

And he prayed earnestly that it might not rain. And it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again and the heavens gave rain and the earth produced its fruit.

19 ¶ Brethren, if any of you stray from the

truth, and one brings him back,

20 let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

are too proud or distant that they cannot confess their sins to one another. **The effective prayer of a righteous man:** Fervent prayer is the result of a righteous person. Righteous people pray fervently (See Jn 9:31; Cl 4:12; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:7,22; 5:14,15). **Avails much:** All prayer requests may not be answered by God. However, prayer is answered on the basis of righteous living. We must assume, therefore, that God answers our prayers in the affirmative, though they may not be answered when we want them answered or in the manner we request that they be answered. The fact that God does answer prayer is evidence that He works in our lives. We may not understand the manner by which He works, but we can be assured by these statements of James that He does work (See Rm 8:28). **17 Elijah ... prayed earnestly:** Elijah was no different than any man. Though he was a prophet, he was an ordinary man with faith in God as any righteous Christian. Elijah did not just make a casual request to God that it not rain (1 Kg 17:1 - 18:45). The Greek verb "prayed" is aorist in tense. The emphasis is that he made one fervent prayer. The result of that one fervent prayer was that God stopped the rain for three and a half years. **18 Prayed again:** The verb here is also aorist tense. In other words, a second prayer was made three and a half years after the first prayer in reference to the rain in order that God allow it to rain again. One prayer stopped the rain. Three and a half years later, a second prayer started the rain again. The power of prayer is not in the number of prayers that are made for a particular request. The

power of prayer is based on the righteous living of the individual who makes the prayer in faith (See comments Cl 4:12). The righteous demeanor of our lives, therefore, is the foundation upon which prayers are answered because God works on behalf of His obedient children.

RESTORATION TO TRUTH

19 If any of you stray from the truth: It is possible for a Christian to stray from the flock, and thus fall from the grace of God (Gl 5:3,4; Hb 6:4-6; 2 Pt 2:20-22). Therefore, Christians must make their calling and election sure by remaining close to Jesus and to one another in the truth (See 2 Pt 1:10,11). **One brings him back:** Christians have a responsibility toward one another to aid one another to remain faithful (See comments Gl 6:1; see Mt 18:15; 1 Tm 4:16). **20 Save a soul from death:** When Peter denied the Lord at the time of the trials of Jesus, he fell away. However, he repented and returned to the Lord. As the brother here who has fallen away is converted again to the truth, Peter was also converted to the right way after his fall (Lk 22:32). The brother who is converted back to the truth has been delivered from his state of being lost. **Multitude of sins:** Sins are cleansed upon the condition that the sinning brother repents and returns to the truth (Ps 32:1,2; Rm 4:6-8; 1 Jn 1:7-9; compare Rm 11:14; 1 Pt 4:8). One can receive forgiveness of any sin for which he repents. However, if one persists in any sin as a way of life, there is no forgiveness (See comments Hb 10:26,27).

The First Letter Of Peter

1 Peter

Author

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

Date

In 1:7 Peter speaks of the fiery trials that would come upon his readers. In 4:7 he says that the end of all things is at hand. If his reference to the fiery trials of persecution of the church was that which Nero carried out in the middle 60s, then the date of writing would be around A.D. 65. If the end

of all things refers to termination of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the date would be about the same. Most Bible students, therefore, place the writing of the letter somewhere between A.D. 63 and 66. This would be at the end of Nero's persecution since Nero committed suicide in A.D. 68. It would also be at the beginning of the great turmoil that would happen in events leading up to Rome's subjugation of national Israel by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Theme

The verse that would best explain the theme of this letter would be 5:12. *"I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand."*

Purpose

Since Peter is writing in view of the destruction of Jerusalem that would come in only a few years after the ink dried on this epistle (4:7), he seeks to encourage his readers. He writes in order to encourage his readers by reassuring them that they stand in the grace of God. Though tested and tried by the hostile environment in which they lived, they must remain confident that they are the royal priesthood of God (2:5,9). Since they are the holy priesthood of God, they must maintain the virtues of Christian conduct in an environment that is hostile to their beliefs (4:12-16). Since they had obtained the mercy of God (2:10), they must behave in a manner that manifests the mercy that was extended to them through the grace of God. Since they have been redeemed because of the suffering of Christ on the cross, they must not seek retaliation against those who unjustly persecute them (2:21-25; 3:13-18).

Chapter 1

1 ¶ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,

2 elect according to the foreknowledge of

God the Father in sanctification of the Spirit, to obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3 ¶ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1 **Peter:** Peter identifies himself as the Christ-sect apostle who was personally sent forth by Jesus with the other apostles (2 Pt 2:1). He does not identify himself as any special apostle of Jesus. He simply states that he is one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Though Peter had the privilege of making the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus in Acts 2, he does not consider that this privilege in some way made him to be preeminent among the apostles. Jesus had promised that he would unlock His kingdom reign by making the first official announcement that He was reigning in heaven on David's throne (See comments Mt 16:18,19). However, neither Peter nor any of the other apostles assumed that Jesus meant that he would be head over the other apostles. **Sojourners of the Dispersion:** The Dispersion (*diaspora*) was a Jewish teaching that referred to the Jews who had been scattered throughout the nations (Js 1:1). It is certain that Peter is writing to Christians who are the new Israel of God. He thus may be using this Jewish phrase that first referred to the scattering of national Israel to refer to the new spiritual Israel, the church of Christ that was scattered throughout the world (See At 8:4). He writes to Jewish and Gentile Christians who have been scattered into the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. 2 **Elect according to the foreknowledge of God:** Before the creation of the world the scheme of God's redemption for man was planned (See comments Rm 8:29,30; 1 Co 2:7; Ep 1:4-6). It was executed in the mind of God in that Jesus was predes-

tinued to the cross for the redemption of those who would respond to the grace of God (Rv 13:8). In God's foreknowledge, therefore, He planned that He would elect out of the world for eternal salvation all those who would respond to the gospel of the cross by immersion into Christ (2 Th 2:13,14; See Rm 6:3-6). Therefore, the church is the group of those whom God will elect for eternal dwelling. They are thus the elect, though according to our calendar the actual electing has not yet taken place (See 2:9; 5:13; Ti 1:1). Peter's audience, as well as all Christians, will be chosen out of the world for eternal salvation at the final judgment because they have made a free-moral choice to become a part of the elect (See At 2:23; Rm 8:29; 11:2). God foreordained that the church would be the group of the saved. Therefore, all those who have free-morally chosen to become members of the church are referred to in the New Testament as the elect and chosen. **Sanctification of the Spirit:** The elect are such because of their individual choice to become a part of the church which is destined for eternity. The members have fulfilled their individual part of God's plan of salvation. God's part is the sanctification of those who have chosen to become a part of the elect. Therefore, when one makes a free-moral choice to become a member of the elect, he is cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Ep 1:7). He is born again (1:23; Jn 3:3-5) because he is washed of sin (At 22:15). He is thus set apart from the world as God's son (1 Co 1:2; 6:11). **To obedience:** The word "to" is from *eis*. Therefore, in one's response to the gospel by baptism, he is set apart from the world in order to be delivered unto God as an obedient son (Ep 2:10). Acceptable obedience begins when one responds to the gospel by im-

Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now

for a little while, if need be, you have been distressed by many trials,

7 so that the proof of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

8 Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

mersion for remission of sins (See comments 1 Co 15:10). One thus walks in the light because he has allowed the light of God to move him to obedience (1 Jn 1:5-10). **Sprinkling of the blood:** The Old Testament covenant that God established with Israel was inaugurated by the sprinkling of the blood of animals (Ex 24:7,8; see Is 52:15). However, the covenant that God has now established with the obedient has been inaugurated by the blood of Jesus (Mt 26:26; Hb 12:24). **Grace ... peace:** God's grace results in peace between God and man in reference to God's forgiveness of our sin. His grace also results in peace in reference to inner peace that comes from knowing that one is right with God because he has been saved by God's grace. This common greeting of "grace and peace" of New Testament Christians is the result of the plan of God's grace that now has been revealed (See Rm 1:7; 1 Co 1:3; Gl 1:3; Ep 1:2; Ph 1:2).

OUR SALVATION OF HOPE

3 Begotten us again to a living hope: Before the crucifixion, the disciples had hoped that Jesus was the one for whom they hoped would be the redeemer of Israel (Lk 23:21). However, because they did not understand at the time, the crucifixion brought disappointment and disillusionment. Three days after the crucifixion, the resurrection of Jesus from the grave restored their hope. Peter here states that they again have hope by the resurrection of Jesus (See 3:21; 1 Co 15:12-20; Ep 1:17-20). Every Christian now has hope of eternal dwelling because of the resurrection of Jesus (At 24:15; Hb 2:14,15). **4 An inheritance:** Since Christians have been raised with Jesus from the grave of baptism, they have hope of an inheritance in eternal dwelling with God (Rm 6:4,5). There is a crown of glory awaiting all those who remain faithful to their calling (2 Tm 4:8; see Ep 1:14; Cl 3:24). Peter does not use the Greek word *aiōnios* (eternal) to explain the unending nature of this dwelling because *aiōnios* sometimes refers to that which has an end (See the Old Testament Septuagint use of *aiōnios* in reference to many ordinances of the law - Ex 12:24; 29:9; 40:15; Lv 24:8; Nm 25:13; Jr 32:40; Ez 16:60). In order that his readers not misunderstand the unending nature of heaven to come, Peter uses four words to explain their future inheritance. This inheritance will be the following: (1) **Incorruptible:** As opposed to that which is material, the inheritance will be imperishable (Mt 6:19,20). (2) **Undefiled:** Nothing unclean will enter therein (1 Jn 1:7; compare Rv 21:8,27). (3) **Does not fade away:** Material things pass away

with their using. However, the inheritance for which Christians wait will not pass away as we see the world around us passing away. (4) **Reserved:** Our inheritance is secured by God (Mt 5:10-12; Cl 1:5). **5 Kept by the power of God:** The Greek verb here refers to being guarded. It is a military term that refers to one being protected. Peter uses the Greek present tense wherein he is emphasizing the continuous action of the verb. Christians are now continually protected by God for the inheritance that is yet to come (Jn 10:28; see Ph 4:7). However, if one's faithful obedience stops, then the guarding stops (See comments Lk 22:31,32; 1 Jn 1:5-10; Rv 2:10).

6 Distressed by various trials: All Christians have reason to rejoice in the hope they have of unending life in the presence of God. It is this hope that takes them through the trials of this life (Js 1:2,3; see Mt 5:11,12; At 14:22; 20:19; Rv 3:10). The Christians to whom Peter wrote were headed for a great testing that would last for "a little while." This would probably refer to the indirect suffering they would experience as Rome brought down judgment upon the insurrectionists of national Israel in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). Christians would have to undergo the Roman-Jewish wars that would take place around this date. We must also keep in mind that Nero was leading a personal vendetta against Christians in Rome, which persecution spread to other areas of the Roman Empire. The persecution of Nero would end in A.D. 68 when Nero committed suicide. The indirect persecution that resulted from the Roman campaign to put down national Israel ended in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. **7 The proof of your faith:** It would be the trials that would determine the sincerity of their faith (Compare Mk 8:31-38). It often takes hard times to determine if one has a genuine faith. As gold is refined by fire in order to remove impurities, so the impurities of one's faith are removed by the fires of trial (Jb 23:10; see Rm 2:7). It is for this reason that Christians count it with joy when they fall into various trials (Js 1:2,3). They count it with joy because they understand the good that comes from such trials (Rm 8:28). **8 Have not seen Him, you love:** Christians walk by faith (2 Co 5:7). They are more blessed than the early disciples who walked by sight because they personally experienced Jesus and His miraculous works (See comments Jn 20:24-32). Because we walk by faith, we love by faith. God considers blessed those who love Jesus, and yet, have not seen Him or experienced any miracles that proved He was the Son of God (See Jn 3:2). **9 Outcome of your faith:** It is not that one receives a

9 receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of *your* souls.

10 ¶ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you,

11 searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow.

12 To them it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to you they ministered the things that are now reported to you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy

Spirit sent forth from heaven, which things angels desire to look into.

13 ¶ Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind. Be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not fashion yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.

15 But as He who has called you is holy, so you be holy in all manner of behavior,

16 because it is written, "*You will be holy, for I am holy.*"

17 ¶ And if you call on the Father, who with-

meritorious reward for works that are produced by his faith. It is that faith continues in the love of God. Faith moves us to trust in God to provide the final reward for a walk of faith. Faith moves one to remain in the commandments of the Lord (Js 2:14-26). Therefore, the reward is the result of a faith that moves one to stay close to God (See Rv 2:10). **10 This salvation:** It is certain that Peter is discussing the eternally planned mystery of the cross that will result in our eternal dwelling in heaven. It was this mystery that was concealed from all men by God until its revelation through Jesus (Ti 2:11). Indications of the mystery were revealed to the Old Testament prophets in order to give hope to all men. All men needed hope concerning a solution for man's inability to keep law perfectly in order to justify oneself before God (See Gn 3:15; Is 53; Ps 22). Under the Old Testament dispensation before the cross, God expected men to walk by faith in His promise that a solution for sin was coming (See comments Rm 3:25). **11 Searching:** The prophets were not given the privilege of understanding the prophecies that were revealed to them concerning the scheme of salvation. They wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Co 2:12,13; 2 Pt 1:20,21). However, the Holy Spirit did not inspire them to understand what they wrote. Even Satan did not know what God had in mind concerning the cross. If he had known, then certainly he would not have moved the mob of Jerusalem to have Jesus crucified, which crucifixion led to the downfall of his kingdom of darkness. **Glory that would follow:** Not only did the Old Testament prophets speak of the gospel of the cross, they also prophesied of the glorious church that would be called into heavenly dwelling (Gn 3:15; see comments Gl 3:8). **12 Revealed ... to you:** Though the prophecies concerning the mystery of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit to be written by the prophets, the revelation of the mystery was not known until it took place. The mystery was the good news of the death of Jesus on the cross for man's sin problem. It was His resurrection in order to give all men hope of eternal life (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4,20-22). This gospel event was reported to those to whom Peter wrote by the inspired preachers who proclaimed the same to all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15; see 1 Co 2:12,13; Ep 3:1-5). **Angels desire to look into:** Before the revelation of the gospel to man, no one other than God knew what was to be revealed. Even angels sought to understand the mystery. However, it

was not revealed to them nor any other being, including Satan (Compare Ep 3:10; Hb 1:14).

