described Noah as "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). If this is the case, then the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah to the ungodly humans who, at the time of Peter's writing, were "spirits in prison" awaiting final judgment.

3. **Noah is presented as an example of one who committed himself to a course of action for the sake of a clear conscience before God**, though it meant enduring harsh ridicule. Noah did not fear men but obeyed God and proclaimed His message. Noah's reward was the salvation of his family, who were saved through water, being brought safely through the flood.
4. **"were saved"** - literally, **"were brought safely through."** The souls in the ark were brought safely through the time of the flood by the water. While it was actually the ark that saved them, Peter here teaches that the

waters of the flood saved them (not in the sense of salvation of the soul). **The very waters that were death to the rest of the human race was life to Noah and his family.**

3:21 The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

5. **"the like figure"** - (ho antitupon) the word **"figure"** refers to the word **"water."** Antitupon means **"the counterpart of reality."** Thus it translates, "Which (water) also (as a) counterpart now saves you, (namely) baptism." What Peter is saying is that it saves them only as a counterpart. That is, **water baptism is the counterpart of the reality, salvation. So water baptism only saves the believer in type.**

Just as the O.T. Jew was saved before he brought the offering to the priest, as the offering was only an outward testimony that he was placing his faith in the Lamb of God, of whom these sacrifices were merely a type.

The act of bringing the sacrifice was his outward expression and testimony of his inward faith. Water baptism is the outward testimony of the believer's inward faith. He is **saved by his inner faith, which he then expresses outwardly in water baptism as a type.** Therefore, water baptism actually has NO power to save. It can only testify of the reality to which it is a counterpart.

Peter was not teaching baptismal regeneration, as he clearly states that baptism does "not wash away the filth of the flesh." Additionally, he adds that the answer to a good conscience toward God is accomplished by the "resurrection of Jesus Christ" as the believer so identifies himself with Christ in His resurrection.

V. CHAPTER 4

A. Living for the Will of God May Lead to Suffering: (4:1-6)

I Peter 4:1-6 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 4:2 That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

1. **"arm yourselves"** was used of a Greek soldier putting on his armor and taking his weapons. This particular usage suggests taking **heavy armor**

as opposed to light armor: the heaviest armor available to us.

2. **"mind"** - (ennoia) also translated as **"intent or attitude"**. As Christ's attitude was to **love sacrificially**, our attitude and behavior must be consistently the same as Christ's.

Matthew 26:39 **And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt].**

3. **"for he who has suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"** refers to Christians who have suffered in the flesh because of persecution from the world.
 - a. **believers who are mature enough to suffer for the will of God are those who have forsaken the sinful lusts of the flesh.**
 - b. The world persecutes especially those who are living lives of obedience, and separation, doing the will of God. Therefore, persecution is an indication that their lives "hath got release" from sin. This does not mean that they never sin, but that the "conversation" of their life is to walk in the Spirit, not the flesh.

John 15:20-21 **Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. {21} But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.**

Heb 13:5-6 **Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. {6} So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.**

Prov 3:5-6 **Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. {6} In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.**

4:3 For the time past of [our] life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: **4:4** Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with [them] to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of [you]: **4:5** Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. **4:6** For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

4. **"time past"** refers to that time **before we received Christ** when we

walked according to the ways of the world. That period was quite long enough for us to experience sin, and now that we are in Christ, that former life should be a closed matter. Old things have passed away, behold all things are become new.

**** This is the very heart of Peter's teaching: to forsake the old life of sin, and live only for the will of God.**

a. Peter lists several former behaviors that are no longer acceptable:

- (I) **licentiousness** - (aselgeia): without self-restraint
- (II) **lusts** - (epithumia): evil desire, longing for the forbidden
- (III) **drunkenness** - (oinophugia): an excess or surplus of wine
- (IV) **revelries** - (komos): carousing, riotous living, orgies
- (V) **drinking parties** - (potos): banqueting, times of drinking
- (VI) **abominable idolatries** - (eidololatria): the forbidden worship of idols. This was even forbidden by Roman law, so it must have been very terrible.

b. Doing God's will by living in the Holy Spirit is directly opposed to doing our own will according to the flesh. It is like the difference between **light and darkness**. When God breaks the bondage to sin in our lives and sets us free to serve Him, we find our tastes have changed. We now hate the things we once loved and love the things we once hated. Such is evidence of the new nature of Christ in us.

Often when this happens, our former partners in sin cannot understand the change in us and will speak evil concerning us. But Peter reminds us in verse 5 that they will one day give account of their actions to The Judge.

5. "them that are dead" refers to **Christians who had died, having suffered persecution** for their testimony in the flesh, (being judged by men); but now being dead (many martyred), do live according to God's Word with respect to their human spirits.

B. The End is Near; Love and Serve One Another: (4:7-11)

I Peter 4:7-11 **4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.**

1. In view of the fact that **the end of all things is at hand**, we should be of sound mind, calm and collected in spirit, with eyes open, knowing how to pray. Prayer that is not crowded with every day worries likely has a greater impact on the will and plan of God.

1 Th 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

- a. **be sober** means “of sound mind, clear-minded”
- b. **be watchful** means “self-controlled”

1 Th 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

Mat 26:40-41 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? {41} Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

1 Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

2. "above all things" what Peter is about to say is of **highest priority**.

3. "have fervent love among yourselves" - "fervent" (ektenes) means "intense, without ceasing, to stretch out." The New English Bible translates it, "Keep your love for one another **at full strength**." Instead of being self consumed, our priority should be to constantly stretch out our hand of love in all its strength.

1 Cor 13:7 (Love) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

4. **love “covers” (a multitude of sins)** - (kalupto) means "to cover up or to hide." Of course, love does not ignore the reality of sin, nor justify nor condone sin. The only solution for sin is forgiveness--and **love motivates us to forgive**, to build up instead of tearing down, and to bear one another's burdens: thus fulfilling the law of Christ.

Prov 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

1 Cor 8:1 ... Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 4:11 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: that God in all things

may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

5. **"hospitality"** - (philoxenos) literally **"friendly to strangers"**, a willingness to share joyfully with others; putting authentic agape love to practical use. Peter is not speaking of the hospitality shown to our friends, but to Christians who, in the course of their travels for the Lord, or whatever other reason, might need food or shelter. Recall that at the time of this letter, there were many who were suffering persecution and deprived of the necessities of life.

Acts 2:42-47 **And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. {43} And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. {44} And all that believed were together, and had all things common; {45} And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. {46} And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, {47} Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.**

1 Tim 3:2 **A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;**

Titus 1:8 **But [a bishop should be] a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;**

6. **"gift"** - (charisma) has as it's root word "charis" which means **"grace"**. In other words this is a **"grace gift"** or **"spiritual gift"** from God. Peter shares that each of us has such a spiritual gift from God, which is not resident in our natural abilities (given be the Holy Spirit as He wills). These gifts vary, as their purpose is to enable us to minister to one another. This is how the Body of Christ is built and how we all grow to become more like Christ (Eph.4:11-13).

Other scriptures about "spiritual gifts": **Rom.12; I Cor.12-14; Eph.4**

7. **"as good stewards"**: a steward was a **slave**. **His life did not belong to himself. He belonged to his master. His purpose in life was to please his master.** He owned nothing, everything was his master's. We are to give out the gift of God, in grace, realizing our responsibility as stewards: what we receive of God is for God's purpose, and has only been entrusted to our care.

8. **"let him do it as of the ability which God giveth"**:

vs 11 teaches that we are not to serve God in our own strength, but in the strength and ability which God supplies. A spiritual gift can never be administered in the flesh. The ministry is not something that we carry on for God, but something we must allow God to carry on through us, **that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.** (If it's done in the strength of man, it only glorifies man.)

C. Rejoice in Suffering: (4:12-15) Seen in the light of eternity, the glory of the Lord always lies AHEAD. First there is suffering; then there is GLORY!

I Peter 4:12-15 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 4:15 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.

1. **"Beloved"** is literally, **"divinely loved ones"**; as Peter seeks to remind the readers who were going through suffering, that they were loved with all the love in the heart of God.
2. **"think it not strange"** is literally, **"stop thinking it a thing alien"** to you. Peter was teaching them to see suffering as a natural thing. If the world hated Christ and caused Him to suffer, shouldn't they, who bear His name and reflect His life, also expect to suffer.
3. **"fiery trial"** means literally, **"a burning"**, but is used in this passage to represent a **smelting furnace**, and the **refining process in which gold and silver are purified**. Their suffering, like the smelting furnace, would have a purifying effect on their lives.
4. **"rejoice"**: again Peter reminds them that suffering for well-doing is cause for rejoicing. We are sharing in the same kind of suffering which Christ suffered—for righteousness' sake.
5. **"reproached"** - (oneidizo) means to **"demote, chide, taunt or revile."** The person who reproaches a Christian is blaspheming! But in another sense, it proves that the Spirit of Christ is present, and so He is glorified; and so there is cause to have joy.

Matthew 5:11 Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Mark 15:32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him **reviled** him.

6. "**happy**" is from the Greek word which means "**prosperous**"; the one suffering for righteousness was prospering spiritually. The world rarely persecutes a worldly Christian, only a spiritual one.