EXHORTATION TO LIVE GODLY LIVES

13 Gird up the loins of your mind: Loose dress was to be girded when working or running. Peter metaphorically uses the girding up of the dress in order to refer to Christians becoming serious about the work in which they are engaged. One must bind up all unholy thought and behavior in order to run the Christian race. They must discipline their lives and lay aside sin (Hb 12:1; see 1 Co 9:24; Gl 2:2; Hb 10:39). **Be sober:** Sober means to exercise self-restraint or to be mentally balanced. One who is of a sober mind carefully and sensibly acts after giving great thought to what he will do (4:9; 5:8; 2 Tm 4:5). **Revelation of Jesus Christ:** Reference here is probably to the final coming of Jesus (Hb 6:19; see Rm 8:24,25; 1 Th 5:8; 2 Th 2:16; Ti 2:13). **14 Obedient children:** All sons of God are obedient to His commandments (Mt 7:21; Ph 2:12; Hb 5:8; compare Rm 1:5; 6:15-18; 16:26). They are sons because they are obedient. **Former lusts:** While they were ignorant of the will of God, they walked in a rebellious behavior against the commandments of God (See At 17:30; Ep 2:1-10; 4:17-19; 1 Th 4:5). **15,16 Be holy, for I am holy:** Peter's quotation of Lv 11:44,45 emphasizes the fact that sons of God must lead a life that is separate from the behavior that is typical of the world (See Hb 12:14). He states a command that they be holy. Emphasis is not on the holiness that is made possible by the cleansing blood of Jesus, but on the obedience of the Christian to the will of the Father. Through obedience one responds in order to come into contact with the cleansing blood of Jesus. It is the blood of Jesus that justifies one before God (Rm 3:25). However, our response to the cross is necessary in order that we come into contact with the justifying grace of God through the blood of Jesus. The sons of God, therefore, should behave themselves after the nature of God. They must lead godly lives because they have been sanctified by the blood of Jesus, and thus, made holy.

17 Without respect of persons: Our judgment will not be based on whether we call ourselves sons of God. Judgment will be based on our response to those works for which we have been created in Christ Jesus (Ep 2:10). Therefore, judgment will be based on our choice and not by God showing favoritism (At 10:34,35;

out respect of persons judges according to each one's work, pass the time of your journey *on earth* in fear;

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold from your vain behavior *received* by tradition from your fathers,

19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in

these last times for you

21 who through Him are believing in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

22 ¶ Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

23 having been born again, not by perishable seed, but imperishable, by the word of God that lives and abides.

Rm 2:9-11; Js 2:1,9). **Judges according to each one's work:** Our work is the manifestation of our response to God's grace (1 Co 15:10). If there is no response, then there is no appreciation of the grace of God, and thus, no application of the grace of God to our problem of sin. Since God will judge according to our response to His grace, then the conduct of our lives must be according to His will (See Mt 6:9; Lk 11:2; Rm 2:6; 8:15; 2 Co 5:10; Rv 20:12). **18,19 Redeemed ... with the precious blood:** Redeem is a metaphor that finds its earthly meaning in one of two sources or both. Israel was redeemed out of the captivity of Egypt (Ex 6:6). The Israelites were redeemed out of a situation from which they could not deliver themselves. In the culture in which Peter's readers lived, slaves could be redeemed out of slavery by a predetermined amount of money that could be paid for their freedom. In this context, Peter wants us to understand that we were bought out of slavery. A price was paid that we could not pay. It was paid, but not with things of this world that deteriorate away. The price that was paid was the incarnate offering of the Son of God on the cross (1:2; Jn 1:29; At 20:28; Rm 3:25; 1 Co 9:19; Ti 2:14; Hb 2:17; 9:26,27; 1 Jn 2:2; 3:5; 4:10). **Tradition from your fathers:** It is significant that Peter mentions religious traditions in the context of the subject of redemption. The Jews taught a legalistic system of justification. They taught that one could be justified before God through strict obedience to the traditions of the fathers (See comments Mk 7:1-9; Cl 2:20-23). But such efforts to justify oneself are futile attempts to stand before God on the basis of one's own conditions. Traditions originate from man. Therefore, if one seeks to be justified before God on the basis of the traditions of men, then he is seeking to be justified by conditions that have originated with man. But one cannot be justified on his own conditions. Neither can one be redeemed through a combination of honoring religious traditions in conjunction with the word of God. If the traditions are made a condition for salvation, then the redemption by the blood of Jesus is assumed to be insufficient. Religious traditions that are made conditions for salvation, therefore, proclaim that the grace of God is insufficient (See comments Gl 1:6-9; 5:1). **Lamb without blemish:** Under the Old Testament law only a lamb that was without blemish or spot could be offered as a sacrifice for sin (Ex 12:5). Peter points out here that the sinless Son of God offered Himself as a ransom for our sins (See Is 53:7; Jn 1:29). **20 Foreordained before the foundation of the world:** God had planned the scheme of redemption before the creation

of the world (Rm 16:26; Ep 3:5; 4:16; Cl 1:26). Jesus was the Lamb that was slain before the existence of those for whom He died (Rv 13:8). **In these last times:** Peter had preached on Pentecost that the Spirit had been poured out in the last days (At 2:16,17). He was in the last days when the Spirit came. As he writes this epistle he is in the last times. These last times (last days) do not refer to the end of time. Reference is to the last days of national Israel (See comments Mt 24). Jesus was manifested in the last days of national Israel in order to offer all men an escape from sin. Jesus died on the cross in A.D. 30. Forty years later in A.D. 70, national Israel would come to a close. Therefore, the messengers of Jesus went forth into all the Roman Empire during the forty years between the cross and the calamity of Jerusalem in order to call out of Israel those who were sons of Abraham by faith. **21 Raised Him:** The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of the hope of the Christian (At 3:13; 1 Co 15; Ep 1:20,21; Ph 2:9; Rv 1:17). Not only was Jesus raised as prophesied, He was raised to reign at the right hand of God (Dn 7:13,14). He is now reigning with authority over all things (3:22; Ep 1:22,23).

22 Obeying the truth: The truth of the gospel is the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins and His resurrection to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over all things (See comments Jn 1:17; Gl 2:5,14; compare Mk 4:26-29; Jn 17:17; Js 1:18). It is this truth that one obeys in order to be purified from sin (See comments At 22:16; Rm 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). **Love one another fervently:** It is by love that we are identified as the disciples of Jesus (Jn 13:35; see 2:17; 3:8; Rm 12:9,10; 2 Co 6:6; 1 Th 4:9,10; 1 Tm 1:5; Hb 13:1). The nature of the true church of Christ is manifested by the love by which the members relate to one another. No church can claim to be the church of Christ if such love is not characteristic of the membership. **23 Born again:** Christians have been born again through their obedience to the gospel (See comments Jn 3:3-5). **By the word of God:** Those to whom Peter writes did not experience the gospel event of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. However, through the inspired preaching of the evangelists the report of the event was communicated to them (See comments 1 Co 15:1-4). It is through the word of God that men are informed of the gospel. They are thus born again when they obey the gospel by immersion which is preached to all the world (Mk 16:15,16). **Abides in you:** The word of God, therefore, abides in the heart of the one who has submitted to the gospel. Obedience to the gospel is the indication

24 For, “*All flesh is as grass and all its glory as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls away.*

25 *But the word of the Lord endures forever.*” And this is the word by which the gospel was preached to you.

Chapter 2

1 ¶ Therefore, laying aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings,

2 as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word so that you may grow up to salvation,

3 if you have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

4 ¶ And coming to Him *as to* a living stone – rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious –

5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

that one has allowed the will of God to have free course in his life by submitting to the lordship of Jesus (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21; At 2:36-38). When one submits to the gospel, the word of God is living in the heart of this person (Jn 1:21). **24,25** *The word of the Lord endures forever:* Peter quotes Is 40:6-8 to show the contrast between that which is temporary and that which is without end. All that is of the world is temporary. However, the word of God is forever (Mt 24:35; Mk 13:31). It will endure beyond the passing away of the physical world.

Chapter 2

1 *Laying aside:* The conjunction “therefore” signifies that Peter concludes the preceding comments of 1:23-25 with what one must do to maintain the holy life. The Greek word for “laying aside” (*apothemenoi*) refers to putting something off. In order to be holy as God is holy (1:16) we must put off sin (See Rm 13:12; Ep 4:22,23; Cl 3:8; Hb 12:1,2). *Malice:* Malice is the character of one who seeks to do that which is evil against his fellow man (See Rm 1:29; 1 Co 5:8; 14:20; Ep 4:31). *All deceit:* This is the character of one who seeks to be dishonest toward another in order to accomplish his own purposes or to cause harm to others (Rm 1:29; 2 Co 12:16). *Hypocrisies:* The hypocrite speaks the life of righteousness but lives contrary to that which he speaks (Mt 6:24; Jn 3:10). *Envies:* The envious character desires to possess what another has or be what another is (Mt 27:18; Mk 15:10; Ti 3:3). His envy, therefore, hinders him from having a correct relationship with those he envies. *Evil speakings:* Slander is wicked lies about another in order to cause one’s fellow man to suffer harm in reputation. This is verbal defamation of the character of another (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). **2** *Newborn babes:* In contrast to the above character, Peter exhorts his readers to yearn for the word of God which is the source of godly direction (Compare At 20:32; Hb 4:12). Newborn babies yearn for and crave the milk that brings sustenance to their lives. In this manner, all Christians should crave the word of God in order that they be spiritually nourished (Compare comments Mt 18:3; 19:14; see 1 Co 14:20). “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled*” (Mt 5:6). *Grow up to salvation:* The word of God is the source of our faith (Rm 10:17). Without it we would know little about the God who is beyond the curtain of nature. Neither would we know anything about the Son of God who died for our sins. If we did not have the

Bible, all ideas concerning what God has done in history would be filled with corrupted legends and myths (See comments Lk 1:1-4). Therefore, the Christian seeks Bible knowledge in order that he may grow in the holy life (See At 20:32; 1 Th 2:13; 2 Tm 2:15; 2 Pt 3:18). Those who are ignorant of the word of God grow after their own desires, and thus, end up with their own religion that they have created after their own feelings or traditions (See Hs 4:6; Mk 7:1-9; 2 Th 2:10-12). **3** *The Lord is gracious:* (See Ps 34:8). Peter’s readers have experienced the goodness of the Lord. They had experienced the miraculous work of the Spirit. They had witnessed the change of lives as men and women submitted to the lordship of Jesus (See comments Hb 6:3-6). Since they have experienced such, Peter then reasons that they should follow his instructions to continue as babes who long for the nurture of the word of God.

OWNERSHIP BY GOD

4 *A living stone:* Peter’s metaphor is of the Lord who is the rock of our salvation (Ps 62:1,2). The Lord is the one who is the solid foundation of the Christian life. Christians have a living hope (1:3) because of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. They have a living word (1:23) that works in the lives of those who have submitted to the lordship of Jesus. Peter says that they now have a living stone upon which they can base their lives. *Rejected:* Jesus was rejected by those who were of a rebellious nature, and thus, would not submit to His lordship (See Ps 118:22; Jn 1:11). **5** *As living stones:* Christians are living stones because the Stone upon which their lives are built is living. They live because Jesus lives. The Old Testament temple was built out of stones of the material world. On the other hand, the temple of God today is built out of living stones that have responded to the grace of God. The church, therefore, is a spiritual house as opposed to a house of stones (1 Tm 3:15; compare Ep 2:20-22; Hb 3:6). *A holy priesthood:* Under the New Testament law every Christian functions as a priest, and thus, has direct access to God through the high priesthood of Jesus (Rv 1:6; 5:10). The church, therefore, is the priesthood of God that has been separated from the world in order to minister the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). *Spiritual sacrifices:* In contrast to the physical animal sacrifices that were offered by the Old Testament priests, the priest of God today offers up spiritual services to God in response to His grace (Rm 12:1; see Ph 4:18; Hb 13:15,16). **6** The Old Testament prophecies directed Israel’s attention toward this new dispensation about

6 Therefore, it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect and precious. And he who believes on Him will not be disappointed.”

7 ¶ Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious*. But to those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected, the same has become the cornerstone,”

8 and “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” For they stumble, being disobedient to the word. And to this they were appointed.

9 ¶ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a special people, so that you may proclaim the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

10 You in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 ¶ Beloved, I urge *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

12 Keep your behavior honest among the

which Peter here speaks (Is 28:16; see Rm 9:32,33). **Lay in Zion:** On earth, the church was established in Jerusalem (At 2). The source from which the authority of the word of God proceeds for the church, originates in heaven where Jesus is seated at the right hand of God (Mt 28:18; Ep 1:20-22; Hb 8:1). **A chief cornerstone:** The chief cornerstone for building a house in ancient times was the first stone laid by the builders in order to determine the setting of the house. It was the stone from which measurement was made in order to squarely build the house. Jesus is the chief cornerstone from which the church is built (See Mt 16:18,19; Ep 2:20). Any church that does not focus on Jesus as the authority from which all direction must come, is not the church of Christ. Therefore, we must continually look unto Jesus for direction in building ourselves together as the body of Christ (Hb 1:1,2; 5:9). **Not be disappointed:** Since the authority of the word of God proceeds from heaven where Jesus continues to function as the chief cornerstone, no Christian should be ashamed (See Rm 1:16; 5:5; 2 Tm 1:8). One should never be ashamed of believing and obeying that which is of heavenly origin (Rm 1:16). **7,8** Peter here contrasts the attitude of all men to Jesus. **Precious:** Jesus is precious in the hearts of those who have accepted Him as the Lord of their lives. He is precious because He has changed their worldly behavior into a holy manner of life (vss 1-3). **Stone of stumbling:** The Jewish leadership of Jerusalem rejected Jesus (Jn 1:11), and thus, He became the stone over which they stumbled. Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 (vs 7) and Isaiah 8:14 (vs 8) in order to let his readers know that God knew there would be a rejection of His Son. Because of their unbelief in Jesus as the Son of God, they rejected Him both as the Messiah of Israel and Son of God (Rm 9:32,33). The rejection of Jesus, therefore, was not previously unknown by God (See Rm 9:22). God knew that prejudiced and prideful people would not accept the Messiah who would come out of Nazareth. He knew that the people would reject His work, and thus, become disobedient (See 1 Co 1:23; Gl 5:11). **9** In contrast to those who did not believe, Peter says that Christians are four things in comparison to the Old Testament nation of Israel. (1) **A chosen generation:** They are the new Israel of God (Gl 6:16). They are the family of God with whom God has established a covenant relationship (See Mt 26:26-29). (2) **A royal priesthood:** Christians are now priests of God. They offer up spiritual sacrifices and the service of their lives in service to the

world (Rm 12:1). The church is God's royal priesthood to minister to the world of unbelievers. (3) **A holy nation:** The church of God's people has been separated from the world because of the member's voluntary submission to King Jesus. (4) **Special people:** As the nation of Israel was chosen out of the nations of the world, the church is the group of chosen who will eventually be called into heavenly glory because they have voluntarily chosen to become members of the body of Christ (See Ti 2:14). **So that you may proclaim:** The church of disciples are the preceding four things in order to proclaim the gospel to the lost. It is not the work of the priesthood of disciples to preach the praises of God to themselves. They already know God. It is the work of the church to preach the gospel to unbelievers (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). When the church becomes introverted and speaks only to itself, then the church had died. The candlestick is removed because the community in which the disciples live no longer have a witness to the praises of God. **Called ... into ... light:** Christians have been called out of the domain of darkness in sin to the light of the Son of God (Jn 8:12; see Jn 3:19; At 26:18; Rm 2:19; 13:12; 2 Co 4:6; Ep 5:8; 6:12; Cl 1:13; compare Is 9:2; 42:16). **10 Now the people of God:** Under the Old Testament law Israel was the nation of God that had been called out of the world of nations. Peter certainly has such in mind as he refers to the church that is now the special people of God. Members of the church are the possession of God because of their obedience to the gospel (Compare prophecies of Hs 1:6,9,10; 2:23 with Rm 9:25,26). **Have obtained mercy:** The members of the church have responded to the grace of God by obedience to the gospel (Rm 6:2-6). They have therefore reaped the mercy of God who has set aside the punishment that would have been meted out for sin (See comments Ep 2:1-10).