D. Let Them that Suffer Commit the Keeping of Their Soul to the Creator:
(4:16-19)

I Peter 4:16-19 Yet if [any man suffer] as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. 4:17 For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God? 4:18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 4:19 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.

1. "**Yet if any man suffer as a Christian**" should be understood in its historical background. (from Wuest pg.121) The **Cult of the Caesar** was the state religion of the Roman Empire, in which the **emperor was worshipped** as a god. This served two purposes. First, the subjects of Rome gave obedience to the laws of the empire, not only as a political, but as a religious duty. Secondly, it was the unifying factor which bound the many different peoples of the empire into one, and made the military task of holding together its far-spread domain an easier one.

The Greek word for Caesar is **Kaisar**. Those who worshipped the Kaisar were called **Kaisarianos**. Christianity appeared as a rival claimant to worship and dominion. The Lord Jesus was looked upon, in the Christian Church, as the One who would some day come back and take the government of the world upon His shoulder. Those who worshipped Him as God were called **Christianos**, worshipers of the Christ as opposed to the Kaisarianos, worshipers of the Caesar. Rome saw that Christianity was striking at the very vitals of the empire. It answered this by the bloody persecutions which followed. It truly meant something to be a Christianos in those days.

2. "**let him not be ashamed**": Peter remembers the night he cowered before the might of the Roman empire as he denied the Christ. Now, as the Rock-Man, he would never do such a thing. In fact, Peter died a martyr's death on a Roman cross; and tradition tells us, he was crucified head down, for he did not feel worthy to be crucified as his Lord was.

3. Judgment must begin at the house of God: Peter concludes the chapter by explaining that **God allows persecution and hardship**, as disciplinary judgment, **to purify his own children**. If his own children do not escape disciplinary judgment, how much more will those who reject his righteousness reap everlasting judgment.

From our perspective, discipline is always hard, and those who are saved are not exempt from temporal disciplinary judgments. These are a natural consequence of sin, which we are told to endure.

Hebrews 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

4. "commit" - (paratithesthosan) is **an accounting term** meaning, **"to deposit or entrust."** Just as Christ committed Himself unto the Father, so believers, who are going through persecution, should **deposit their lives in the hands of God**. We know that He is able to keep that which we commit to Him.

II Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

VI. CHAPTER 5

A. Four Priorities for Christian Leaders: (5:1-4) Peter now writes to the church elders, not as their superior, but as a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ. True Christian leaders are called and anointed by God, not by human systems. Their task is to shepherd and equip believers for ministry to each other and to the world.

Eph 4:11-13 And he [Jesus] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; {12} For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: {13} Till 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:

I Peter 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 5:3 Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1. **"who am also an elder"** could also be translated **"who am also a fellow-elder."** Peter never claimed or assumed any higher position than that of an ordinary elder in the Church. The Greek term **"elder"** was used to designate **someone who was advanced in years**, and it **also became one of the official designations of an officer in the Church**. It is translated as **overseer and bishop**.
2. **Priority # 1: leaders should "feed the flock of God" - "shepherd or feed"** (poimaino) means to **tend to the needs of the flock of God**. Note that the emphasis here is on the fact that this is the "flock of God". Never should it be, "my flock" or "my church", as Christ is the Chief Shepherd; and we are merely under-shepherds.

I Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

(The church at Corinth faced this difficulty. Some people decided to follow Paul as their shepherd while others chose to follow Apollos. Paul refuted this error and demanded that they follow neither Paul nor Apollos--but Christ.)

I Corinthians 3:5-7 Who then is Paul, and who [is] Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

This is the requirement of an effective under-shepherd—to recognize that we are stewards of the flock of God which He has entrusted to our care. To be a pastor of a church is more than a vocational choice; it must be a holy calling, and a sacred trust given by the Chief Shepherd.

Peter himself received this holy calling from Christ.

John 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

3. **Priority # two: lead, not by constraint, but willingly.**
"constraint" means "by compulsion"; feeling forced or obliged;
willingly means **not from a sense of religious duty**, but **voluntarily, joyfully, lovingly**.

4. **Priority # three: lead, not for dishonest gain** (“filthy lucre”), **but eagerly**. Leaders should not serve (or commercialize their ministry) for “**personal gain**” such as power, wealth, recognition, to please or impress others.
To serve “**readily**” means to serve “**eagerly**”, “**willingly**”, “**with a forward spirit**”, avoiding a spirit of greediness.
5. **Priority # four: lead, not as “lords over”**, but as “**examples to the flock**”. Leaders are not called as dictators, even if benevolent. They are to **serve, not dominate**. They should demonstrate the example of the Lord Jesus by being a loving servant. Jesus taught the disciples what type of leadership he desired:

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them [unto him], and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 20:27 And **whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:** 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

"ensamples" - (tupos) means "a print left as an impression after a blow has been struck, **a pattern or model of something else.**"
Leaders are to be a model of **someone who has denied himself, is daily taking up his cross, and is following Jesus as the Lord of his life**. If the cross has struck a blow to your life, then the impression left should reflect in your life the image of the cross.

- B. Instructions to the Sheep: Live in Humility.** (5:5-7) Having dealt with the elders of the Church, Peter now turns his attention to the younger Christians, and their need to be submissive. (recall chap.2:13—3:5)

I Peter 5:5-7 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

1. **"submit yourselves"**: every believer, no matter his or her position or office, should be in submission to someone. In submission, we must obey another's direction and show ourselves accountable to another's authority.

Some church members and leader insist on full liberty to do what ever they choose, but liberty carries responsibility. **Liberty means servant-hood**. We should not allow liberty itself to become a bondage; we must restrain

ourselves from liberties that do not build up others.

I Peter 2:16 As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

I Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I Corinthians 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

2. "be humble": which means to **have the Spirit of Christ.**

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Humility carries the meaning of "lowly" which means "not rising far from the ground." The instruction here is to "suffer yourselves to be humbled." Peter encourages them **not to resist the process of humbling God was taking them through.** If they were submissive to it, in due season God would exalt them to a place of honor. **In God's economy, humility always precedes exaltation.**

Proud is a translation of the Greek word which means, "to show above," describing the **proud person as one who shows himself above others.** God "resisteth" the proud. Resisteth is a military term meaning, "to draw an army for battle." In other words, **God goes to battle against the proud.**

Proverbs 3:34 Surely he resists the proud: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Prov 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

3. "casting all your care upon him" - "cast" means "having deposited with, once and for always" while "care" means "anxiety or worry." Peter was urging these younger believers to resolve to cast the whole of their future worries upon Christ, with the result that when they experience things that would naturally cause them to worry, instead they will not worry. The words, "for He careth for you" is literally, "for you are His concern." Why worry therefore, if we are His concern?

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:...

Mat 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. {30} For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

C. Finally, Stand Firm in the Faith. (5:8-11)

I Peter 5:8-11 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 5:9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle [you]. 5:11 To him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

1. "be sober, be vigilant" - "sober" (nepho) means to "be self-controlled not under any influence of intoxicants" while "vigilant" (gregoreo) means to "be watchful or awake."

1 Cor 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

2 Tim 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

We are to be on watch for our adversary, the devil who is watching for us, seeking to devour. We must first "draw near to God", then "resist" (anthistemi) meaning "to stand against", even while we suffer.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

A missionary once shared this advice as to what to do if you encounter a hungry lion. First, don't try to flee as that would be certain death as the lion can run much faster. Second, do your best to look very brave and stare right into the lion's eyes. If you are successful, he will back down and go away. However, if that does not work, you should prepare for the lion to attack you. Have your spear (sword) ready so that when he leaps upon you, he will land on the spear and be killed! The devil is just like a roaring lion.

2. "after ye have suffered a little while" we will see that God's grace will have accomplished **four important things** in our lives:

- a. **"make you perfect"** - (katartizo) "to **restore**, to **mend** and to **complete thoroughly**." God wants to restore what sin has taken, to mend what sin has broken, and to complete us into the image of Christ.
- b. **"establish"** - (sterizo) "**to strengthen**", to make us so that nothing will shake us.
- c. **"strengthen"** - (sthenoo) "to **give vigor or make firm**." It is God's desire that we become vigorous and strong in action for Him.
- d. **"settle"** - (themelioo) means "to **consolidate or to lay a foundation**." God uses times of suffering to unite the fragments of our lives and secure us to the foundation we have in Christ.

D. Greetings (5:12-14)

I Peter 5:12-14 By Silvanus {Grk: Silas}, 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. 5:13 The [church that is] at Babylon, elected together with [you], saluteth you; and [so doth] Marcus my son. 5:14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace [be] with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1. **These last verses were most likely written by Peter**, himself, indicating Silvanus (Grk: Silas) as the possible scribe and/or courier (Acts 15:22-27). "In Babylon" is most likely a reference to Rome, by which it was often referred to among the early Church.
2. **"Mark my son"** - This would be the **John Mark** of Acts 12:12; the same person to whom Paul refers in several of his letters (Col. 4:10); and who wrote the second gospel—the Gospel of Mark.
3. **Peter closes with** the exhortation to **greet one another with a loving kiss**. This was one of the customs of the early Christians who related to one another **as members of the family of Christ**. (Paul shared this same instruction in several of his letters, including Rom.16:16; 1Co.16:20.
4. **"Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus."** What better final statement to make to these dearly-loved-of-God saints who were suffering, dispersed, and at times without the necessities of life? Peter urges them to **receive God's peace, something no one could take from them**.