LIVE AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

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

11 Sojourners and pilgrims: Christians are residents of the world. However, their citizenship is not of this world. Their citizenship is registered in heaven and they are only sojourners in this world (Ep 2:19; Ph 3:20).

Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they may, because of *your* good works that they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 ¶ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it is to the king, as supreme,

14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do well.

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing

right you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

16 *Live* as free men, and do not use *your* freedom as a covering for evil, but as the bondservants of God.

17 Honor all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

18 ¶ Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

19 For this *is* commendable, if for the sake

Because their citizenship is in heaven, they are not to become attached to this world (Mt 6:24; Js 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15; see Ep 2:3; Cl 3:5; 1 Th 4:3; Ti 2:12). **War against the soul:** There is a struggle that goes on between the lust after the things of this world and our focus on heavenly things (See Rm 7:23; Js 4:1). Those things that are of this world seek to divert our focus from our heavenly citizenship. The things of the world seek to keep our thinking on the world and off heavenly dwelling (Gl 5:17; See Rm 8:13; Cl 3:1-3). **12 Behavior honest among the Gentiles:** Christians must behave with integrity among the unbelievers in whose presence they live. They must behave in a way that gives hope to others (Mt 5:16; see vs 15; 3:16; Mt 9:8; 2 Co 8:21; Gl 6:10; Ph 2:15; Ti 2:8). In doing this, they influence others for good (1 Th 4:12; 1 Tm 3:7). They also bring glory to God. **Day of visitation:** In view of the date Peter writes, reference here could possibly be to the coming visitation of God upon national Israel. In only a few years from the time of his writing the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed (A.D. 70). Christians would be vindicated as the people of God, and thus, would shine forth in the kingdom of God (Mt 13:43; Ph 2:15).

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

been revealed from heaven. In cases as this, Christians must first submit to the law of Christ. However, God has ordained that governments exist, and thus, Christians as citizens of governments of the world must submit to the laws of government insofar as those laws do not contradict the laws of God that have been given directly from God. **15 By doing right:** When Christians do that which is good, they silence those who make accusations against them. They should answer accusations by doing good to their enemies (Mt 5:43,44). By doing this, they proclaim the ignorance and foolishness of those who accuse them. In other words, those who would accuse the one who is doing good according to the will of God are ignorant and foolish because their values and behavior are not based on the one true God.

16 As free: Christians are free from the necessity of having to keep God's law perfectly in order to meritoriously save themselves (Rm 6:14,20,22; 1 Co 7:22; see comments Gl 2:16; 5:1,13). However, their freedom does not give them the liberty to violate either civil law or God's law (See comments Rm 3:31). Their freedom gives them the right to obey. Their obedience is not out of constraint, but willingly. They obey because of their response to the love and grace of God (See 2 Co 4:15; 1 Jn 4:19). As slaves of God they seek to do that which their Master desires. Therefore, they are obedient to civil law as the result of their submission to the lordship of Jesus in their lives. **17** Peter makes four concluding imperative commands concerning the conduct of the disciple of Jesus. (1) **Honor all:** Christians are to give honor to whom honor is due (See Gn 5:1; 9:6; Ps 8:4,5; Pv 14:31; Rm 13:7; 1 Tm 1:17; Js 2:1-9; 4:11,22). (2) **Love the brotherhood:** Those who have come into the Christian community must love those who have also done the same. It is by brotherly love that the church of Christ is known to belong to Christ (Jn 13:34,35; Gl 6:10; Hb 13:1; 1 Jn 2:10; 4:11,12,19). (3) **Fear God:** It is our awareness of the greatness and power of God that moves us to obedience (1:17; Gn 42:18; Jb 1:9; Ps 19:9; 34:9; 111:10; Ec 12:13; Mt 10:28). (4) **Honor the king:** This would certainly have been a difficult attitude to maintain in view of the fact that Nero was at the time of writing persecuting Christians. Regardless of wicked kings that behave in an ungodly manner, Peter's emphasis here is to honor the position of kingship in civil government (See comments Rm 13:1-7).

18 Servants: Reference here is to slaves. They must be obedient to their masters regardless of whether their masters are good or evil (See comments Ep 6:5-8; Cl 3:22-25; see 1 Tm 6:1,2; Ti 2:9,10). **19 Suffering**

of conscience toward God, one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what credit *is it*, if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer, you take it patiently, this *is* commendable with God.

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps.

22 “*He did no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.*”

23 When He was reviled, *He* did not revile again. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.

24 He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins,

might live to righteousness; by whose wounds you were healed.

25 For you were as sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Chapter 3

1 ¶ Likewise, wives, *be* submissive to your own husbands so that if any do not obey the word, they, without the word, may be won by the behavior of the wives

2 when they observe your pure behavior *combined* with fear.

3 Your adornment should not be outward, *as* plaiting the hair and wearing of gold, or putting on of clothes.

4 But *let it be* the hidden person of the heart,

wrongfully: Peter exhorts those slaves who are Christians not to rebel against unjust masters. Christians must keep their emotions under control. They must endure their hardships even if they are treated wrongfully (See 4:16; Mt 5:10-12,39-48; Lk 6:32-34). **20 Take it patiently:** There is no glory given to God when one is justly punished for something that he did wrong. On the other hand, if one behaves in a Christian manner, and yet is punished, then glory is given to God because he patiently endured being treated wrong when he was in the right. **21 Follow His steps:** Jesus was innocent. However, when He was beaten He did not retaliate nor did He accuse. In this He left us an example of patiently suffering wrong from others (See Jn 13:15; 15:18,19; 1 Jn 2:6). **22,23 He did not sin:** In His humanity, Jesus was tempted as all men, yet without sin (Hb 4:15; see Is 53:9; Mt 26:59,60; Lk 23:41; Jn 8:46; 18:38; 19:4-6; 2 Co 5:21). Though wicked men spoke harshly against Jesus, He did not retaliate with evil (See Mt 26:61-63,66-68; 27:12-14,28-31,39-44). **24 Bore our sins:** Jesus took the burden of our sin problem to the cross (Is 53:12; Hb 9:28). He was the sacrificial lamb who took away our sins, and thus, delivered us from condemnation (Mt 26:28; Rm 5:6; 1 Co 11:24; 15:3; 2 Co 5:14; Hb 2:9; 9:26; 10:10). Peter began this context by exhorting slaves to endure patiently when they were wrongfully beaten (vss 18,19). He has now turned to Jesus who was wrongfully crucified for our sins. If Jesus had retaliated, there would have been no crucifixion, and thus, no redemption. He submitted to being wrongfully treated in order to accomplish the work of the cross. Those who would follow after His example, therefore, should walk in His steps. When one sees that Jesus went to the cross as an innocent victim who was offering for our sins, he should be moved to obediently follow Jesus. He should willingly become a slave of righteousness because Jesus willingly offered Himself for our sins (See comments Rm 6; see 2 Co 5:21; Cl 3:1,2). **25 Sheep going astray:** See comments Ep 2:1-3. **Shepherd and Overseer:** Those who understand the grace of God that was manifested on the cross will be moved to respond to the One who can guide them to salvation and

watch over their souls (See Jn 10:2-5,11-18; Hb 13:20; Rv 7:17). Those who do not allow Jesus to be their shepherd are hardened and rebellious. They do not have the spirit of a sheep who seeks to be led in the right direction.

Chapter 3

EXHORTATION FOR WIVES

1 Likewise: This word refers us back to Peter's instructions concerning citizens of government and slaves (2:13-25). Citizens are to be submissive to government (2:13). Slaves are to be submissive to their masters (2:18). Wives are to be in submission to their own husbands for the sake of establishing an environment in which to bring up children to respect authority (See comments Ep 5:22-24; Cl 3:18,19; Ti 2:5). **Without the word, may be won:** After verbal communication of the gospel fails to win the unbelieving husband, the believing wife should resort to the patient example of a godly life (See comments 1 Co 7). The good behavior of a Christian wife has great influence over those spouses who need to see the example of a Christian life (Mt 18:15; see vs 15). Paul uses the word “may” to indicate that the Christian conduct of the wife is not a guarantee that the unbelieving husband will be won to Christ. **2 Pure behavior:** Herein is the nature of the Christian wife. Her godly behavior is the result of a reverential attitude toward God (2:12). This is conduct that is observed, not heard. Her behavior exemplifies the embodiment of Christ who is the light of the world and the Lord of her life. In her submission, he light shines (Mt 5:16). The manifestation of one's light before the world is possible because of the light of Jesus who abides in us (Jn 8:12). **3,4** Peter contrasts in these two verses the demeanor of the worldly minded woman with the Christian woman who has embraced the principles of godly living. The worldly minded woman focuses on the outward person. She seeks to cover up the inner person by outward dress (See Is 3:16-24). She seeks to draw attention to herself by her adornment and not by her inner spirit. Through elaborate braiding of the

with the incorruptible quality of a meek and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

5 For after this manner in the former times, the holy women who trusted in God, also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you are if you do right and are not afraid with any terror.

7 ¶ Likewise, husbands, dwell with *your wives* with understanding, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel, and as heirs together of the grace of life, so that your prayers not be hindered.

8 ¶ Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion one for another. Love as brethren, *be* kindhearted, humble.

9 Do not render evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead blessing, knowing that you

hair and lavish wearing of gold and silver, she seeks to draw other's attention to herself. In contrast to such outward adornment and behavior, godly women "*that women dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and sobriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but rather that which manifests women professing godliness through good works*" (1 Tm 2:9,10). The Holy Spirit does not condemn the wearing of gold or silver. What He does warn against is wearing such clothes in order to draw attention to one's outward appearance in order to distract others from one's inner self. The focus of the Christian woman should be on dressing the inner person with Christ in a manner that presents a meek and quiet spirit before others (See Rm 7:22; 2 Co 4:16). Christian women must focus on being clothed with Christ. It is this spirit that will draw others to focus on the cross to which the humble heart is submitted. It is this character of the person that is precious in the sight of God. **5 Holy women:** Peter takes our minds to the holy women of the Old Testament who manifested in their lives the example of godly behavior. Because they trusted in God, they submitted to their husbands (See 1:15,16; 2:9). Their submissiveness to their husbands created an atmosphere in the home wherein children could grow up in the security of the father's loving headship. Her submissiveness gave children a model for respect of authority and honor of God. **6 Sarah obeyed Abraham:** Sarah respected the headship of her husband. She thus allowed him to maintain leadership in the family by her own submissiveness (See Gn 18:12). His headship of the family existed because of her submission. She did not steal away his headship by behaving in an insubmissive manner. Because of her relationship with God, she maintained her God-ordained function as a holy wife in keeping the home (See comments 1 Tm 2:12-15; Ti 2:4,5). **Children you are:** Those women who conduct their lives after the demeanor of holy women in the Old Testament are daughters of Sarah. If they conduct themselves in a manner as Sarah conducted herself, they will not need to fear the retaliation of an unbelieving husband. The Christian wife, therefore, must manifest in her life that her behavior is motivated by her fear of God. She must fear God more than she would fear an unbelieving husband (Pv 3:25). Her conduct must be motivated by God above any motivation that might come from an unbelieving husband who has no respect for God. However, when both mates are servants of the same God, then a great spiritual atmosphere is created in which children can be nurtured to focus on eternal values. Sarah's behavior was complemented by the godly behavior of her husband who also feared God.

EXHORTATION FOR HUSBANDS

7 The instructions that Peter gives to husbands must also be shown even if the wife is not a Christian. He must manifest this demeanor of life in order to win her to be obedient to the one true God and His directives for Christian families. **With understanding:** As Abraham spiritually led Sarah, so should Christian husbands lead their wives. Christian husbands should seek to be gentle toward their wives. They must understand the wife's gentle and meek character by which they too must manifest their Christian demeanor toward their wives. A harsh and unloving husband brings great sadness into the life of a wife who is seeking to maintain a Christian attitude in the husband-wife relationship (See comments Ep 5:25-29). **Giving honor:** The husband who honors his wife encourages her to maintain her living a godly life. **Weaker vessel:** It is not that she is intellectually or spiritually weaker. The woman is physically weaker. Her emotional nature is more tender, and thus, a husband should seek to protect his wife (1 Co 7:3; Cl 3:19). The husband who recognizes the weaker nature of his wife will guard himself against being harsh to her. He will guard her from the harshness of life. In the husband-wife relationship, the wife should find in her husband protection from the harshness of the unbelieving world. **The grace of life:** A Christian husband and wife who realize that they have been saved by God's grace will manifest the same toward one another. The mercy that God has extended toward the saved should manifest itself in mercy that should exist in a husband-wife relationship. The forgiveness that God has given should promote forgiveness in the family (See comments Mt 18:22-35). When the family is graced with mercy and forgiveness, then an atmosphere is maintained wherein both husband and wife can freely and comfortably pray. A spiritual environment is maintained wherein children can be nurtured to honor the God who developed such through the reverential obedience of a godly father and mother.

EXHORTATIONS FOR THE CHURCH

8,9 No one can read these two verses of scripture and in any way justify harshness in his or her relationship with another brother or sister in the church. The relationship between disciples must always be characterized by love and forgiveness (See comments Cl 3:12-14). The Christian community must seek to maintain the fundamental teaching of unity (See 1 Co 1:10; Ph 1:27). Those who would behave in a manner that would contradict the Christian nature that is expressed in these verses, certainly do not have the mind of Christ (See comments 1 Tm 6:3-5). As the Christian family pro-

were called to this, so that you might inherit a blessing.

10 For *“he who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no deceit.*

11 *Let him turn away from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it.*

12 *For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”*

13 ¶ And who is he who will harm you if you follow what is good?

14 But even if you suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are blessed.* And do not be afraid of their intimidation, and do not be troubled.

15 But sanctify Christ as Lord God in your hearts and *be ready always to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear;*

16 having a good conscience so that when they slander you as evildoers, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be ashamed.

17 For *it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing right than for doing evil.*

18 ¶ For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit,

vides a spiritual environment in which family members are encouraged to spiritually grow, so a spiritual church environment presents encouragement wherein members can spiritually grow.

THE REWARDS OF SUFFERING

13 *Who will harm you:* Peter's rhetorical question here emphasizes the fact that people usually do not harm those who do good. If one conducts himself after the manner of Christ, then people usually respond by returning good for good. **14** *Even if:* Some of Peter's readers were evidently suffering, though they were living the Christian life. But the Christian must not expect that his Christian life will be without persecution. "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tm 3:12; see Mt 5:10-12; Jn 15:18,19; At 14:22). **Do not be afraid:** In quoting Is 8:12, Peter seeks to encourage those who are under persecution. They must not fear those who are persecuting them because of their Christian living. **15** *Sanctify:* By setting Jesus apart in one's heart, he will keep himself in the fellowship of God. By maintaining Jesus as the Lord of his life, he will keep himself separated from the world (See Ps 110:1; Rm 10:9; 2 Co 4:5; Ph 2:9,10). **Give a defense:** The Greek word that is here translated "defense" (*apologia*) refers to giving a verbal defense for what he believes (See use of the word in At 22:1; 25:16; Ph 1:16; 2 Tm 4:16). Christians must know why they believe. God does not ask us to believe without evidence. Belief without evidence is superstition. Because men seek evidence for their superstitious beliefs, they often invent all sorts of supposed miraculous happenings to confirm their faiths (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). On the other hand, God has given witness of Himself and His message to man (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). He has given enough evidence to satisfy the hungering and thirsting of those who are searching for truth. In this context, Peter says that every Christian should be able to give a defense for what he believes (See comments Rm 1:20). A Christian is such because he has believed evidence that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God (Jn 20:30,31). The foundation of one's faith, therefore, should be based on the evidence for belief that has been provided by God. Though one's faith may

first be established on the belief of a mother, father or friend, one must eventually come to the point of believing because of his own conviction that the evidence supports the fact of the sonship of Jesus. This belief should be strong enough that it would stimulate questions in the minds of our neighbors concerning our beliefs. **16** *Slander you as evil doers:* Living after the manner of Christian principles is not a guarantee that one will not receive accusations from the evil-minded world. Persecution is such because it comes from the mind of one who cares nothing for Christian principles. If one does evil, then what he reaps from his wrongdoing is not persecution. It is reaping what he sows (Gl 6:7,8). However, if one lives righteously, and yet suffers, he is being persecuted. Regardless of persecution, Christians should so live in accordance with the will of God that they will always have a good conscience toward God (See Rm 2:15; 9:1; 2 Co 1:12; 2 Tm 1:3; compare 1 Jn 3:3). **Good behavior in Christ:** Regardless of the environment in which the Christian lives, he must behave according to the principles of Christ (yss 1,2; 1:15; 2:12). Those who would persecute Christians while knowing that they are innocent, are put to shame by the good behavior of Christians. **17** If a Christian does suffer for doing right, then he should remember the innocence of Jesus (1:19; 2:21ff). Jesus suffered on the cross though He was innocent of all wrong. Therefore, the Christian should not have a spirit of retaliation. He should maintain his principles of Christian behavior in the face of unjust persecution.

EXAMPLE OF JESUS

18 *The just for the unjust:* The suffering of Jesus was not a suffering that was earned by the righteousness of men. He went to the cross on behalf of those who did not deserve the result of His suffering (See comments Rm 5:8; see Jn 3:16). **Made alive by the Spirit:** Wicked men killed Jesus on the cross (At 2:23). Though He was physically put to death on the cross, He was resurrected by the power of God working through the Holy Spirit. **19** *In which:* The Father, Son and Holy Spirit work as the one true God. Though the manifestation of God is three, and their work is manifested in three areas, God is one in being, work, nature, goal and char-

19 in which also He went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,

20 who once were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being prepared, in which few, that is, eight souls were saved by

water.

21 The like figure whereunto *even* immersion does also now save us – not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the appeal of a good conscience to God – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

acter. In this context Peter wants us to understand that it was in spirit that Jesus went and announced to the spirits in prison. **Proclaimed:** We must not assume that this is a sermon that concluded with an invitation to repent. The Greek word here would better be translated in this context “proclaim” or “announce.” It was not, therefore, as if Jesus were offering an invitation for repentance, and thus, a second chance for salvation. **Spirits in prison:** One could assume that these were those confined in torments in the hadean world of torments. After His death, Jesus went to Paradise (Lk 23:43) in the hadean realm of existence (At 2:27). We could assume that He did not keep silence in this realm of the dead. After the cross, He surely announced to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the host of departed saints that the gospel plan of salvation had been accomplished. The mystery of God for which all the righteous dead had waited for centuries had finally taken place. Their faith had paid off in that they would now reap the results of the blood of Jesus for their faithfulness to the promises of God (See comments 1:10-12; Ep 3:1-13). On the other hand, He proclaimed to those who were reserved in torments of the hadean world what they lost by their unfaithfulness while alive (See 2 Pt 2:4; Jd 6; Rv 20:7). The announcement of the offering of the sacrificial Lamb of God surely added to the agony of their torment. The reality of their doom was only intensified when they were informed of the eternal life they had lost as a result of unbelief and disobedience. **20 The days of Noah:** Peter identifies the specific group to whom Jesus went in the spirit to proclaim the fulfillment of the mystery of God. These were those who were disobedient in the days of Noah when Noah was building the ark. We must also keep in mind a second interpretation of what is being said here which also happened. As Jesus “came and preached” to the inhabitants of Ephesus through the personal preaching of Paul (Ep 2:17), so He through Noah went and preached through righteous Noah who was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pt 2:5). During the one hundred years while he was building the ark, Noah preached concerning the right ways of God and the coming doom of sinners (See Gn 5:32; 6:12-18; 7:6). He proclaimed God’s laws to a wicked generation that was dead in sin. His generation was dead in sin when the preaching was done. At the time Jesus died on the cross, those of his generation were physically dead and their spirits were in the hadean realm of existence until the day of resurrection and judgment (Jn 5:28,29). It was to this group that Jesus in the spirit preached during the preparation of the ark. Such preaching would have been for the purpose of stimulating repentance. On the other hand, if Peter’s emphasis in this context is on Jesus personally announcing, between the time of His death on the cross and resurrection, the event of the cross to those who were in hadean existence, then the proclaiming was simply to state the fulfillment of the mystery of the gospel. There was no

call to repentance because all who are presently in the hadean realm of existence in a disembodied state have received their final judgment (Hb 9:27; see comments Lk 16:19-31). **Eight souls were saved:** Out of all the population of the world, only Noah, his wife and their three sons and their wives, were saved by the ark when God brought a great flood that covered all the world. The event illustrated that God is not interested in numbers, but in quality. Satan had ravaged the world with wickedness to the point that the imagination of men’s minds was only evil (Gn 6:5). Therefore, God determined to start again the population of the world in order to preserve the seedline of woman. He started again through righteous Noah and his family. **Saved by water:** God used the universal flood of Noah’s day to purify the earth of wickedness (See comments Jd 14,15). The wicked were thus destroyed in order to preserve the righteous (Gn 7:13). **21** Peter makes reference to the point at which one is saved in baptism by using the illustration of the salvation that was provided by God at the time of the flood of Noah’s day. Baptism is the antitype at which point one is saved as the flood physically saved Noah and his family. As Noah was delivered by water from a wicked world, so in the water of baptism Peter’s readers were delivered from their own sin by the blood of Jesus (See Mk 16:16; At 2:28; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6). It is not that there is any saving power in the water or in a meritorious act of immersion. The power of sanctification is in the blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). Though men must submit to the action of immersion in order to obey the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, it is the work of God to forgive sins. It is at the point of one’s submission to the gospel in baptism, therefore, that God promises that remission of sin takes place (At 2:38). One cannot expect God to fulfill the promise of remission if he will not submit to the conditions for remission. It is for this reason that baptism is necessary for salvation. It is necessary, not because it is a work of merit, but because it is a point of reference wherein God has promised that sins are forgiven. It is the point at which God’s grace is unleashed in the lives of those who have responded to His grace that was manifested on the cross (Ti 2:11). Therefore, if one is not baptized, there is no contact with the blood of Jesus that is poured forth from the grace of God. **Answer of a good conscience toward God:** Peter wants us to understand that baptism is not for the purpose of any ceremonial cleansing or washing of dirt from the flesh. He wants us to understand that something within the individual is taking place and something within heaven is also taking place. The soul is being sanctified within. It is God from heaven who forgives sin to the point of immersion He remembers our sin no more (Hb 8:12). When one fulfills the command of baptism, therefore, he can have a good conscience toward God because he knows that he has obeyed the commandments of God (Mk 16:16;

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Chapter 4

1 ¶ Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
2 so that he should no longer live the rest of

his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

3 For the time already past is sufficient in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

4 In this they think it strange that you do not run with *them* to the same excesses of dissipation, speaking evil of *you*.

At 2:38). Since he has obeyed, he can trust that God has forgiven him of all sin. Religious people that have corrupted the manner and meaning of baptism can have no good conscience toward God because they have allowed their traditions to change baptism. One must remember that which is most important for man to do in order to be saved is where Satan will do his greatest work to distort the truth. And such he has done with the manner and meaning of baptism in reference to the salvation of men. Baptism is by immersion, and according to what Peter says in this context, it is necessary in order to be saved. No tradition or misguided interpretation of men will change this fact. In order for one to have a good conscience toward God, he must simply submit to what the Bible says on this matter. Men must stop arguing with God in order to maintain erroneous traditions. They must obey what He has commanded us to do. **22 *Gone into heaven:*** After His resurrection, Jesus ascended into a heavenly realm of existence (At 1:9-11). He is now at the right hand of the Father, the realm of authority over all things (Mt 28:18; Rm 8:34; Ep 1:19-23; Cl 2:10-15; Hb 1:3; 8:1). ***Angels and authorities and powers ... subject to Him:*** The kingdom reign of Jesus extends far beyond the realm of the visible church. All the church is kingdom, but not all the kingdom of Jesus is church. The church is only those of the kingdom of Jesus who have submitted to the lordship of Jesus in their hearts (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21). Peter states clearly in this passage that angels, authorities and powers are all under the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, angels, authorities and powers are not in the church because they have not submitted to the lordship of Jesus by obedience to the gospel. Therefore, it is erroneous to affirm that the kingdom reign of Jesus is limited to the church. When Jesus was given all authority over all things in fulfillment of prophecy, more than the church was both prophesied and fulfilled (See Dn 7:13,14). He is now head over all things (See comments Ep 1:20-22; Ph 2:9-11; Hb 1:3). He is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tm 6:15). This means that He is now King of all the kings of the world and Lord of all the lords of the world. Though the kings and lords of the world do not recognize Him as their King and Lord, this does not mean that Jesus is not functioning as King of kings and Lord of lords. There have always been insurrectionists in kingdoms of this world. Such is true of the kingdom of Jesus. However, the presence of the insurrectionists does not nullify the reign of the king. Jesus is simply allowing the insurrectionists to continue until a time when He will put an end to all rebellion by the open manifestation of His power (See comments 1 Co 15:24-28).

Chapter 4

LIVING FOR GOD

1 Jesus suffered in the flesh in order to bring redemption to all men. Those who have responded to the grace of God that was manifested in the sacrificial offering of Jesus must also be prepared to suffer persecution with Jesus. ***Arm yourselves:*** It is evident that Peter here envisions a coming persecution or hard times that will come upon the Christians to whom he is writing. In the coming war of Rome on Jerusalem, there would be hard times for everyone involved (See comments Mt 24). Though Christians were not directly involved in the conflict, they suffered as a result of the turmoil of the war. Beyond the indirect sufferings that would result from the destruction of Jerusalem, there was a greater suffering that was looming in the future. This would be the direct persecution of the church by the Roman State during the reign of Domitian. This persecution would be directed toward Christians who would not affirm that Caesar was lord. As a result, they would be accused of insurrection, and thus, sentenced to the death penalty (See introduction to Rv). ***Suffered in the flesh:*** See comments 1:6,7 (Js 1:2,3). ***Ceased from sin:*** Peter's point is not that one can cease from being able to sin. Reference is to those who have stopped living a life of sin (See comments Ep 2:1-3; see Rm 6:7). The one who suffers as Jesus and for Jesus has the mind of Christ. He is thus not living a life of sin (Gl 5:4; see 1 Jn 1:8-10). ***2 Live ... for the will of God:*** See comments Gl 2:20. Those who have ceased from a life of sin have committed themselves to live according to the will of God (Ep 6:6; 1 Th 4:3; 1 Jn 2:17). They were born by the will of God through their obedience to the gospel (Jn 1:13). They therefore live according to the word of God. ***3*** Peter recounts the time in his life, and the life of those to whom he writes, when precious time was wasted in living according to the flesh (See Ep 2:1-3; 1 Th 4:5; Ti 3:3). All who formerly involved themselves in worldly living, behaved in a manner that led to death (Rm 6:21-23). Listed here are examples of practices in which men involved themselves in order to waste away their lives. ***Sensuality:*** This would be sensual behavior that would lead to illicit sexual activity. It would include all behavior that encourages sexual lusts (Rm 13:13; 2 Co 12:21; Gl 5:19; Ep 4:19; 2 Pt 2:2,7). ***Carousing:*** This is merrymaking or revelry that is associated with drunken behavior that is out of sensible control (Rm 13:13; Gl 5:21). ***Drinking parties:*** These are parties that are designed specifically for the purpose of becoming intoxicated, and thus, the occasion for one to lose his sensibilities. ***Abominable idolatries:*** The idola-

5 They will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, so that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

7 ¶ But the end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be sober and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent love among yourselves, for love will cover a multitude of sins.