II PETER

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF 2 PETER

- A. THEMES:** Warning against false teaching; reminding of true teachings on “the KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST”; continuing Christian growth.
- B. KEY VERSES:** (2 Pet 1:3) **According as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue**
(2 Pet 3:1-2) **This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: {2} That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:**
- C. AUTHOR:** Peter, the disciple. (see I Peter: Author)
The apostle of hope. Peter's given name was Simon. God changed his name (Jn 1:35-42). He was often called Simon Peter, and was called upon to minister to the Jews.
- D. DATE:** written about 65 – 70 AD.
- E. AUDIENCE:** Jewish Christians who were scattered to many countries, and were experiencing persecution for their faith.
- F. PURPOSE:** to “**stir up the pure minds of believers to REMEMBER the teachings of the holy prophets and commandments of the apostles (3:1-2), and the precious promises of God to believers (1:3-4); resulting in Christian growth (1:5-15). He also intended to warn against false teachers and predict coming apostasy and iniquity (chap.2), and to encourage believers to look for the Lord’s return (3:1-14).**”

A major threat of false teaching **to the Church came from the “Gnostics”**. (DARB) **Gnosticism** was a religious system, incorporating ancient and new philosophies, that **taught that KNOWLEDGE, not FAITH was the key to salvation**. It spread quickly through the Church, world-wide, and caused much confusion among Christians from the 1st to the 6th centuries, and its influence is still present in several religions today (unfortunately, even in some which call

themselves “Christian”). Some Gnostic **teachings include:**

1. Higher knowledge and new enlightenment bring salvation.
2. Flesh is sinful and the source of all evil.
3. The topics of creation and the source of evil are separate from the understanding of the Supreme God.
4. The creator of the world, the God of the Jews, is not the same being as the “Supreme God”.
5. Denying the humanity of Christ, as well as His suffering and death. Since all flesh is evil, Christ’s body cannot have been “real”.
6. Deny that God has a personality that humans can relate to.
7. Deny that man has a free will.
8. Man can commune with God through asceticism, and denying himself all comfort and pleasure; but sinfulness is not a serious offense to God, thus immorality and licentiousness abound.
9. Infusing some Christian teachings into the practice of pagan customs would make them more acceptable to Christians who were dissatisfied with the “simplicity” of the gospel. (darb)

G. SIMPLE OUTLINE

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF 2 PETER

II. Chapter I: KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

A. Greeting (1:1 -2)

B. Realize That God’s Power Is All We Need (1:3 - 9)

C. Remember What You Have Learned (1:10 - 15)

D. Trust God’s Word (the O.T. prophets) (1:16-21)

II. Chapter Two. The FALSE TEACHERS (2:1-22)

A. How to Recognize False Teachers: Their Destructiveness (2:1 - 19)

B. The Certain Doom of False Teachers:

C. Beware Becoming Entangled Again (2:20 - 22)

III. Chapter Three. CONTINUE TO TRUST GOD

A. Remember the Basics (3:1-7)

B. Remember that God’s Timing is Perfect (3:8-9)

C. Remember, the Day of the Lord Will Come; New Heavens, & Earth (3:10-13)

D. Remember to be Diligent: to be Pleasing to Him when He Comes: (3:14-16)

E. In our Diligence, Be Patient, as He Fulfills His Plan of Salvation (vs 15-16)

F. Be Diligent to Grow, Spiritually, Lest You Fall (2 Peter 3:17-18)

H. COMPARE TO: Jude; 2 Timothy; 2 Thessalonians; Revelation

II. Chapter I : KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

A. Greeting (1:1 -2)

2 Pet 1:1-2 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

- 1. the writings of “a servant”:** as always, Peter introduces himself as a servant to Christ, and a fellow believer with those he wrote to.
- 2. “precious faith”** (isotimos) “bought by the blood of Jesus Christ”. **“Precious”** means **valuable or costly**. It is the common factor that brings believers together. Faith that comes not through human righteousness, but by the righteousness of God. Note Peter makes it clear that Jesus is both God and Lord.

“precious” is a word Peter uses often:

- precious **painful trials** (1 Pet.1:7)
 - precious **blood of Christ** (1:19)
 - precious **living stone** (2:4)
 - precious **Christ** (2:6)
 - precious **gentle, quiet spirit** (3:4)
 - precious **believer’s faith** (2 Pet.1:1)
 - precious **divine promises** (2 Pet.1:4)
- 3. “grace and peace”** come from knowing God.

B. Realize That God’s Power Is All We Need (1:3 - 9) Rather than beginning his letter by warning against the false teachers, Peter REMINDS them of the basics of true Christianity. He therefore gives us the specific steps to follow if we are to remain victorious. If we continue to grow in our knowledge of Christ, we will not be deceived by false teachings.

2 Pet 1:3-9 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

- 1. Be aware that ‘His divine power hath given unto us all things.’** (vs.3)
Through the Holy Spirit, God has given us divine power and everything we need to follow, obey, and grow in Christ.

Phil 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Col 2:9-10 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. {10} And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

2 Tim 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2. Apply the “great and precious promises” **God has given us.** “Precious” means valuable or costly. **They are precious because they allow us to:**

a. “be partakers of the divine nature.” **We have received God in the promised Holy Spirit.**

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Acts 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

1 Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

b. **Escape “the corruption that is in the world through lust.”** Walking in the Spirit takes us in the opposite direction from where our “natural self” and the world is headed.

Gal 5:16-17 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. {17} For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 1:7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 1:8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

B. Take the initiative to build our Christian faith. (abiding in Christ) Peter gives us **7 things we should add to our faith;** so that we will be “**useful**” (not barren), and “**fruitful**” (not unfruitful). John 15:4: “abide in me”.... If we do not add them, we will be “**blind** and unable to see afar off (reality); and we will “**forget** that we were purged from our old sins.” Thus, we will be easily deceived by false teachers. So, to our faith we should add:

- 1. Virtue:** goodness, or moral excellence. Without virtue, faith is not authentic.
- 2. Knowledge:** If faith is to be active obedience to God, then we must have **knowledge of God and His will** for us.
Contrast to our former ignorance:

1 Pet 1:14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

- 3. Temperance or self-control:** This comes as we yield to the control of the Holy Spirit. It is not enough to “know” about Godliness; we must also “do” it. As “temperance”, it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, {23} Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

- 4. Patience: or perseverance, endurance.** It involves staying the course, or seeing things through to its conclusion without concern for time; to bear trials, to have fortitude, to abide.

Josh 23:8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Phil 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

Rev 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

5. **Godliness:** “Godly, pious, devout”. This is not something we can pretend or manufacture. This comes from God as we die to self and allow God the Holy Spirit to live through us.

6. **Brotherly kindness:** the quality of love between brothers and sisters. This same thought was expressed in 1 Peter 1:22; and 4:8.

Rom 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

1 Cor 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

7. **Charity:** “love”; “agape” which is **God’s unconditional love**. This is **also a fruit of the Spirit**, the highest expression of love, the ultimate sign of the Christian lifestyle and of being the disciples of Christ. God IS love.

1 John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

C. Remember What You Have Learned (1:10 - 15) Peter urges believers to be

always reminded of these truths and promises, and to take individual responsibility to apply them to their lives, especially since there are false teachers attempting to deceive them.

2 Pet 1:10-15 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

1. “give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” (Vs. 10-11)
“diligent” (spoude) means “to speed”, “to urge on”. **By diligence, Peter means we should** move ahead with eagerness and earnestness. **He realizes that if we are** deeply grounded in the basics of our faith, **remaining active in those basics, then the false teachers will not be able to lead us astray. Peter wants us to** make sure our relationship is active and vital in the present tense. **We cannot rely on our past experiences; we need a living faith that is active everyday. Doing this will yield** two results:

- a. **We “will never fall”** vs. 10. When we are attentive to where we are going and what we are doing, we do not stumble or fall. It is when we are distracted and careless in our walk that we are prone to fall or stumble.
- b. **We will enter “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord...”** vs. 11 As we walk each day in active obedience to our Lord, we are **secure both in the present and future**. Peter’s concern for us is his knowledge that **we must complete the course to gain the prize**. It is not enough to have a good start, or to get most of the way through, to gain the prize of entrance into the “everlasting kingdom of our Lord”; we must complete the course.

1:12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. 1:13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle (body), to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; 1:14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. 1:15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

2. “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things...” (Vs. 12-14) Here Peter speaks of accountability with a pastor’s heart. Though he knows his listeners already know these things he feels compelled, as a spiritual father, to continue to remind them, as long as he lives (vs. 13), because of his

desire to see them gain the prize. In verse 14 Peter says that he is not long to remain with his listeners; it is almost time for him to die, just as Jesus had prophesied (Jn.21:18-19)

3. Peter indicates that he shall continue to remind them of these things, long after his death, that they too would win the prize. Perhaps his letters would serve that purpose.