9 Be hospitable one to another without grumbling.

10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

trous religions of Peter's day were often drunken and adulterous occasions. They were religions that were constructed around the fulfillment of the lusts of the flesh (See Rm 1:23-25; 1 Co 6:9). Men's inner most base lusts were thus fulfilled in the name of abominable religious practices. **4 They think it strange:** The wicked behavior Peter has just explained in verse 3 had become the accepted behavior of the society. Therefore, when Christians refused to partake of such sinful behavior, they were considered antisocial. Those who determine to live the Christian life will be mocked by those who refuse to live after the lusts of the flesh (See Jn 15:18,19). When the normal practice of any society becomes sinful, it is the duty of Christians to take a stand against that which is contrary to the will of God. If they do not, then they have lost their preserving influence in society (See Mt 5:13-15; Ph 2:15). **5 They will give account:** Those who live in the world are often unconcerned about giving account of their behavior before the One who is the head of the body they persecute. Jesus will be the judge of the living at the time He comes again. He will also resurrect the dead which He will also judge (Jn 5:28,29). Death will not be the end of the persecutors of the sheep of God. Jesus is coming to judge all men (At 10:42; 17:30,31; Rm 14:10; 2 Tm 4:1). **6 The gospel was preached:** One possible interpretation of this difficult passage is that Peter is referring to those who were spiritually dead. The gospel was preached to all men, but all did not obey, and thus, remained spiritually dead. However, he seems to contrast those who are living in the flesh with those who are physically dead and in a disembodied state of the hadean realm of existence (See comments Lk 16:19-31). If reference is to the gospel being announced in the hadean realm of existence during the time Jesus went there between His death and resurrection (3:19), then the "preaching" was not to offer an invitation for repentance. It was simply to proclaim what those who in torments had missed when they lived in rebellion in the flesh (See 3:18-20). There is no reason to assume that those who lived in rebellion in the flesh, but were dead at the time Peter wrote, would have a second chance of salvation. After death comes one's final judgment (Hb 9:27). At the time Peter wrote, the dead had been finally judged, and thus, were awaiting their final punishment after the final judgment of the last day (Jn 5:28,29). While in life, these dead had failed to live by faith. They sought to live according to the lusts of the flesh as explained in verse 3. The good news being preached to them while in a disembodied state would have increased their agony when they considered what they missed by not living on earth in fear of God. **In the flesh ... in the spirit:** At the time Peter wrote, living Christians were still in the flesh. They were alive. Though in the flesh, they lived according to the

will of God (See Rm 8:9,13; Gl 5:25). They were guided by their submission to the word of God in order to live in harmony with the One before whom they would eventually give account.

7 The end of all things is at hand: The phrase "at hand" means that something is about to happen. In the context in which Peter writes, he must refer to the end of the Jewish State. "All things" would refer to the end of national Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). Jesus had been crucified and the church established in A.D. 30. The law of grace and faith had been preached throughout the areas of the Roman world where Jews lived (See Cl 1:23). It was now time to bring down the theocracy of national Israel by the termination of Jerusalem and all that she represented. **Therefore, be sober:** In view of the fact that national Israel was coming to a close, it was a time for seriousness and watchfulness (Mt 24:42-44). It was a time when Jewish Christians must not involve themselves in the politics of national Israel. Jesus had prophesied the signs of the time before the destruction. This same message had been delivered to Jewish Christians throughout the Roman Empire. Since Peter is writing primarily to Jewish Christians, they must be warned concerning Rome's destruction that she would rain down on national Israel. It was thus a time to stay away from Palestine and Jerusalem. **8 Fervent love among yourselves:** Love is the bond that would hold the family of God together in times of great turmoil (See Jn 13:34,35; Cl 3:14). **Love will cover:** The one who loves does not seek evil in the life and character of his brother (Compare Pv 10:22; 1 Co 13:4; Js 5:20). He does not go after his brother in search of flaws and evil. Love looks for the best that is in others. Love overlooks those character flaws that would cause tension between two brothers. It is not that love overlooks sin. Love meekly corrects. It does not consider personality differences and matters of opinion, things over which to divide with one's brother. In times of great social stress into which Peter's readers were going, it would be a time when brothers and sisters must practice love and unity (See comments Mt 24:12). **9 Be hospitable:** The Greek word used here refers to being friendly to strangers. Christians must be known for their spirit of hospitality to all people (See Rm 12:13; 1 Tm 3:2; 5:10; Ti 1:8; Hb 13:2; 3 Jn 5-8). **Without grumbling:** True hospitality is not grudgingly given. It comes out of a heart that loves people and loves to help others. **10 Each one has received a gift:** The Greek word for gift here is *charisma*. Peter's reference is possibly to the miraculous gifts that were given to all Christians who had come into contact with a Christ-sent apostle (See comments At 18:8; Rm 1:11; 1 Co 12:8-11). Such miraculous gifts were given to the first century Christians because they did not have the

11 If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability that God gives, so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

12 ¶ Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with ex-

ceeding joy.

14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the spirit of glory and of God rests on you. [On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.]

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's affairs.

16 Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.

17 ¶ For the time *has come* that judgment

full written revelation of the New Testament. The gifts were given only as a temporary work in order to aid the establishment of the early church in an environment of great religious confusion (See comments Ep 4:11-16).

As good stewards: It was only by the grace of God that miraculous gifts were given. In Peter's statement here, it is indicated that the one who possessed the gift had power over exercising the gift (1 Co 14:32). Therefore, the Holy Spirit did not subject to His control the one who possessed the gift. Those who possessed the gift were the stewards of the gift, and thus, had the choice of exercising the gift (See comments 2 Tm 1:6).

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

SUFFERING AS A CHRISTIAN

12 The fiery trial: Peter speaks of this trial as if it is something that is soon to come upon them. He seems to be writing in view of the fact that his readers are about to endure great trials (See vs 7). Because they are not of the world, nor do they conduct themselves after the lusts of the flesh, Christians should not be surprised that they would endure persecution from those who are of the world (See 1:3-9; Jn 15:18,19; 2 Tm 3:12; see comments At 14:22). **13 Rejoice:** The trials about which Peter here speaks are evidence that they are walking according to the will of God. They are partaking

in the sufferings of Jesus who also suffered at the hands of wicked men. It is a time for rejoicing because the trials are evidence of their Christian behavior (Mt 5:11,12; 2 Tm 2:12; Js 1:2,3).

His glory is revealed: In this context, the glory of Jesus was revealed when His prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem verified Christianity over Judaism (vs 7; see comments Mt 24). When national Israel was destroyed, many Jews came to realize that God was no longer with Israel. **Exceeding joy:** It is not that Christians rejoiced in the calamity of national Israel in A.D. 70. Their joy was in the confirmation the event gave the messiahship of Jesus. Jesus' prophecies of Matthew 24 were fulfilled. The church was magnified as the people of God. In this, Christians were joyful. When Jesus comes again at the end of time, they will experience the same joy. It is for this reason that Christians look forward to the coming of Jesus and the end of this environment that brings persecution and hardship (See 2 Pt 3:11,12; Rv 22:20).

14 Reproached for the name of Christ: Reproached here refers to being slandered, reviled or insulted. Peter encourages his readers by stating that reproach on behalf of Christian belief and behavior is glorification of Jesus. It is evidence that one's beliefs and behavior in the name of Jesus are not of the world, and thus, of the world that is beyond (See Mt 19:29; At 5:41; 9:16; 21:13). When one reproaches a Christian for his beliefs and behavior he is blaspheming God. There will be no forgiveness for such behavior, because the one who is blaspheming is not repenting of his sin in order to become as the one he blasphemes.

The Spirit of Glory and of God: The blasphemy glorifies God in the sense that the obedient life of the Christian manifests the nature of the God after whom the Christian calls himself. The light that the Christian manifests to the world does not originate from within himself. It originates from Jesus who lives within the heart of the one who has submitted to His lordship (Mt 5:16; Jn 8:12). **15** The suffering of Christians does bring glory to God. It brings glory to God because the Christian is living the principles of godliness. On the other hand, it brings shame on the name of God for the disciple of Jesus to hypocritically live contrary to the beliefs that he proclaims (2:20; 3:14-17; compare 1 Co 6:7). **Busybody:** Reference here is to the one who seeks to meddle and control the affairs of someone else (1 Th 4:11). Reference is not to faithful brethren caring for the spiritual well-being of their brothers (See comments Rm 14; Gl 6:1-5). **16 Let him not be ashamed:** It is through many tribulations that we will enter the eter-

begin at the house of God. And if *it* first *begins* with us, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous are scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls *to Him* in doing right, as to a faithful Creator.

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

17 In this verse Peter asks a rhetorical question to which he assumes that his readers can give the correct answer. In the historical context, a time had come for judgment in time to begin on national Israel. The destruction of national Israel loomed in the near future. It was a time wherein Jesus would come in time in judgment upon the nation of Israel by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). Those who had obeyed the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus would escape the destruction because they would believe the prophecies of such that were made by their Lord. On the other hand, those Jews who had not obeyed the gospel by baptism had manifested their disbelief in Jesus. They would suffer the consequences of Jesus' judgment on Jerusalem because of their unbelief. Over one million Jews died in the destruction. Historians report that over eighty thousand Jews were sold into captivity. Therefore, in answer to Peter's question, his readers must respond that there is no hope for the one who does not obey the gospel. The same answer is also true in reference to the final judgment to come at the end of time. Those who do not obey the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus will not be saved when Jesus comes again (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9; see Rm 6:3-6; 1 Co 15:1-4). There is no hope for those who do not obey the gospel by immersion for the remission of their sins (See At 2:38; 22:16). **18 Righteous are scarcely saved:** This statement confirms that Peter has the destruction of Jerusalem in mind when asking the previous question of verse 17. In the final judgment, the righteous are not scarcely saved. They are saved by the all-sufficiency of the grace of God (See 1 Jn 3:21). Those who abide in the word of God, will not be ashamed when Jesus comes again (1 Jn 2:28; 4:17; 5:14). However, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, things would be different. Those Christians who lived in Judea during the time of the destruction would scarcely be saved from the destruction even if they believed the prophecies of Jesus concerning such (See comments Mt 24:15-22). **The ungodly:** Peter's

Chapter 5

1 ¶ Therefore, I exhort the elders who are among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed.

2 Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but voluntarily according to God; not

second rhetorical question in this context has an obvious answer. If the righteous scarcely be saved through wars of the destruction of national Israel, then the ungodly Jews who rejected Jesus will not be saved. If one applies what Peter is saying to the end of time and the final judgment, emphasis is still on the fact that the unrighteous have no hope of salvation. Those who do not come to the Father through Jesus cannot be saved (Jn 14:6; At 4:12). **19 Entrust their souls:** Those who are being persecuted for righteousness sake must trust in God who will deliver them from destruction. God is faithful and will not allow the faithful Christian against his will to be taken away from his state of salvation (Jn 10:27-29). Since God is faithful toward us through His grace, we should be faithful toward Him through godly living (2 Tm 1:12).

Chapter 5

SHEPHERDS AMONG THE FLOCK

1 The elders: The elders of the church were a group of men who had been designated as spiritual leaders of the flock of God (See comments 1 Tm 3:1-7; Ti 1:7-9). They were designated to shepherd the disciples (At 14:23). Depending on one's translation, in the New Testament elders are also referred to with the English words "bishops" or "shepherds" (1 Tm 3:1), "overseers" (At 20:28) and "presbyters" (At 11:30; 15:4,5,22; 20:17; Js 5:14). It is worthy to note that there are no ceremonies in the New Testament for designating these men to function as shepherds. And for good reason. The more the ceremonial presentation of the men before the disciples, the greater the tendency that their designation goes to their head. In order to prevent this, there was always a plurality of shepherds functioning in any one area (At 14:23; Ti 1:5). **Fellow elder:** At the time of the writing of this epistle, Peter had also been designated an elder among the disciples. Though Peter was writing from Babylon (5:13) to those who were a great distance from him (1:1), he was an elder with them in the universal body of Christ. **Witness of the sufferings of Christ:** Peter was also a Christ-sent apostle, and thus, a special witness to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus (See comments Lk 24:45; At 1:8; 3:15; 10:39). **Partaker of the glory:** Peter, as well as all disciples, will be partakers of the eternal glory of heaven that is yet to come (Rm 8:18). **2** In this context Peter gives specific instructions to the shepherds among the disciples. In the historical context, there seems to have already started the apostasy of lordship leadership about which Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders (See comments At 20:29,30). Paul prophesied lordship leadership would come and Peter stated that it had already begun. Any time shepherds make decisions outside the context of

greedy for money, but with eagerness;

3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away.

5 ¶ Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves

to the elders. Yes, all *of you* be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

6 Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you at the proper time,

the authority of the Scriptures that are bound on the disciples, they are following after the apostasy of lording over the flock. **Shepherd the flock:** It is the work of shepherds to care for the needs of the flock. Emphasis here is on taking care of the sheep of God. Taking care of the sheep means that elders service the spiritual needs of the members of the church (At 20:28; see Ez 34). Decisions must certainly be made in this work. However, the decisions are about what the shepherds should do, not what is bound on the flock. **Flock of God:** Elders must always remember that the sheep belong to God. Those who would call away the sheep after themselves (At 20:29,30) are actually stealing the sheep of God by their dictatorial leadership of the sheep (See comments 3 Jn 9,10). When elders force their opinions on the flock, they are stealing away the submission of the sheep from the only Lord they are to have. Jesus is the one Lord and head of the church. He never instituted any individual or group of individuals who would function in the church in order to endanger His lordship and headship over the members of the church (See comments Mk 10:35-45; 3 Jn 9,10). **Serving as overseers:** The authoritarian elder would presume that the word "overseer" is here used in a sense that he must take control of the flock. But he is wrong. The shepherd sees over the flock in order to identify needs to which he can administer service (At 20:28). He is a careful and watchful servant of the disciples who is constantly among the sheep in order to identify needs that must be serviced. Peter gives three negative reasons that are offset by positive reasons for servicing the needs of the flock of God. (1) **Not under compulsion:** The elder should not consider it a burden to be a servant to the flock. Neither should he believe that others should be compelled to obey his orders. **Voluntarily:** No one can serve as an elder who does not enjoy serving the needs of others. Therefore, one must first desire to serve before he can be qualified to be designated as a shepherd of the flock (1 Tm 3:1). In this work he leads by encouraging others to volunteer to serve. (2) **Not greedy for money:** Fulltime elders, who also ministered in the word, were to be given double pay (1 Tm 5:17). The second salary was the church giving funds to the elder who worked among the needy. The nature of his work and character meant that he would give the needy the second salary. In view of this fact, it would be easy for the greedy person to seek the designation of an elder in order to consume the second salary upon himself (See 1 Tm 3:3,8; Ti 1:7). **Eagerness:** Those who love people and love to serve people will not be considering the money as a primary benefit for their service. Elders who are qualified to be elders are serving people regardless of money. Their eagerness to serve without pay before their designation as fulltime elders, indicates the genuineness of their hearts to be the slaves of the needs of others. **3 (3) Nor as being lords:** Those

elders who bind on the disciples decisions that God has not bound, are stealing the lordship of the church away from the one Lord Jesus Christ. Paul prophesied of some elders who would draw away the sheep after their own desires (At 20:29,30). In order to exercise their desire to lord over their fellow man, they use the designation as elders of the church to become dictators of God's family. They impose their decisions on a flock that should be looking to Jesus for direction. **Being examples:** The opposite to lordship leadership is example leadership. Herein is the leadership influence of elders. They are not a delegated committee of lords over the disciples. They function in leadership by living the godly life of service. Their example of Christlike living, therefore, draws the sheep to follow them. People always go to those who will take care of their needs. Therefore, the elders' leadership is not by handing down decisions out of boardroom meetings. It is in manifesting in their lives the godly example of those who are seeking to follow God and serve the needs of God's flock (Jn 13:15; Ph 3:17; 1 Th 1:7; 2 Th 3:9; 1 Tm 4:12; Ti 2:7). **4 Chief Shepherd:** As shepherds of the flock, elders must always remember that the flock does not belong to them. And since it does not belong to them, they must give account of their shepherding to the One to whom the flock belongs. Therefore, when Jesus, who is the Chief Shepherd (Jn 10:14; Hb 13:20), comes to take His flock home to eternal heaven, elders must give account of how they have serviced the needs of the flock. **Receive a crown of glory:** Those elders who have served well in taking care of the needs of the flock of the Chief Shepherd will receive a reward for their service (2:25; 2 Tm 4:8). The crown to which Peter refers is the *stephanos*. This was the crown of victory that was worn by victorious Romans when they returned from battle. Such crowns faded away. However, the crown of victory that the Christian will receive will not fade away (1:4).

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

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

7 casting all your care on Him, for He cares for you.

8 ¶ Be sober, be vigilant. Your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

9 But resist him, standing firm in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are experienced by your brethren who are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace who has called us to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a while, will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen *and* settle you.

11 To Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

12 ¶ Through Silvanus, our faithful brother to you as I *also* consider him, I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

13 ¶ She who is in Babylon, elected together with you, greets you, and *so does* Mark my son.

14 ¶ Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace *be* to you all who are in Christ. Amen.

one does submit to God's will, he will be lifted up. However, we must first recognize the sovereignty of God over all things before we will humbly submit to His will (See Ex 7:5; Dt 3:24; 5:15; 1 Kg 8:42; Dn 9:15). 7 The proud will seek to rule their own lives. They think that they have everything under control. The proud man usually tries to bear all his burdens without asking for the help of others. He tries to walk alone. On the other hand, the humble man who has cast his burdens on the shoulders of God will find peace and security in the care of God (See Ps 55:22; 37:5; Mt 6:25-33; Lk 21:18; Hb 13:5).

8 **Sober ... vigilant:** Disciples must walk with maturity and industry (See Mt 26:40,41; Mk 13:35-37). They must be cautious in their Christian life lest they be tempted to forsake their confession. **The devil walks about like a roaring lion:** Satan has no power over the one who voluntarily keeps himself close to Jesus (See comments Jn 10:27-29). However, Satan roams about as a nervous lion looking for his lunch. Those who are ignorant of his warning roars will fall victim to his hunger for the souls of men. Therefore, it is necessary that the Christian learn how the devil seeks to destroy the lives of men. One must be aware of how he stalks his prey. The sober and vigilant Christian is constantly listening for the roar of the hungry Satan. He can identify how Satan works. However, if he becomes ignorant of God's word or enticed by the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life, he will be ensnared by Satan and consumed (1 Jn 2:15,16). The Christian must remember that Satan cannot voluntarily consume anyone he so chooses. The apostate Christian has simply given himself over to Satan because of his own ignorance of the word of God or willingness to forsake the fellowship of the community of God's people. 9 **Resist him:** Peter's admonition is evidence that the Christian has the voluntary power to stay away from the consuming hunger of Satan to devour souls. The context in which one is more apt to fall is when he is under trials and persecution. Therefore, it is in such a state that one must be sober and vigilant to resist Satan. Christians can withstand the temptations that are presented by Satan by exercising faith in God through prayer, Bible study and good works toward others (See comments 1 Co 10:13; Ep 6:11; Js 4:7). **Brethren who are in the world:** As a Christian, one must first understand that he is a member of a worldwide brotherhood. He does not stand alone. Secondly, one must understand that as a Christian, others have also gone through similar trials that he

may be suffering. Since others endured, then certainly the one under similar circumstances of trial can also endure (See comments Hb 12:1,2). 10 **Called us to His eternal glory:** Christians have been called out of the world through their voluntary obedience to the gospel (1 Co 1:9; 2 Th 2:14). Since they have been called by God through the gospel, they will be guarded by God through all trials. Peter's readers were about to endure great trials. However, these trials would last only a little while. The calamity of national Israel that was finalized in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, did pass. Those Christians who endured the ordeal of the Jewish wars with Rome would be strengthened by trusting that God had all things in control. Through the environmental trauma of the day, therefore, God perfected, established, strengthened and settled the church (See 1:6,7; Js 1:2,3). Through the shaking of national Israel, the church came forth as the glorious people of God (See comments Hb 12:28). 11 **To Him:** Because God is able to keep those He has called through Jesus, He is thus to be given all glory and dominion in our lives (See Jn 10:27-28).

12 **Through Silvanus:** As did Paul, Peter used someone else to write the words of this epistle as he dictated them. Silvanus is the same name as Silas. He is possibly the same Silas of Acts 15:22,32,40; 1 Th 1:1; 2 Co 1:19. **The true grace of God in which you stand:** We do not stand on our ability to perfectly keep law, nor on our good works. Christians stand because of and on the grace of God. Their salvation is dependent on God's grace since they are unable to keep law perfectly or to do good works in order to atone for their own sin (See comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16; 3:11,12). 13 **She who is in Babylon:** There has always been a debate concerning the reference here to Babylon. The feminine pronoun "she" was possibly a reference to the church. However, to what Babylon Peter refers has always been debated. Some Bible students have affirmed that his reference is figurative, and thus, reference is to Rome of Italy, the great Babylon of Revelation that John says will fall. Though tradition does say that Peter eventually died in Rome a martyr, there is no reason to suppose that at the time he wrote this epistle he was not in the literal city of Babylon. He was on his way into all the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15), and thus, we would suppose that he was in the city of Babylon. If the letter were written somewhere between A.D. 63 and 66, then Paul would have already been in Rome teaching, for he was there from A.D. 61 to 63. It seems unreasonable

that Peter would also have taken his duties as a Christ- sent apostle to Rome so soon after Paul was there. For this reason, it is probable that Peter is actually writing from the ancient city of Babylon in his efforts to obey the commission of Jesus to go into all the world. **Mark my son:** Many Bible students believe that this was John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas (See At 12:2; 13:5,13; 15:36-41; Ph 2:22; Cl 4:10; 1 Tm 1:1,2; 2 Tm 4:11). This could possibly be true. However, since Peter refers to this Mark as “my son,” it must be assumed that Peter baptized him. But this is only an assumption. Peter was married (1 Co 9:5). It is possible that this could have been the actual son of Peter. There is no way of knowing exactly who this Mark is. **14 A kiss of love:** This is one of many times reference is made in the New

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

The Second Letter Of Peter

2 Peter

Author:

The inspired author of this New Testament letter is the same as the first letter that carries his name (1:1). Though there are some differences in the style of writing, vocabulary and Greek structure between 1 Peter and 2 Peter, there is little doubt that the apostle Peter wrote this letter (See introduction to 1 Pt).

Date

In view of what is stated in 3:1, this letter was possibly written a short time after 1 Peter. If the contents of the third chapter refer primarily to the destruction of Jerusalem, as some Bible students affirm, then the letter was written after 1 Peter and a short time before A.D. 70. A probable date of writing would be between A.D. 65 and A.D. 68.

Theme

In view of the coming calamity of national Israel and the influence of false teachers who had twisted the teachings of Paul concerning the grace of God, Peter’s theme is stated in 3:18. *“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”* Their growth must be founded upon the fact of God’s grace and knowledge that Jesus manifested this grace on the cross. Peter thus reassures his readers that he and the other apostles did not follow after fables that were devised after the craftiness of men (1:16). They must stand firm on the historical fact of the work of God’s grace through the cross.

Purpose

Peter knows that his death is in the near future. Therefore, he writes this last epistle to warn his readers against false teachers who have entered the fellowship of Christians and were teaching those things that would lead to their destruction. He exhorts his readers to remain faithful to the truth (1) by instructing them to grow in holy living that is based on true knowledge (1:1-21), (2) by revealing the unholy life-style of those who forsake the truth (2:1-11), and (3) by giving them hope for the future because of the judgment of God upon all wickedness (3:1-18).

Chapter 1

1 ¶ Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a

like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

2 ¶ Grace and peace be multiplied to you

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1 Simon Peter: Peter’s identification of himself

as Simon Peter leaves little doubt that the apostle Peter is the writer of this letter (See Mt 4:18; 16:17; At 15:14). His original name was Simon, but Jesus changed his name to *Petros* which means “rock” (Mk 3:16; Jn 1:42).

through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue.

4 Through these are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, so that by them you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 ¶ And beside this, giving all diligence, add

Bondservant: Peter is the *doulos* (slave) of Jesus Christ. All Christians have placed themselves in the position and work of slaves for their Lord Jesus Christ. They have relinquished their choices to Christ who directs their lives through His inspired word (Compare Jn 12:48; Gl 2:20; see comments Rm 12:1,2). One's slavery to Jesus is not by compulsion. It is by choice. Christians willingly serve out of a heart of gratitude for the grace of God that was revealed on the cross for our sins (Ti 2:11). **To those:** This letter was probably addressed to the same audience as the first letter. It was written to Jewish and Gentile Christians. It was specifically written to Jewish Christians who were of the *diaspora* (3:1; see comments 1 Pt 1:1). **Obtained like precious faith:** The faith of the Christian is certainly precious. It is a faith that gives strength in times of trial and suffering in a world of uncertainty (Hb 6:18,19). It is a faith that was made possible by the righteousness of God and Jesus who willingly gave Himself for our redemption (See comments Rm 3:21-22; see Jn 10:17:18). Our faith, therefore, is not the invention of our own minds (vs 16). It is not the result of our own law-keeping and good works of a religion that we may have created after the traditions of our fathers. Our faith is not based on superstitious beliefs (vss 16-18). Our faith is based on God's grace through the sacrificial offering of the Son of God in whom we believe. We believe because of the evidence of His miracles and resurrection, wherein Jesus was proved to be the Son of God (Rm 1:4; see comments Jn 20:30,31; Hb 2:3,4). Our faith, therefore, is not wishful thinking. It is based on the evidence that moves us to conclude that it is more reasonable to believe than disbelieve. Because our faith is based on evidence, it "*is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Hb 11:1).

LIVING A HOLY LIFE

2 Grace and peace: God's grace brings peace of mind. This common New Testament greeting is possible because grace frees us from our own inability, which inability could never have justified us before God. Honest people know this. Therefore, those who recognize their sin before God rejoice when they hear that God has extended grace through Jesus for sins for which atonement could never have been made through law-keeping and meritorious deeds (Rm 5:1,2; see comments Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). **Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus:** This knowledge (*epiginosko*) is the highest knowledge that brings understanding of God and Jesus His Son (See vss 3,8; 2:20; 3:18; Ep 1:17; 4:13; Cl 1:9; 3:10. 1 Tm 2:4). It is the knowledge of accepting who God is through accepting Jesus as the revelation of God on earth. As we grow in obedience to the will of Jesus, we grow to understand the nature of the God who sent Jesus into the world (3:18). The more we grow in love, for example, the better we understand the God of love (See comments 1 Jn 4:7-11). Our growth in un-

derstanding the nature of God, therefore, brings peace of mind (1 Jn 2:3; 3:19; 5:13-15,18-20; see 3:18; 1 Pt 1:2). The one who never grows in holy living can never understand the nature of the God of heaven. One can only grow to understand God if he grows in holiness. **3** This statement by Peter reassures us that God has supplied us with everything in this life that is necessary for living according to His directions and for developing a nature that prepares us for eternal dwelling. **Given us all things:** One of these things certainly includes the word of God (See comments 2 Tm 3:16,17; see Jn 14:26; 16:13; At 20:32; 1 Th 2:13). It is through the word of God that we learn how to conduct our lives according to the will of God. But what is in Peter's mind is more than the revealed word of God. The word of God is certainly the guide that we must follow in order to be certain concerning the conduct of our lives in behavior and godly living. However, the "all things" is plural, and thus, refers to more than one thing. We would assume, therefore, that Peter has in mind the work of God in our lives in order to work all things together for good (See Rm 8:28). He would also have in mind Christian fellowship among those who have commonly responded to the grace of God that was revealed on the cross through Jesus (See comments Jd 3). We would also include here the provision by God of an environment that would sustain our very being in preparation for heavenly dwelling. All these things are included in the knowledge of Jesus through whom God worked for our salvation. **Life and godliness:** All things that are necessary to live a spiritual life in this world have been granted to us by God. All things that are necessary to live a life of spiritual service toward God in holy living have also been provided. God has provided all that is necessary for the Christian life. If one does not respond to God in the way that God desires, therefore, he is without excuse (see 2:20-22). **Through the knowledge of Him:** Peter uses again the Greek word (*epiginosko*) that refers to the highest knowledge. Contrary to some of his Gnostic readers who presumed to have inner insights that supposedly gave them an edge in "spirituality," Peter reassures his readers that their obedient faith that is based on their knowledge of Jesus is what is necessary on their part for the life about which he speaks. In the context, therefore, the "all things" would have specific reference to the knowledge of Jesus. This is God's part to provide all that is necessary for godly living that would lead to salvation. **4 Exceedingly great and precious promises:** It is true that Christians enjoy the fulfillment of God's past promises concerning our salvation in Christ. The fulfillment of those promises reassures us that the present promises God has given concerning the future will also be fulfilled. God has promised another salvation in the future. It is a salvation from this present environment of suffering (See 3:10-13). It is this and many other promises of God that motivate us to live a godly life (2 Co 7:1; see Hb 8:6). **Partakers of the divine**

to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,
6 and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness,
7 and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are in you and abound, they make you *to be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus

Christ.