D. Trust God's Word (the O.T. prophets) (1:16-21) Peter now establishes his credentials, and the trustworthiness of the prophecies of the Word of God, in contrast to the "cunningly devised fables" of the false teachers he will expose in chapter 2.

2 Pet 1:16 –21 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 1:17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 1:18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

1. Peter was an eyewitness to the Lord Jesus Christ, and of God's "spoken" word. Vs. 16-18 He walked with Christ for 3 years. He has declared the "power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ", perhaps through preaching or by letter, to those whom he is now writing to. Either way, he has shared the gospel with them. He also reminds them that he was present at the transfiguration of Christ. This is confirmed in the gospels (Matt. 9:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28). It is interesting that Peter would mention this event, as it must have had a profound effect on his spiritual life, especially as the Father declared "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It confirmed, for Peter, the reality of Jesus as the true Son of God. This reality, he now wishes to confirm to his readers.

1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2. We must also heed the words of the prophets' revelations: Vs. 19 We have a more sure word than those of the heathen priests who "cunningly devise fables" about their dead idols. Peter uses the analogy of a light which shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises. God's Word comes to shine in our hearts when we are in darkness. But we cannot understand it until it breaks through into our hearts like the dawning of the day, when the morning star arises just before the sun makes its appearance. That morning star must

arise in our hearts and illuminate God's truth to us. This is the work of God the Holy Spirit. We need only ask God the Holy Spirit to illuminate truth to us. (John and Paul also taught that it was God the Holy Spirit that illuminated truth to us:)

1 John 2:20 But ye have an “unction” (anointing=God the Holy Spirit) from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

1 John 2:27 But the anointing (God the Holy Spirit) which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

3. We can rely on the Word of God because the prophecies of scripture have come from God. Vs. 20-21 True prophecy is not from men; it was revealed by God the Holy Spirit, through the prophets. The prophets are merely the human vehicles through whom God chose to communicate His truth. It is also important to realize that no prophecy was for any private interpretation. In other words, we need realize the Word of God came from God, and if we are to accurately understand it, we must rely on God the Holy Spirit to reveal its meaning to us. “False teaching” flows from the minds of men and women; “truth” flows from the heart and mind of the living God.

III. Chapter Two. THE FALSE TEACHERS (2:1-22) Peter offers an extensive lecture on the false teachers and their false teachings. He uses two major categories of information: how to identify false teachers; and the destiny of false teachers.

A. How to Recognize False Teachers: Their Destructiveness (2:1 - 19)

2 Pet 2:1-19 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 2:2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 2:8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 2:11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. 2:12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; 2:13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; 2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

2:15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 2:16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

2:17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. 2:18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

1. Vs. 1 **They will secretly bring in destructive heresies.** They do not come with a sign around their neck saying, "Beware I'm a false teacher." Rather they come "**clothed in light**", looking at first to be quite harmless, and perhaps even willing to be of service. Their message is usually a **blend of truth and error**. "Heresies" (haireisis) can be translated "sect".

2. Vs. 1 **They will even deny the Lord.** “Deny” (arneomai) means “to contradict, reject, or disavow.” Peter knew what it was to deny the Lord, and certainly did not want anyone to follow in that path. The **key question** to ask any (false) teacher is, “**Who do you say Jesus is?**” If he does not proclaim Jesus as Lord, God, Everlasting...his answer will expose his heresy.
3. Vs. 3 **They will exploit you with deceptive words.** “Exploit” (emporeuomai) means “make merchandise of you”. The false teacher is like a merchant who will “buy” or “sell” you, like merchandise. They will **use you as merchandise, or objects to be bought and sold**, to suit their own purposes.
4. Vs. 10 **They walk according to the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness.** They do not walk in the Spirit, but in the flesh. They are often involved in immoral or illegal practices, because things of the Holy Spirit, and the lusts of the flesh are contrary to one another:

Gal 5:16-17 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. {17} For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Gal 5:19-25 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, {20} Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, {21} Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. {22} But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, {23} Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. {24} And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. {25} If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

5. Vs. 10 **They despise authority.** False teachers do not wish to submit to God’s delegated authority, nor to live under the Lordship of Christ. They want to be their own authority.

Jude 1:8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

6. Vs. 10 **They are presumptuous.** They are audacious, rash, arrogant, and daring in a negative sense.

7. Vs. 10 **They are self-willed.** (authades) means “self-pleasing or strong-willed”. They always want their own way, not God’s way.
8. Vs. 10 **They speak evil of dignitaries.** They are not afraid to put others down. They feel they are better than others.

Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

9. Vs. 12 **They speak evil of things they do not understand.** They will scoff, abuse, and sneer at things they don’t understand. Because they live in the flesh, they cannot understand the things of the Spirit, but they scoff at them.
10. Vs. 13 **They are spots and blemishes.** “Spots” (spiloi) means “unwanted ugly stains; “blemishes” (momos) means “disgraceful persons”. They are disgraceful persons. What a contrast to Paul’s description of the church:

Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

11. Vs. 13 **They sport themselves in their own deceivings.** They “carouse” or “riot” in feasting, and become entangled in the sin of their own deceptions.

Mark 4:19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

12. Vs. 14 **They have eyes full of adultery.** They use people for their own gratification.

Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

13. Vs. 14 **Their eyes cannot cease from sinning.** They are lovers of the world; all that their eyes long for. They have given themselves over to sin & deception.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Mat 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

14. Vs. 14 They beguile unstable souls. “Beguile” (deleazo) means “to entice, allure, entrap, or delude”. They are found enticing and alluring those who are unaware or in-experienced. But the pleasure is only momentary; sin always leads to death. (Rom.6:23)

15. Vs. 14 They have a heart exercised with covetous practices. They have **trained their hearts**, through continuous use, **to be greedy or to covet** that which belongs to someone else.

Exo 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

16. Vs. 14 They are accursed children. They are living under a curse from God, and don't even know it. Literally it means they are children of curse.

17. Vs. 15 They have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray. To illustrate the sin of going astray, Peter recites the story of Balaam, who strayed away from God into sin and was verbally rebuked by a donkey, which God had enabled to speak (Num. 22).

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Mat 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

18. Vs. 17 They are wells without water. They are of no purpose or use; they have lost their intended purpose. They cannot quench the spiritual thirst of their hearers because **they have no living water to give** them.

19. Vs. 17 They are clouds carried with a tempest. They are like empty clouds being driven by a storm. They have nothing to offer, and no control over where they are going. They are being controlled and used by Satan.

20. Vs. 18 They speak great swelling words of vanity (emptiness). They cannot bring us to truth, but can only impress us with their earthly knowledge, and flamboyant speech.

21. Vs. 18 **They allure through the lusts of the flesh, and through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.** They will attempt to allure true believers who have already escaped the judgment of sin by the knowledge of Christ. They appeal to the lusts of the flesh; they cannot teach us the truth of the Spirit.
22. Vs. 19 **They promise liberty, while they themselves are the servants of corruption.** Sin always promises what it cannot deliver. It promises us liberty or freedom, but it gives us slavery. We are either dominated by sin or by the Holy Spirit.

B. The Certain Doom of False Teachers:

1. Vs. 1 **They will bring upon themselves swift destruction.** This destruction is the wages of sin and will come upon them quickly.

Phil 3:18-19 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: {19} Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

2. Vs. 3 **Their judgement now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.** Peter is wanting them to realize that their judgement has not escaped God; He is not unaware or unconcerned about their sin. Their judgement is on its way.
3. Vs. 4-9 Peter addresses the pending doom of false teachers giving **4 examples of God's judgement :**
 - a. Vs. 4 **The angels.** As God did not spare the angels who sinned (Rev.20:10), do you think He would spare false teachers who are leading others astray?
 - b. Vs. 5 **The ancient world.** If God destroyed the ancient world (saving Noah & family), would He not judge false teachers?
 - c. Vs. 6-8 **Sodom & Gomorrah.** If God condemned the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah, leaving them in ashes, would He not judge false teachers?
 - d. Vs. 9 **The day of judgment.** Peter answers the three questions in verse 9: "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment."
4. Vs. 12 **They shall utterly perish in their own corruption.** "Utterly perish" (kataphtheiro) means "to spoil entirely, or to completely destroy". "Corruption" (phthora) also means "perish, or destroy". There is no doubt; they will be completely destroyed. They will reap what they have

sown.

5. Vs. 13 **They shall receive the reward of the unrighteous.** This is re-emphasizing the previous pronouncement of destruction. (Rom.6:23)
6. Vs. 17 **They are those to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.** Swift destruction, doom, judgment, utter perishing, death, and gloom of darkness await those who would be false teachers and lead others astray from the truth.