9 For he who lacks these things is blind and short-sighted, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

10 ¶ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never stumble.

nature: The divine power of verse 3 makes it possible for us to put on the divine nature. Through obedience to the gospel, obedient believers are clothed with Christ, and thus, they put on the divine nature (Gl 3:26,27). Putting on Christ is dressing oneself in the divine nature of godliness and sanctification of the Spirit (See Rm 8:9; 2 Co 3:18; Gl 2:20; Ep 4:24; Cl 3:10; Hb 3:14; 12:10).

Escaped the corruption: Those who have put on the divine nature in Christ have been delivered from the lust of the world because they are now slaves of Jesus. The Christian has escaped the temptations of the world by directing his attention to the One who died on the cross for his sins (1 Co 10:13; Js 1:13,14). It is not that he is no longer tempted. What the Christian has is another focus or direction of life. Before his conversion, he could look only to the world for direction in life. But after knowing Christ, he has a new focus. It is a focus that directs his attention away from the values and behavior of this world (See comments Rm 12:1,2; Cl 3:1,2).

5 Giving all diligence: Emphasis here is on hastening one's spiritual growth. Peter places the responsibility for growth on the shoulders of individual Christians. God will not do for Christians that which is the responsibility of Christians to do for themselves. In the area of spiritual growth, it is the responsibility of each Christian to spiritually grow (3:18). **Faith:** Since faith comes by hearing the word of God, one must begin and continue his growth in faith by his study of the word of God (Rm 10:17; Hb 11:1,6). We must know where God wants us to go before we can arrive at the destination that has been prepared for us. Faith that is based on the directions of God, therefore, will lead to a strong character, and eventually, eternal life. **Virtue:** Virtue refers to strength in character (1 Pt 2:9). Christians must give diligence to develop characters that are able to endure the sufferings of this world's environment, which is the best of all possible environments for the preparation of spiritual characters for eternal dwelling. In order to develop such characters, one must grow in knowledge of God's eternal purpose. **Knowledge:** By growing in knowledge of God's word, one develops the ability to discern between right and wrong (1:2). His fear of God and his love in response to a knowledge of what God has done to save him, gives him the power to exercise self-control in his life. **6 Self-control:** God's people must be those who have their lives and emotions under control (See At 24:25; Gl 5:23; 1 Co 9:25-27). They apply discipline to their lives in order to carry out their work as children of God. Their self-control helps them to maintain a commitment to their calling. **Patience:** Perseverance is the ability to patiently remain steadfast in one's demeanor of life. Regardless of the instability of the environment in which one lives, he must consistently remain committed to his Christian principles

and work (See 2 Co 1:6; 6:4; Hb 11:27; Js 1:2,3). When one remains faithful through all trials, he has the emotional and spiritual foundation upon which to live the godly life. **Godliness:** One's reverence for the word of God will motivate him to act according to God's instructions. Godliness is living like God wants us to live. No one can live godly and worship God correctly if he is ignorant of what God wants. Therefore, Peter assumes that one diligently applies himself to God's instructions in order to conduct his life after the will of God. Godliness, therefore, works to maintain relationships with others that are based on the directions of God. **7 Brotherly kindness:** The one who is concerned for his brother will not act harshly toward his brother (Rm 12:10; Gl 6:10; 1 Th 3:12; Hb 13:1). He will not speak in a manner that brings injury to the character of his brother. He loves his brother because God first loved him (1 Jn 4:19).

Love: Love is the foundation upon which all relationships are established and maintained between God and man and between man and man (See comments Gl 5:14,22,23; see Mt 5:44-46; Jn 13:34,35; 1 Co 13). **8 If these things are in you and abound:** Peter's use of the word "if" places a condition on being fruitful. Therefore, one must make every effort to apply and grow in the qualities he has just discussed. These fundamental principles of character must be maintained and increased in order to be a fruitful disciple in one's knowledge of who Jesus is (See Jn 15:1,2). One can intellectually know Jesus. However, unless he grows in the spiritual qualities about which Peter has just spoken, he will not know Jesus or the Father who sent Him into the world.

9 He who lacks these things: The one who lacks the above qualities is blinded to the fact that he has been cleansed by the sacrificial blood of Jesus (1 Jn 2:9-11). He seeks to maintain the calling of being a Christian, and yet, lacks the inner character of what a Christian is. God's grace that was poured out to save him has lost its motivating appeal to live the godly life (See 2:20-22). He is thus deficient in spiritual understanding of those things that lead to one's understanding of who God is. He has forgotten that he was purged of sin when he obeyed the gospel (At 2:38; 22:16), and thus, is living a life that is ungrateful for the grace of God (See comments 1 Co 15:10; 2 Co 4:15; see Ep 5:26; Hb 9:14).

10 Make your calling and election sure: Through individual initiative to focus one's life on the behavioral characteristics of verses 5,6, one assures his salvation. He assures his salvation, not because he has meritoriously obeyed legal demands of law. He has assured himself by development of the inner man that is manifested by the demeanor of his life. When we concentrate on the spiritual development of the inner man, our focus is on God, not on things of this world (See 2 Co 13:5; Cl 3:1,2; 1 Jn 3:19). Salvation, therefore, is de-

11 For an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 ¶ Therefore, I will not be negligent to always remind you of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

13 Yes, I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, even as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

15 Moreover, I will be diligent that you may be able after my departure to have these things

always in remembrance.

16 ¶ For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

17 For He received from God the Father honor 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."

18 And we heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

19 ¶ And we have more certain the prophetic

pendent upon our focus on the inner man in order to be directed to live according to the commandments of God (See Mt 7:21; Ph 2:12). In this sense, every man is responsible for his own salvation. **You will never stumble:** If one continually focuses on maintaining the inner man, the result will be that he will not fall away from the grace of God. It is not that one will not sin. Peter's point is the same as John's. One's spiritual walk in the light of God's direction will keep him within the realm of the cleansing blood of Jesus (See comments 1 Jn 1:7-9). He may sin, but he is not living a life of sin. Therefore, he will not fall away. He is not like the one whose life is not centered on God as described in verse 9 (See 2:20-22; Gl 5:4; Hb 6:4-6). **11 The everlasting kingdom of our Lord:** Since the saints to whom Peter writes are already obedient subjects of the present kingdom reign of Jesus over all things, reference here must be to the kingdom of Jesus that is yet to come. Christians now reign in life with Jesus who is now reigning (Rm 5:17). However, there is also a heavenly kingdom that is yet to come (See comments 1 Co 15:24-28). Entrance into this realm of dwelling will be given to all those who are of the nature of what is explained in verses 5,6. Since the Christian's focus of life is on the development of the inner man, he will be a qualified citizen for dwelling in the heavenly kingdom that God has promised to those who love and serve Him (Ti 1:2; 1 Pt 1:3-6).

SOURCE OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

12 Remind you always of these things: Peter's readers were obediently focusing on those things that would lead to their eternal salvation. Nevertheless, as an apostle and elder of the church, he knew that it was his responsibility to continually remind the church of those things they already knew (See At 20:28; Ph 3:1; 1 Jn 2:21). His work to remind them of those truths that have already been revealed illustrates the responsibility of all those who spiritually lead the flock of God (See comments Ep 4:11-16; 2 Tm 4:1,2). The church must continually be rehearsed in those things that often become forgotten with the passing of every generation. Since the church is always one generation away from apostasy, leaders must continually carry out the task of teaching the word of God to every generation of the church (1 Pt 5:12; Jd 5). **13** Disciples must never complain against those teachers who are doing their duty of teaching the fundamentals upon which our belief is

based. It is right for teachers to teach such things since members must continually be stirred to remember the truth they have always known. Therefore, members must not quench the Spirit (1 Th 5:19) by becoming dull of hearing those things that remain the foundation of our faith (Hb 5:11,12). **14 Put off my tent:** Peter's reference here to his tent (tabernacle) is to his body. He speaks of the body in a manner wherein he does not consider it his real self. We indwell our bodies. The physical body houses our soul and spirit (See comments 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Th 5:23). In this context Peter speaks of his death. His death was foretold by Jesus (Jn 21:18,19). Because of the situation in which he was at the time of writing, he senses that his death is near in the future. **15** One motivation for Peter's writing was to deliver these final instructions to the church. He knew his death was imminent (See 2 Tm 4:6).

FAITH BASED ON FACTS

16,17 Cunningly devised fables: Peter and the other Christ-sent apostles did not invent Christianity by organizing a theology out of fables and myths. They were eyewitnesses to Jesus' life and miracles (Lk 1:2; 24:44-49; At 1:22; Jn 20:30,31). They gave the testimony of their experience, and in this context, Peter reminds his readers that their belief is based on the testimony of the apostles. Fables are developed over years of hearsay and the fertile imagination of people in any society. However, Christianity exploded out of Jerusalem after the Pentecost of A.D. 30. It expanded throughout the Roman Empire in a matter of a few years. Fables do not develop in this way. Therefore, the only way to explain the phenomenal growth of the first century church is to understand that it had a miraculous beginning as the result of a resurrected Founder. There is no other logical answer to the growth and commitment of the early disciples (See introduction to At). **Eyewitnesses of His majesty:** Specific reference here would be to Peter, James and John who had the privilege of personally witnessing the transfiguration of Jesus (See comments Mt 17:1-7; Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28-36). They did not proclaim the majesty of Jesus by faith. They walked by fact because they personally experienced Moses and Elijah with Jesus on the mountain. **18 We heard:** Peter had certainly told this story numerous times. The experience of Peter, James and John on the mountain of transfiguration became a foundational fact upon which they witnessed the sonship of Jesus. It was an evidence to

word, to which you do well to take heed, as to a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture came about by the *prophet's* own interpretation.

21 For the prophecy did not come in old time by the will of man, but holy men spoke from God as *they were* carried along by the Holy Spirit.

confirm the message they were proclaiming throughout the world (Hb 2:3,4). God bore witness to Jesus, and thus, we believe because of the testimony of Peter and others who actually experienced the miraculous confirmation of Jesus to be the Son of God (Jn 3:2; see Mt 16:13-19).

19 The prophetic word: The coming of the Messiah, the Son of God, was revealed to the Old Testament prophets (Lk 16:31; 24:25-27,44; see At 2:16-36; 3:18-24; 10:43; 1 Pt 1:10-12). The fulfillment of the prophecies of the prophets was confirmed to be fulfilled by the miraculous work of Jesus (See comments Mk 16:17-20; Hb 2:3,4). **Do well to take heed:** The tense of the verb here is present tense. Therefore, they were to continually heed the things that were confirmed to be true. **Light that shines in a dark place:** Jesus is the light that shines forth in a world of sin (Jn 8:12; see Is 9:2; Mt 4:2; Jn 1:4,5,9; 9:5; 12:35). He is the hope of deliverance from a life of misdirection and confusion. When we focus on Jesus, our life gains direction and hope. We are born out of the mire of sin (Ep 2:1-3). Jesus thus provides a new dawn in our lives to the abundant life. **Until the day dawns and the morning star arises:** As one centers his life on Jesus, there is a new dawn of life within his heart (See Jn 10:10). Jesus brings life to those who are obedient to the gospel. This life grows within one's heart as he continues to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (1:4; 3:18). As we are enlightened by our knowledge of Jesus, we understand the purpose for which we were created and the destiny of our souls. We thus focus our lives on the purposes of God for the creation of all things (See comments Cl 1:16). Peter's reference to the "morning star" here probably refers to Jesus being the object of our attraction. He gives hope of a new day in life (Jn 10:10), and an eternal life that is yet to come (Ti 1:2). **20 Own interpretation:** The meaning here is not that individuals cannot interpret the Scriptures for themselves. Such is actually a misinterpretation of the passage itself. What Peter is saying is that no prophecy is of private origin. No Scripture was ever written as a result of the invention of any individual. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ..."* (2 Tm 3:16). **21** This verse explains what Peter just said in the preceding verse concerning the origin of Scripture. Scripture did not come by the initiative of men. It came as a result of men being directed by the Holy Spirit to record accurately and without error the word of God. Prophecy, therefore, did not originate with men. It originated with God, who through the Holy Spirit, inspired prophets both to speak forth His will and record the same for all men of all history (See 2

Chapter 2

1 ¶ But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many will follow their shameful ways. And because of them, the way of truth will be blasphemed.

3 And through covetousness they will with

Sm 23:2; At 1:16; see comments 1 Co 2:10-13). Since God had revealed to man all that He desires that we have to make the man of God complete and thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tm 3:16,17), we no longer have any inspired prophets.

Chapter 2

WARNING OF FALSE TEACHERS

Peter now turns to a warning concerning false teachers whose lives have manifested the result of their teaching. They have eroded away the foundation upon which they conduct their lives. Now these false teachers are turning their heresies toward others in the church. Peter's warning concerning these teachings is that they destroy the moral foundation of Christian behavior.

1 There will be false teachers among you: Peter uses the example of the Old Testament people of God. There were false teachers in Israel (Dt 13:1-5; 18:20; 1 Kg 22:5-12; Jr 5:31; Ez 13:3). Since there were false teachers among God's people in the Old Testament, Peter warns that there will be false teachers among the disciples at the time he wrote (See Mt 24:5,11,24; 2 Co 11:13; Gl 2:4; At 20:28-31; 1 Tm 4:1,2; 1 Jn 4:1). And since there were false teachers among God's people in the first century, we must assume that there are the same among His people today. **Secretly bring in:** The teaching comes in secretly in the sense that it has an appeal to the flesh (See comments Gl 2:4). **Destructive heresies:** The teachings were destructive because they denied the very foundation upon which our faith is built. They denied the sonship of Jesus by denying the incarnation of Jesus (See comments 1 Jn 2:22,23; 4:2,3; Jd 4). The Gnostics denied that Christ came in the flesh. Such a denial assumed that there was no resurrection. Therefore, the false doctrine about which Peter is discussing is a denial of the redemptive work of the incarnate Son of God (1 Co 6:20; 7:23; Hb 10:29; see "Historical Background" in introduction to 1 Tm). In this context, therefore, the term "false teacher" refers to someone who denies a fundamental doctrine. The term is not used in the New Testament to refer to someone with whom we may disagree on a matter of opinion. This is one of those terms that is unfortunately misused and often applied to anyone with whom we might disagree. One would do well, therefore, to be careful how he uses this term. In the context of this chapter of Peter's epistle, he gives us a definition of who the Holy Spirit considers to be a false teacher. It is one who denies any fundamental doctrine concerning the nature of the incarnate Son of God, and as a result, behaves after the manner

deceptive words exploit you. Their judgment from long ago does not linger and their damnation does not slumber.