Rom 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

2 Cor 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

Mat 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

C. Beware of Becoming Entangled Again (2:20 - 22)

2 Pet 2:20-22 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

1. Peter reminds “those who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord” that we are responsible for our own spiritual welfare, and if we allow ourselves to be led astray we will pay a tremendous price for it.
2. There are two schools of theological thought concerning this passage:
 - a. There are those who contend that once we have been born anew of the Spirit, we cannot become “unborn” (lose our salvation).
 - b. The other group says that since God has created us as free moral agents, we can choose to leave the faith, just as freely as we choose faith.
3. Peter does not address that issue directly. Instead, he exposes the deeper issue upon which both schools of thought would agree. It is simply this: a person who has once come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,

having escaped the pollutions of this world, is in **SERIOUS** trouble when he or she becomes again entangled in them and overcome by them. **He declares that they are worse off in their present condition than they ever were before coming to faith in Christ (Vs. 20). This is an especially strong statement if one considers that prior to their coming to the knowledge of Jesus Christ as Savior they were lost and destined to spend eternity in hell, and now they are in an even worse state!**

4. **Vs. 21** It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness! **God does not offer us an eternal life insurance policy which allows us to “accept” Christ, and then not follow Him; nor to be “born again” of the Spirit, and then to lust after the flesh as our lifestyle; nor to “commit” our lives to Christ, and then live for the devil. That is not Christianity; it is pure hypocrisy! And Peter is making it clear that he will have no part in that kind of false teaching.**
5. **Vs. 22** **To emphasize his point, Peter shares two vivid examples. First, from Provb. 26:11 that those who have turned from the knowledge of Christ are like a “dog who returns to his own vomit.” Second, such a person is like, “a sow, having washed, is now returned to her wallowing in the mire.” If you know someone who says they are a Christian, but is wallowing in the mire, ask God to give you the opportunity to speak with them before it is too late.**

IV. Chapter Three. CONTINUE TO TRUST GOD (Extra notes for Chap. 3 are from Warren Weirsbe’s Be Collection Commentary—notated as WW, ww)

A. Remember the Basics (3:1-7) As Peter prepares to end his ministry, at the end of his life, he desires to encourage and strengthen his spiritual children, that they also would “finish the course, and receive the eternal prize”. He ends his last letter by urging them to **REMEMBER** the important things: therefore “stirring up” their redeemed minds (vs 1). “Stir up” (diegeiro) means “to arouse or awaken fully”. This is what it will take for us to overcome trials, suffering, and false teaching.

**** There are four “beloved” statements which summarize what Peter wanted to get across in 2 Peter 3.**

- “Beloved . . . be mindful” (3:1-2).
- “Beloved . . . be not ignorant” (3:8).
- “Beloved . . . be diligent” (3:14).
- “Beloved . . . beware” (3:17).

2 Pet 3:1-7 This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 3:4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

- 1. Remember the words of the holy prophets (vs 2) (as Peter explained in Chapter 2.)**
- 2. Remember the commandments of the apostles (vs 2)**

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

- 3. Remember that God is in Control (vs 3-7)**

a. even though scoffers deny the message of the prophets and apostles that Christ will return to rule earth and destroy evil. (vs 3-4)

(I) (WW) A scoffer is someone who treats lightly that which ought to be taken seriously. The people in Noah's day scoffed at the idea of a judgment, and the citizens of Sodom scoffed at the possibility of fire and brimstone destroying their sinful city.

(II) Why do these apostates scoff? Because they want to continue living in their sins. Peter made it clear that (false teachers cultivate "the lust of uncleanness") (2 Peter 2:10) and allure weak people by means of "the lusts of the flesh" (2 Peter 2:18). If your lifestyle contradicts the Word of God, you must either change your lifestyle or change the Word of God. The apostates choose the latter approach, so they scoff at the doctrines of judgment and the coming of the Lord. (ww)

3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

- b. after all, God is the Creator of all things. (vs 5)**

(WW) God created the heavens and the earth by His word.

The phrase “and God said” occurs nine times in Genesis 1. “For He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9). Not only was Creation made by the word of God, but it was held together by that same word. Peter’s argument is obvious: the same God who created the world by His word can also intervene in His world and do whatever He wishes to do! It is His word that made it and that holds it together, and His word is all-powerful. (ww)

c. God has already shown His will and power to destroy evil in ancient times. (vs 6) (2:1-9) (Gen.6:8)

(I) (WW) How did Peter refute the foolish argument of the apostate scoffers? All Peter did was remind them of what God had done in the past and thus prove that His work is consistent throughout the ages. Peter simply presented evidence that the false teachers deliberately ignored. Peter cited one of two possible events in history to prove his point: 3:5-7 depending on your theological belief he is either talking about the judgment of God in Gen. 1:1-2 upon the pre-adamite world (the “gap theory”: see Dispensations study for explanation) or the flood in Noah’s day. Which ever you believe Peter is referencing, the result is the same. God has consistently brought judgment on those who rebel against Him and His word.

(II) Having established the fact that God has in the past “interrupted” the course of history, Peter was then ready for his application in 2 Peter 3:7. The same word that created and sustains the world is now holding it together, being preserved and reserved for that future day of judgment by fire. God promised that there would be no more floods to destroy the world (Gen. 9:8-17). The next judgment will be a judgment of fire. (ww)

d. Jesus (like the prophets and apostles) taught of the judgment day to come (vs 7)

Mat 13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Heb 1:10-11 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: {11} They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

(I) (WW) “When the scoffers denied “the power and coming” of Jesus Christ, they were denying the truth of the prophetic books, the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels, and the writing of the Apostles!”

(II) As far back as the days of Enoch, God warned that judgment was coming (Jude 14-15). Many of the Hebrew prophets announced the Day of the Lord and warned that the world would be judged (Isa. 2:10-22; 13:6-16; Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Joel; Amos 5:18-20; Zeph.; Zech. 12:1-14:3). This period of judgment is also known as “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7) and the Tribulation.

(III) Not only does the Word of God predict the coming Day of the Lord, but it also predicts the appearance of the very scoffers who deny that Word! Their presence is proof that the Word they deny is the true Word of God! We should not be surprised at the presence of these apostate mockers (see Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3).

(IV) The Word of God is still “a light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19). We can trust it. No matter what the scoffers may claim, God’s day of judgment will come on the world, and Jesus Christ shall return to establish His glorious kingdom. (ww)

B. Remember that God’s Timing is Perfect (3:8-9)

2 Pet 3:8-9 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. **3:9** The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1. Our time is not His time:

Psa 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

(WW) Peter was certainly referring to Psalm 90:4—“For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” Since a thousand years are as one day to the Lord, we cannot accuse Him of delayed fulfillment of His promises. In God’s sight, the whole universe is only a few days old! He is not limited by time the way we are, nor does He measure it according to man’s standards. When you study the works of God, especially in the Old Testament, you can see that He is never in a hurry, but He is never late. (ww)

2. Jesus has not yet returned because He is not yet ready:

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Mat 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

(WW) Peter proved his point: God is able to intervene in the course of history. He did it in the past and He is able to do it again. The Day of the Lord will come just as surely as the Flood came in Noah’s day and the fire and brimstone came to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. But the scoffers had their argument ready: “Then why the delay?” The promise of Christ’s coming and the judgment of the world has been around for centuries, and it is yet to be fulfilled. Has God changed His mind? (ww)

3. Jesus has not yet returned because of His love for us, that everyone has opportunity to be saved.

- a. (WW) The scoffers did not understand God’s eternity nor did they understand His mercy. Why was God delaying the return of Christ and the coming of the Day of the Lord? It was not because He was unable to act or unwilling to act. God delays the coming of Christ and the great day of fiery judgment because He is long-suffering and wants to give lost sinners the opportunity to be saved. **“And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation” (2 Peter 3:15).**

- b. God's "delay" is actually an indication that He has a plan for this world and that He is working His plan. There should be no question in anybody's mind whether God wants sinners to be saved. God "is not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11). He shows His mercy to all (Rom. 11:32) even though not all will be saved.
- c. If God is long-suffering toward lost sinners, why did Peter write, "The Lord . . . is long-suffering to us-ward"? Who is meant by "us-ward"? It would appear that God is long-suffering to His own people! Perhaps Peter was using the word us in a general way, meaning "mankind." But it is more likely that he was referring to his readers as the elect of God (1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:10). God is long-suffering toward lost sinners because some of them will believe and become a part of God's elect people. We do not know who God's elect are among the unsaved people of the world, nor are we supposed to know. Our task is to make our own "calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10; cf. Luke 13:23-30). The fact that God has His elect people is an encouragement to us to share the Good News and seek to win others to Christ.
- d. God was even long-suffering toward the scoffers of that day! They needed to repent and He was willing to save them. This is the only place where Peter used the word repentance in either of his letters, but that does not minimize its importance. To repent simply means "to change one's mind." It is not "regret," which usually means "being sorry I got caught." Repentance is a change of mind that results in an action of the will. If the sinner honestly changes his mind about sin, he will turn from it. If he sincerely changes his mind about Jesus Christ, he will turn to Him, trust Him, and be saved. "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) is God's formula for salvation.
- e. The word translated "come" at the end of 2 Peter 3:9 carries the meaning of "make room for." The lost sinner needs to "make room" for repentance in his heart by putting away his pride and meekly receiving the Word of God. Repentance is a gift from God (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25), but the unbeliever must make room for the gift. (ww)

1 Tim 2:4 [God] Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 Pet 3:20 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.

Ezek 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Rom 11:32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

C. Remember, the Day of the Lord Will Come; Then New Heavens and a New Earth (3:10-13)

2 Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. **3:11** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, **3:12** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? **3:13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

1. When will the Day of the Lord come? (vs10)

a. No one knows except God the Father.

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Mat 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

b. Like a “thief in the night” (vs 10)

Mat 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Mat 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

c. (WW) Having refuted their false claims, Peter then reaffirmed the certainty of the coming of the Day of the Lord. When will it come? Nobody knows when, because it will come to the world “as a thief in the

night.” **When the world is feeling secure, then God’s judgment will fall.** The thief does not warn his victims that he is coming! (ww)

1 Th 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

2. The heavens and earth will pass away (vs 10)

a. “heavens” (ouranos) is referred to 5 times in chpt. 3:

(I) (vs 5) created by God

(II) (vs 7) kept in existence by the word of God

(III) (vs 10) pass away with a great noise

(IV) (vs 12) dissolved by fire when Christ returns

(V) (vs 13) new heavens

b. pass away with a “great noise” (rhoizedon) means “whizzingly” or “with a great crash”! Imagine the sound!

Mat 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

3. The earth will be burned up (vs 10): everything in it, and on it.

a. “fervent heat” means “fire” (katakaio) means “to consume, or burn up utterly” ; nothing remaining.

(I) (WW) The word **melt** in 2 Peter 3:10 means “**to disintegrate, to be dissolved.**” It carries the idea of something being broken down into its basic elements, and that is what happens when atomic energy is released, and it appears that this may happen by the release of the atomic power stored in the elements that make up the world. Peter no doubt had in mind Old Testament passages such as Isaiah 13:10-11; 24:19; 34:4; and 64:1-4 when he wrote these words. The first passage is especially emphatic that God will bring judgment on sinful man: “And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity,” says the Lord.”

2. Man’s great works will also be burned up! All of the things that man boasts about—his great cities, his great buildings, his inventions, his achievements—will be destroyed in a moment of time. When sinners stand before the throne of God, they will have nothing to point to as evidence of their greatness. It will all be gone. (ww)

- b. It is part of God's master plan. We must be prepared:
(I) (vs 11) live lives of holy conduct (1 Pet.1:15-16;
Mat.24:45-51;))

(A) (WW) Because we do not know the day or the hour of our Lord's return, we must constantly be ready. This expectant attitude ought to make a difference in our personal conduct (2 Peter 3:11). The word translated "manner" literally means "exotic, out of this world, foreign." Because we have "escaped the corruption that is in the world" (2 Peter 1:4), we must live differently from the people in the world. To them, we should behave like "foreigners." Why? Because this world is not our home! We are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11) headed for a better world, the eternal city of God. Christians should be different, not odd. When you are different, you attract people; when you are odd, you repel them.

(B) Our conduct should be characterized by holiness and godliness.

1 Peter 1:15-16 But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation [behavior]; because it is written, 'Be ye holy; for I am holy'.

The word holy means "to separate, to cut off." Israel was a "holy nation" because God called the Jews out from among the Gentiles and kept them separated. Christians are called out from the godless world around them and are set apart for God alone. (ww)

- (II) (vs 11) **live lives of godliness:** live like Christ, not in the flesh (Mat.25:29)

(WW) The word godliness could be translated "piety." It describes a person whose life is devoted to pleasing God. It is possible to be separated from sin positionally, and yet not enjoy living for God personally. In the Greek world, the word translated godliness meant "respect and awe for the gods and the world they made." It is that attitude of reverence that says with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). (ww)

- (III) (vs 12) **look for His coming: stay faithful** (Mat.24:42; 25:13)

(WW) The key word in this paragraph is look. It means “to await eagerly, to be expectant.” It describes an attitude of excitement and expectation as we wait for the Lord’s return. Because we realize that the world and its works will be dissolved, and that even the very elements will be disintegrated, we fix our hope, not on anything in this world, but only on the Lord Jesus Christ. (ww)

(IV) (vs 12) **hasten His coming by laboring in the spiritual harvest:**

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

(A) (WW) There are two extremes in ministry that we must avoid. One is the attitude that we are “locked into” God’s sovereign plan in such a way that nothing we do will make any difference. The other extreme is to think that God cannot get anything done unless we do it! While God’s sovereign decrees must never become an excuse for laziness, neither must our plans and activities try to take their place. Perhaps two illustrations from Old Testament history will help us better understand the relationship between God’s plans and man’s service.

(B) God delivered Israel from Egypt and told the people He wanted to put them into their inheritance, the land of Canaan. But at Kadesh-Barnea all except Moses, Joshua, and Caleb rebelled against God and refused to enter the land (Num. 13-14). Did God force them to go in? No. Instead, He had them wander in the wilderness for the next forty years while the older generation died off. He adjusted His plan to their response.

(C) When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh, his message was clear: “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4) It was God’s plan to destroy the wicked city, but when the people repented, from the king on down, God adjusted His plan and spared the city. Neither God nor His basic principles changed, but His application of those principles changed. God responds when men repent.

(D) How, then, can we as Christians hasten the coming of the Day of God? For one thing, we can pray as Jesus taught us, “Thy kingdom come” (Matt. 6:10). It would appear from Revelation 5:8 and 8:3-4 that the prayers of God’s people are related in some way to the pouring out of God’s wrath on the nations. If God’s work today is calling out a people for His name (Acts 15:14), then the sooner the church is completed, the sooner our Lord will return. (ww)

4. **Look for new heavens and a new earth** (vs 13) The old world must pass away so that the new may come: **there will be only righteousness there; no more sin** (new earth described in Rev. 21)

Isa 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Rev 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

D. Remember to be Diligent: Because We are Looking For Christ’s Return, and Wish to be “Found” Pleasing to Him when He Comes: (3:14-16)

2 Peter 3:14-16 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 3:15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which

they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

1. “Diligent” refers to: “being earnest; making every effort to be ready” to meet Him; being prepared for the coming of Christ; (same word used in 2 Pet.1:10: “...diligent to make their calling and election sure.”)

2. We should be found by Jesus:

a. In Peace (vs 14) (eirene) similar to “shalom”, implying “prosperity or well-being”. We must be at peace with the Lord; resting in His faithful provision.

John 16:33 **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

b. Without spot (vs 14) “spot” (aspilos) means “unwanted ugly stains”; the same word used by Peter (2:13); and by James (1:27) when he instructs us to remain “unspotted” from the world; also used by Peter to describe Jesus the Lamb of God (1 Pet.1:19)

(I) Jesus desires to have a beautiful, unspotted Bride:
that He has made clean (sinless) by His own blood.

(II) (WW) Finally, this expectant attitude will make a difference when we meet Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:14). It will mean that He will greet us “in peace” and have no charges against us so that we would be “ashamed before Him at His coming” (1John 2:28). If we are diligent to watch for His return, and to live holy and godly lives, then we will not be afraid or ashamed. We will meet Him “without spot and blameless.” Jesus Christ is “a Lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19), and we should be careful to follow His example. Peter had warned his readers against the defilement that the apostates bring: “Spots they are and blemishes” (2 Peter 2:13). The separated Christian will not permit himself to be “spotted and blemished” by the false teachers! He wants to meet his Lord wearing pure garments. (ww)

c. Blameless (vs 14) “Forgiven”, “without sin”; only One is faithful, and just to cleanse us from all sin. It cost God His most precious Son in order to make us blameless.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, 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.

3. In our Diligence, We are also Patient, as He Fulfills His Plan of Salvation (vs 15-16)

a. written about by Paul

(I) (WW) Peter made reference to Paul's writings, because it is Paul, more than any other New Testament writer, who explained God's plan for mankind during this present age. Paul explained the relationship between Israel and the church. He pointed out that God used the nation Israel to prepare the way for the coming of the Saviour. But Israel rejected its King, and asked to have Him crucified. Today, Israel is set aside nationally, but God is doing a wonderful new thing: He is saving Jews and Gentiles, and making them one in Christ in the church!

(II) Note that Peter classified Paul's letters as Scripture, that is, the inspired Word of God. Not only did the teaching of the Apostles agree with that of the prophets and our Lord (2 Peter 3:2), but the Apostles also agreed with each other. Some liberal scholars try to prove that the Apostles' doctrine was different from that of Jesus Christ, or that Peter and Paul were at variance with each other. The recipients of Peter's second letter had also read some of Paul's epistles, and Peter assured them that there was agreement. (ww)

b. misused by false teachers

(WW) What happens to people who blindly twist the Scriptures? They do it “unto their own destruction.” Peter was not writing about Christians who have a difficult time interpreting the Word of God, because nobody understands all of the Bible perfectly. He was describing the false teachers who “tortured” the Word of God in order to prove their false doctrines. The word “destruction” is repeated often in this letter (2 Peter 2:1-3; 3:7, 16). In the King James Version, it is translated “damnable,” “pernicious,” and “perdition,” as well as “destruction.” It means the rejection of eternal life, which results in eternal death. (ww)

- c. **a great contrast:** to live in peace, without spot, blameless, enjoying salvation by the longsuffering of God; or, destruction, loss, shame, sorrow of those who misuse the truth.

E. Be Diligent to Grow, Spiritually, Lest You Fall (2 Peter 3:17-18)

2 Pet 3:17-18 **Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.**

1. The Climax of Peter’s Message: After warning against false teachers, their certain destruction, the final destruction of the heavens and earth, the day of Christ’s judgment, His coming to rule the new earth as King of kings and Lord of Lords; Peter has reached the main point of his message: **“BE READY!”**

2. How to Be Ready:

- a. **Remember what you KNOW.** (vs 17) Use your knowledge of Christ to live a “Christ-like” lifestyle (by the Holy Spirit).
- b. **Beware lest you fall from your steadfastness.** (vs 17) Even after overcoming the suffering of great persecution from outside the Church, Christians can face the dangers of deception by false teachers within the church.

(I) (WW) The word translated “**beware**” means “**be constantly guarding yourself.**” Peter’s readers knew the truth, but he warned them that knowledge alone was not sufficient protection. They had to be on their guard; it is easy for people who have a knowledge of the Bible to grow **overconfident and to forget the warning:**

1 Cor 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

(II) What special danger did Peter see? That the true believers would be **“led away together with the error of the wicked”** (literal translation). He is warning us against breaking down the walls of separation that must stand between the true believers and the false teachers. There can be no communion between truth and error.

(III) The word **“wicked”** (vs 17) means **“the lawless.”** Peter’s description of the apostates in 2 Peter 2 reveals how lawless they are. (ww)

(IV) **We must continue to stand upon the “rock”, Jesus Christ.**

Mat 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

(V) Jesus has promised to always be with us.

Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Prov 18:24 A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

c. Grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ. (vs 18)

(WW) How can we as believers maintain our steadfastness and avoid being among the “unstable souls” who are easily beguiled and led astray? By growing spiritually. “But be constantly growing” is the literal translation. We should not grow “in spurts,” but in a constant experience of development. (ww)

1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

(I) **“Knowledge”** (gnosis), not the kind which brings pride and division; but knowledge from the Holy Spirit that brings **unity and mutual growth and Christ-likeness.**

(A) (WW) We must also grow “in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” It is one thing to

“know the Bible,” and quite another thing to know the Son of God, the central theme of the Bible. The better we know Christ, through the Word, the more we grow in grace; the more we grow in grace, the better we understand the Word of God. (ww)

1 Cor 8:1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

Eph 4:12-13 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: {13} Till 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:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

(B) (WW) We must also grow “in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” It is one thing to “know the Bible,” and quite another thing to know the Son of God, the central theme of the Bible. The better we know Christ through the Word, the more we grow in grace; the more we grow in grace, the better we understand the Word of God. (ww)

(II) “Grace” (charis) “unmerited”, “receiving without deserving”; it is the center of the Christian faith and life. Grace flows from God for us to enjoy then give to others.

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Gal 6:18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Eph 6:24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

(A) (WW) We must grow “in grace.” This has to do with Christian character traits, the very things Peter wrote about in 2 Peter 1:5-7, and that Paul wrote about in Galatians 5:22-23. As we study God’s Word, we learn about the various aspects of grace that are available to us as children of God. We are stewards of “the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). There is grace for every situation and every challenge of life. Our testimony should be, like Paul:

1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

(B) Growing in grace often means experiencing trials and even suffering. We never really experience the grace of God until we are at the end of our own resources. The lessons learned in the “school of grace” are always costly lessons, but they are worth it. To grow in grace means to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom we receive all the grace that we need.

John 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

(III) **Jesus Christ** is the focus of Peter’s epistle, of every true believer, of the earth, and of all creation. Peter himself had grown in the grace and knowledge of Christ since his fishing days; he refers to Jesus as Lord, and he urges us to do the same by surrendering to the Holy Spirit’s work in us.

3. Spiritual Growth Brings Glory to Christ (vs 18)

- a. (WW) What is the result of spiritual growth? Glory to God! It glorifies Jesus Christ when we keep ourselves separated from sin and error. It glorifies Him when we grow in grace and knowledge, for then we become more like Him. (ww)

2 Pet 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. TO HIM BE GLORY BOTH NOW AND FOR EVER. Amen.

JUDE

Notes are from “**The Communicator’s Commentary**” by Paul Cedar; published by Word Publishing copyright 1984.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF JUDE

A. THEME: Warning against false teachers

B. KEY VERSES: **Jude 1:3-4** Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and **exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints. {4} For there are **certain men crept in unawares**, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, **ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**

C. AUTHOR: Jude

Jude 1:1-3 **Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,**

Jude was the brother of James (author of the book of James); and the half-brother of Jesus. (In Mark 6:3 and Matt. 13:15 we find that Jesus had brothers by the name of James and Judas (Jude)). There was only one James who was recognized as a leader in the early church; the same James who wrote the epistle of James and was the half brother of Jesus. Thus making Jude, the brother of James, also a half-brother of Jesus. There is no evidence that Jude was a leader in the early church, so it would be natural to identify himself by his more recognizable brother, James.

Nothing is known about him; only that he was not considered an “apostle”, but was with the disciples in the upper room after Christ’s ascension.

Acts 1:14 **These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.**

Jude identifies himself as a “servant” of Jesus Christ. Though he once rejected and opposed his brother Jesus (John 7:5), Jude now knows and declares Him as Lord and Savior.

D. DATE:

The epistle of Jude was probably written between 66 – 75 AD. It was the time when a group of “Gnostics” had begun to corrupt the Church with false teachings and immoral practices.

E. AUDIENCE:

The “called, sanctified, and preserved in Christ”; to all believers in Christ (vs 1). Some Bible scholars believe that Jude and 2 Peter were written to the same group of believers, because the message is very similar which indicates the recipients were facing the same needs. (Compare to 2 Pet.)

F. PURPOSE:

Jude had intended to write concerning their mutual salvation, but found it necessary to write exhorting them to contend earnestly for the faith that they first received from the teachings of Christ and His apostles, and also from the example of OT teachers. Jude, like Peter, begins with a loving and encouraging affirmation of “beloved” believers; then instructs them in a stern WARNING against “false teachers”, and in building spiritual lives. It is thought possible that Jude may have written his letter first, from which Peter may have borrowed, as Peter’s letter is the longer. Others believe that they were both writing from Rome at the same time, with knowledge of each other’s work; perhaps having shared a common experience as the source of their material.

Jude has two major concerns—that believers would not drift by their own carelessness, and that they would not be led astray by false teachers. Rather it is his prayer that instead they will take the initiative and build their faith.

G. SIMPLE OUTLINE

I. OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF JUDE

II. GREETING AND PURPOSE (Jude 1:1-3)

A. Jude, the Servant of Jesus (vs 1)

B. To Those Who are Called (vs 1)

C. Mercy, Peace, and Love Multiplied to You (vs 2)

D. It was Needful to Write to You and Exhort You

III. EXPOSING UNGODLY, FALSE TEACHERS (vs 4-19)

A. Characteristics of “certain men crept in unawares”

IV. FINAL JUDGMENTS UPON FALSE TEACHERS: (vs. 5-11; 13-15, above)

V. BUILD YOUR SPIRITUAL LIVES (vs. 20-25)

A. “On Your Most Holy Faith...” (vs 20)

B. “Praying in the Holy Spirit.” (vs 20)

C. “Keep Yourselves in the Love of God.” (vs 21)

D. “Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (vs 21)

E. “Having Compassion, Making a Difference:” (vs 22)

F. “And Others Save with Fear, Pulling Them out of the Fire...” (vs 23)

G. He is Able to Keep You from Falling (vs. 24-25)

H. COMPARE TO: 2 Peter

II. GREETING AND PURPOSE (Jude 1:1-3)

Jude 1:1-3 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: {2} Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be multiplied. {3} Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

A. Jude, the Servant of Jesus (vs 1) Though he once rejected and opposed his brother Jesus (John 7:5), Jude now knows and declares Him as Lord and Savior. He did not glory in being the brother of Christ, but had a meek and humble spirit; not ashamed to be servant to his brother, Jesus; or to be less significant than his brother James.

B. To Those Who are Called (vs 1)

1. “called” (kletos) “to be called”

Rom 1:6-7 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: {7} To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:...

2. “sanctified” (hagiazo) “set apart” (1 Pet.3:15)

3. “preserved” (tereo) “kept”; “reserved”

C. Mercy, Peace, and Love Multiplied to You (vs 2): This is a uniquely Christian greeting, used similarly by many Christian writers, including Paul:

1 Cor 1:3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. It was Needful to Write to You – and Exhort You

1. Jude had wanted to write concerning the basics of their salvation.

2. Instead, he saw the need to urge them to “contend” (to strive, struggle, argue earnestly) for their authentic Christian faith.

2 Tim 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

III. EXPOSING UNGODLY, FALSE TEACHERS (vs 4-19)

To examine this passage we will divide it into two categories. Like 2 Peter, the first exposes the **characteristics of false teachers and their teachings**; the second, the **judgment they will face**.

Jude 1:4-19 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

1:5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. **1:6** And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. **1:7** Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

1:8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. **1:9** Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. **1:10** But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. **1:11** Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. **1:12** These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; **1:13** Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. **1:14** And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, **1:15** To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. **1:17** But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; **1:18** How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. **1:19** These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

A. Characteristics of “certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation”. Their speech and conduct reveal their true character.

1. **“Ungodly men”** (vs 4) cannot teach truth, because God is the source of truth.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

2. They **“turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness”** (Vs. 4) Those who walk in sin would encourage us to use the precious and costly grace of God as a license to live the life of immorality.

3. They “**deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (vs 4)
The test of a spirit is what it says about Jesus. No one can belong truly to Him without acknowledging Jesus as Lord.

Rom 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

1 Cor 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4. “**These filthy dreamers defile the flesh...**” (vs 8) Sin always leads to death. When we walk in the flesh we are actually polluting our own bodies. Contrast with:

1 Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

5. They “**despise dominion**” meaning they **reject authority**. (vs 8) Even in recent years we have seen a moving away from submission to God’s authority. This is a defiance of the first commandment: You shall have no other gods before me. (Ex.20:3) There are many who do not wish to live under the Lordship of Christ, nor under the godly discipline of the church, God’s delegated authority. Also, many churches no longer make any effort to exercise church discipline.
6. They “**speak evil of dignities (dignitaries).**” (vs 8) Love and respect for God’s authority in the church, those He places in leadership, is a vital principle of spiritual life. We are admonished to treat the elders who labor in the word as being worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17). We are to obey those who have rule over us as they watch out for our souls (Heb. 1

Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

1 Th 5:13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

7. “**These speak evil of those things which they know not.**” (vs 10) The natural sinful person will speak his loudest on his weakest point, to hide his weakness. The false teachers not only speak with loudness but also

with evil.

8. Like **“brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.”** (vs 10) “Corrupt” means “destroy”. They are like irrational dumb animals, destroying themselves. This is especially significant when we consider that among the early false teachers were the gnostics who contended that they were particularly brilliant and elite in their spiritual understanding (higher knowledge).
9. **“These are spots in your feasts of charity,** when they feast with you feeding themselves without fear...” (vs 12) The word “spot” carries the meaning of “a ledge or reef of rock in the sea” with the idea of a ship needing to steer clear of such danger. In the same manner we should steer clear of false teachers who come in the guise of love, but only to serve themselves.
10. They are **“feeding themselves without fear”**. (vs 12) False teachers care only for themselves, tend only themselves, take what they want rather give to the needs of others.

John 21:16 He [Jesus] saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

11. **“They are clouds without water...”** (vs 12) This is the same analogy as used in 2 Peter. Clouds without water are like wells without water—of little use. Being empty, they are driven about by the wind—out of control.
12. They are **“trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit...”** (vs 12) They are like fruit trees in late autumn that bear no fruit. Quite unlike those who are abiding in Christ and bear much fruit.

John 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. {5} I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

13. They are like **“raging waves of the sea...”** (vs 13) Such violent waves produce a “foam” which represents their own shame or disgrace.
14. They are **“wandering stars.”** (vs 13) Like stars who have moved out of their intended orbit. Sin always takes us off course away from the intended blessings of God.

15. **“These are murmurers, and complainers...”** (vs 16) Like the children of Israel in the O.T. they praised God when in fellowship with Him, and murmured and complained when they had gone astray.

Exo 16:2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

16. They are **“walking after their own lusts...”** (vs 16, 18) Peter begged his readers to refrain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (2 Peter 2:18). These false teachers make no such warning: instead they practice such behavior in their own lives!

17. **“Their mouth speaketh great swelling words...”** (vs 16) They are boasters, and they attempt to impress people not only with their bragging, but with the words they use.

18. They **“have men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.”** (vs 16) They speak flattery to people in order to deceive them for their own advantage. Flattery is a form of lying, because it is exaggerated or distorted truth.

Proverbs 28:23 A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet”.

19. **“These be they who separate themselves...”** (vs 19) Those who walk according to their own ungodly lust are the ones who cause divisions or separations in the Body. Whenever there are divisions in the Body of Christ, you can be sure that the lust of the flesh is at work.

20. They are **“sensual.”** (vs 19) The word means to live in the natural as opposed to the supernatural. It is to walk after the flesh and not the Spirit.

1 Cor 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

21. They **“have not the Spirit.”** (vs 19) This is the summary of all these statements: the real problem is spiritual. They simply do not have God the Holy Spirit in them. He is the source of revealed truth. They cannot have or reveal the truth if it is not in them.

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

IV. FINAL JUDGMENTS UPON FALSE TEACHERS: (vs. 5-11; 13-15, above)

Jude assures his readers that God will certainly judge and destroy false teachers who lead others away from the grace of God. They are in the same spiritual category as the Pharisees, whom Christ hated.

- A. The Lord “**destroyed them that believed not.**” (vs 5) Jude uses O.T. examples to remind his readers that God destroyed those Israelites in Moses’ day who did not believe (Numbers 14), implying that He will do the same to non-believers today.
- B. He has “**reserved [disobedient angels] in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.**” (vs 6) Again Jude parallels Peter’s teaching concerning the judgment of angels (2 pet.2:4). If God judged disobedient angels (Rev.20:10), He will surely judge false teachers who lead His children astray.
- C. They will “**suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.**” (vs 7) Jude uses the example of Sodom and Gomorrah to warn those who would seek after sexual immorality in the present day (Genesis 19).
- D. “**Woe unto them!**” (vs 11) Jude declares woe upon those who speak evil about things they don’t understand, who think only in the natural realm, and who literally corrupt themselves. If God’s judgment came upon Cain (who murdered his brother; Gen.4:1-15), Balaam (who deceitfully tried to lead Israel astray for his own gain; Num.22-24), and Korah (who rebelled against the authority and leadership of Moses; Num.16:1-36), then His judgment will surely come upon all who disobey in the present day.
- E. “**To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.**” (vs 13) Jude refers to these false teachers as **stars who have gone astray** and have **moved out of their intended orbit**. He states that the blackness of darkness has been reserved for them forever. “Darkness” is always the domain of sin in scriptures.
Compare to:

John 3:19-21 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. {20} For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. {21} But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

John 1:4-12 {4} In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men. {5} And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. {6} There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. {7} The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. {8} He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. {9} That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that

cometh into the world... {12} But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 9:5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

F. “Behold the Lord cometh...to execute judgment upon all...the ungodly.” (vs 14-15) Jude quotes from the apocryphal book, Enoch. The full prophecy of Enoch is, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” (Enoch 1:9). Within the Jewish society of Jude’s day, the book of Enoch was popular. Jude is not referring to it as scripture, but rather as a common source with which his Jewish readers would be very familiar. Jude leaves no doubt about the fate of false teachers, and he wants all believers to take heed.

V. BUILD YOUR SPIRITUAL LIVES (vs. 20-25)

One lesson of life is that one can destroy in a short time what may have taken years to build. Yet it is much more fulfilling to be a builder. The Lord called us to be builders—not destroyers. Sin brings destruction, but spiritual life brings growth and building! Jude finishes by sharing 6 ways we can build ourselves in our faith.

Jude 1:20-25 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 1:22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 1:23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 1:25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

A. “building up yourselves on your most holy faith...” (vs 20) This is “holy” faith; faith that is “separate, distinct or utterly different”. It is a vital part of spiritual growth that comes from God, and is toward God. It is lived out in active obedience.

Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Gal 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Heb 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

B. “praying in the Holy Spirit.” (vs 20) The battle against false teaching is not to be won by mere argument or intellect. We **need to use our spiritual weapons in building our faith.** One of those is prayer, specifically **praying in the Holy Spirit.** God the Holy Spirit can empower us to pray and guide us into effective prayer; and He will make intercession for us according to the will of God.

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Rom 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. {27} And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

C. “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” (vs 21) Godly builders are lovers. It is the love of God flowing through us. We are to stay within the bounds of God’s love, receive it and give it.

Eph 4:15-16 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: {16} From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 Cor 8:1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

John 15:9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

D. “looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (vs 21) To be enjoyed day by day. The ultimate expression of God’s mercy is eternal life. We must wait for, and look forward to it. As Jeremiah wrote:

Lamentations 3:22-23 It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. 3:23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

E. “having compassion, making a difference:” (vs 22) We need to joyfully, compassionately share God’s mercies with others, including those who have gone astray; attempting to rescue them from false teachers. We will not condemn them, but restore them to Christ and to fellowship in the Church.

1 Pet 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

F. “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire...” (vs 23) The act of mercy should reach as far as to actually snatch them from the fire of judgment. This is something done “with fear” as Paul warned:

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

G. He is Able to Keep You from Falling (vs. 24-25)

The closing two verses of Jude’s epistle are the most quoted of the entire epistle. These bring encouragement to each of us who are walking in active obedience to God, daily building up our “most holy faith, rejecting the heresies of false prophets.” Here the focus is squarely on God:

1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 1:25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.