4 ¶ For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to pits of darkness and reserved *them* for judgment;

5 and did not spare the old world, but saved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to ashes, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;

7 and delivered righteous Lot, oppressed with the filthy behavior of the wicked –

8 for that righteous man, living among them, was vexed *in his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* unlawful deeds –

of conduct that Peter describes in this chapter. **Bring-ing on themselves swift destruction:** In this context, Peter may be referring to Judaeo-Gnosticism that had affected the churches of Asia Minor where many Jews had been converted. They brought in their philosophy of religion which he will explain in this chapter. The indication here is that their destruction is looming in the near future, not centuries later when Jesus comes in His final coming (Ph 3:19; 1 Th 5:2,3; see comments 2 Th 1:7-9). **2** Peter is here prophesying of the result of the teaching. Many will accept the teaching because it appeals to the lusts of the flesh. The religion will not be of the nature of the disciplined life about which he has already spoken (See comments 1:5-11). The religion will encourage one to live after the uncontrolled lust of unclean living. **The way of the truth will be blasphemed:** Those who follow after the religion Peter will discuss in this context, will teach that the righteous behavior about which he has written in chapter 1 is not from God. Those who follow the false teachers will speak against godly living. **3 Through covetousness:** James affirmed that these religionists took advantage of the benevolent heart of sincere Christians (See comments Js 5:4-6; compare Lk 12:15; Rm 1:29; 16:18; Cl 3:5; Ti 1:11). Through deceptive speech they enticed honest and sincere brethren to support their greed for material things. Gullible Christians, therefore, become the victim of those in the church who used the benevolent responsibilities of brethren for their own gain (See comments Mk 7:9-13; 2 Th 3:6-15; see 1 Tm 6:5; Ti 1:11; compare 2 Co 2:17). Because they had taken advantage of sincere brethren, their judgment was certain (Ph 3:19; Jd 4).

4 Peter gives three examples in verses 4-6 of how God had in the past rained down judgment on the wicked. His examples prove that wickedness will not be tolerated by God. Though the judgment may be delayed in coming in reference to our calendar, the judgment is certain to happen. **Angels:** We do not know when this sinning against God took place. The fact is that it did. The consequence was that these angels who sinned were stripped of their habitation and work for which they were originally created (See comments Jd 6). These angels are reserved in “everlasting” confinement. They are securely kept by God until their judgment which will also take place on the last day (Mt 25:41). These angels were created with free-moral agency. For some reason, however, they chose not to remain in their submissive role. Peter’s argument here is that if God cast down angelic beings, he will most certainly judge those false teachers who proclaim doctrines that deny the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus. Those teachers

who promote doctrines that undermine the moral behavior of Christians will face the certainty of God’s judgment. **Cast them down:** The Greek word here is *tartarus*. It is a word that literally means “to cast down” or “consign to tartarus.” This would be the torments of Luke 16:23-26 (See comments). Those who have lived on earth in sin against God are thus confined in hades existence to torments after death until the judgment of the last day. **5 Did not spare the old world:** Peter is not referring to a portion of humanity that was destroyed in the flood of Noah’s day (Gn 5-9). He is talking about the totality of humanity. All but eight souls were swept away by the global waters of the flood (3:5,6). If God would go to such lengths to cleanse the world of the evil inventions of men, then certainly he will judge the false teachers who are affecting the church. In reference to salvation, God is not interested in quantity. He is interested in spiritual quality (See comments Mt 7:13,14).

Preacher of righteousness: Standing alone in his generation of evil workers, Noah stood up and preached that which was right in the eyes of God. Throughout the time when the ark was in preparation, he was preaching a coming calamity that would befall those who rejected God (1 Pt 3:20). However, the world that then was did not repent, and thus, was consumed by the waters of a universal flood. **6-8 Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes:** Sodom and Gomorrah, with the cities of Admah and Zeboim, did not escape the righteous judgment of God (Gn 19:1-26). They were destroyed with fire from heaven because the population of the cities followed after all sorts of wickedness (See comments Jd 7). **Delivered righteous Lot:** Peter says that the wickedness of the two cities oppressed or greatly disturbed Lot. His righteous character would not be desensitized by the commonality of the wickedness around him. He never ceased to abhor sin (See Ps 119:139). He was thus delivered from his wicked environment by God. It is worthy to note that God determined that the wickedness of the environment of the cities was beyond spiritual repair. He did not leave Lot in these cities as a preacher of righteousness. As Noah, He withdrew his men from these cultures that were beyond repentance. In some cases in the world today, there are populations that are beyond spiritual repair. They are doomed to destruction because they have given up a fear of God and the judgment to come. **Seeing and hearing their unlawful deeds:** The character of Lot is manifested in the fact that he did not condone or conform to the sin of the culture in which he lived. The commonality of sin did not twist his judgment that the evil behavior of the society was sin against God. Societies must never be allowed to determine that which is

9 *then* the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

10 especially those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. *They are presumptuous and self-willed.* They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,

11 whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12 ¶ But these, like natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they do not understand. And they will utterly perish in their own corruption.

13 And they will receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure

either right or wrong in the eyes of God. It is God who determines what is right and wrong. Societies seek to digress by conformity to that which is accepted within the society. Once any society gives up a fear of God, it is set on a course of moral self-destruction from which it cannot return. Sodom and Gomorrah were in such a situation. They were on a course of degradation from which they could not return, and thus, God chose to bring their existence to an end as He chose to do the same to the world of Noah's day. Only God can make these decisions because it is only He who knows the future. **9** *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly:* Lot was physically delivered out of the temptations of the culture in which he lived. God will deliver us out of temptations (1 Co 10:13; see Ps 125:3). Peter reassures his readers by affirming that God can deliver the righteous out of temptation if they will seek the way of escape. He is possibly looking forward to an imminent deliverance that they would receive from those who were inflicting suffering upon them at the time he writes and in the near future. God delivered the church from the onslaught of Jewish persecution by the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (See comments Mt 24). He delivered the church from the State persecution of the Roman Empire by bringing down those Caesars of the Roman Empire who persecuted the church (See comments Rv 13). *The Lord knows how ... to reserve the unrighteous:* At the time Peter wrote, the unrighteous of the past were reserved in punishment. They were still in existence, but in reservation for judgment. They had been finally judged (Hb 9:27), but were awaiting the final judgment and their final punishment (See comments Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:7-9). **10** *Especially those who ... despise authority:* In this verse Peter says that God will take special note of those who live immoral lives and those who despise authority (Jd 4,7,8). It seems that God will assign greater condemnation to those who conduct their lives after immoral behavior with defiant attitudes. *Presumptuous:* The immoral and defiant are daring. They suppose themselves to be something when they are nothing in the eyes of God. Their arrogant self-sufficiency leads them to believe that they are right with God when actually they are living in defiance to His will. *Speak evil of dignitaries:* The arrogant speak evil against any who are in authority (Jd 8). Their behavior here manifests their heart. They are not of a submissive heart, and thus, do not submit to God's will (See 1 Pt 5:5-7). In this context, Peter is discussing religious people. These are the false teachers who are among the members of the church (vs 1). They speak heresies in conjunction with the defiant manner of their behavior. They are so presumptuous as to think that they are without sin (See comments 1 Jn 1:7-9). **11** Righteous angels are greater than these false teach-

ers. However, because they are greater in power and might, they are not so arrogant as to speak against authority as these false teachers (See comments Jd 9). It is the nature of those who have created religion after their own philosophies of men to assert themselves to be their own authority in behavior and beliefs. Whenever one leaves the authority of the word of God, he seeks religious authority either in his own reasoning, his own feelings, or his own religious traditions. All presumptuous authority leads one away from the commandments of God (See comments Mk 7:1-9). They lead one to reject the commandment of God in order to keep one's own self-imposed religion (See comments Cl 2:20-23).

THE CHARACTER OF FALSE TEACHERS

In this section Peter gives a vivid description of the nature and character of those false teachers who have become their own self-proclaimed authority. He is very graphic in his description. He is detailed in order to give Christians God's revelation concerning what He considers to be immoral and arrogant behavior. What follows, therefore, should be a warning to all who would conduct their lives after the behavior of what is revealed here.

12 *Natural brute beasts:* These false teachers are like brute beasts who function without the rationality that is characteristic of morally controlled men (See comments Jd 10). *Things that they do not understand:* Their religious arrogance has convinced those things that are beyond the physical world. However, in their presumptuous attitudes, they do not understand that their senses are limited to the physical world, and thus, cannot empirically know that which is beyond the curtain of the physical world (See 1 Co 2:14; 1 Tm 1:7). *Utterly perish:* Their self-imposed religious system of thinking has led them to believe that they are right before God. For this reason, they will not repent. "I tell you, no. But unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:3). This statement of Jesus was made to Jewish religious leaders who had constructed their own religion after their own traditions (Mt 15:1-19; Mk 7:1-9). They, as well as these religious people, would not repent because they had deceived themselves into thinking that they were right before God (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). Peter says that their destruction is certain because they lead corrupt lives (See comments Mt 7:21-23; 25:41). **13** *The reward of unrighteousness:* The reward or result of their unrighteousness will be their utter destruction (See Nm 31:9,19; Rm 6:23). Peter seems to have more in mind than the fact of just punishment that will be meted out to the unrighteous. His meaning seems to be according to what Jesus said concerning what God can do. "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are not

to riot in the daytime. *They are* stains and blemishes, carousing themselves with their own deceptions while they feast with you; **14** having eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. *They have* a heart they have exercised with covetous practices, accursed children. **15** They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son of Beor*, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. **16** But he was rebuked for his iniquity, *for* the mute donkey, speaking with a man's voice,

restrained the madness of the prophet.

17 ¶ These are wells without water, clouds and mists that are carried by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.

18 ¶ For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they entice through the lusts of the flesh, through sensuality, those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the bondservants of corruption. For by whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.

able to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [gehenna]" (Mt 10:28). The unrighteous will face destruction that will not be reversed (2 Th 1:9). **Riot in the daytime:** These unrighteous have no shame. Wicked men usually carry out their wickedness under the concealment of night (Ep 5:11,12; 1 Th 5:7; see Rm 13:13). These arrogantly conduct their evil behavior in daylight. Their open manifestation of evil behavior reveals the arrogance of their minds. **Stains and blemishes:** Peter here affirms that they were taking advantage of the innocence of the common church meals (See 1 Co 11:17-22; Jd 12). Their presence marred the loving fellowship of those who in sincerity shared their food with one another. The loving occasion of the celebration feast was tarnished by the unscrupulous characters of hypocritical disciples who behaved themselves after the directions of Satan. **14 Eyes full of adultery:** Their eyes scan the physical appearance of women with the intent to commit adultery (See comments Mt 5:27,28). **Cannot cease from sin:** They cannot cease simply because of the wickedness of their hearts. They are driven to unrighteous behavior because they have given themselves over to satisfy the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life (1 Jn 2:15,16). **Enticing unstable souls:** Those Christians who are both ignorant of the Bible and spiritually weak are the victims of those teachings that justify the satisfaction of the lust of the flesh (2 Tm 3:6). **Exercised with covetous practices:** Their minds are set on the things of the world, and thus, they roam among the fellowship of the saints establishing relationships that will reap financial benefit (See comments Mt 6:19-34). They see the fellowship of the disciples as an opportunity to reap gain. **15,16 Forsaken the right way:** These are apostates from God's will. They have turned away from godly behavior. **The way of Balaam:** The way of Balaam is covetousness. Greed for money drove Balaam to sell the use of his prophetic gift for evil causes (See comments Jd 11; see Nm 22:4-35; 25:1-9; 31:16). Balaam's sin was that he was willing to do that which he knew was wrong in order to reap financial gain. Those who practice unscrupulous business dealings in order to reap financial gain, sin after the manner of Balaam. Those who minister among the disciples simply for the benefit of financial gain have gone in the way of Balaam. Their greed is greater than their motivation to live the right way according to God's will. **17 Wells without water:** The Holy Spirit now pronounces judgment upon

the inner character of these spiritually empty hypocrites. A waterless well is a great disappointment to the one who has sought for it in order to satisfy thirst (See comments Jd 12). The hypocritical teachers about whom Peter writes could deliver intellectual teaching. However, because of the wickedness of their hearts, they offered no spiritual leadership that would satisfy those who were seeking godly examples of Christian conduct. **Black darkness:** The word "forever" is not included in many manuscripts. However, Peter has in mind the punishment of hell that is awaiting those who are of the character that he has just described. They think that they are walking in the light (See 1 Jn 1:7-9). Their tragedy is in the fact that they have deceived themselves. They are actually in darkness, and thus, will reap the reward of darkness for their sinful conduct of life. This should be a warning to every Christian who is ignorant of the word of God, and yet, thinks that he is walking according to the will of God (Hs 4:6). Ignorance of the word of God is the foundation upon which Satan deceives religiously minded people into thinking they are right with God while they are living and believing a lie (See comments 2 Th 2:10-12). **18 They entice through the lusts of the flesh:** When John wrote the judgments of Revelation, those who were in the church of Thyatira were suffering from the influence of the wickedness about which Peter here writes (See Rv 2:20). Those who have given themselves over to satisfying the lust of the flesh are here speaking enticing words in order to lead others into their wicked immorality (See Rm 16:17,18). They are seeking to draw back into sin those who have escaped through obedience of the gospel (At 2:38; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6). **19 They promise them liberty:** These have turned "the grace of our God into licentiousness" (See comments Jd 4). They have twisted the liberty of the grace of God into a teaching whereby they justify their own immorality (See Jn 8:34; Rm 6:16,20). They have wrongly concluded that since we are saved by God's grace and not by perfect law-keeping, that we have liberty to sin while expecting God to extend His grace toward our sin (See comments Rm 6; Hb 10:26; see Rm 7:6; 8:2; 2 Co 3:17; Gl 2:4; 5:1). The one who feels at liberty to practice any lustful sin has brought himself into the bondage of Satan. Those who are in such bondage often entice others to join with them in their sin. They do so in order to justify themselves in fulfilling the lust of the flesh. **20 Escaped the pollutions of the world:** Peter speaks here of those who

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb, “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Chapter 3

1 ¶ This is now, beloved, the second letter I write to you in which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder,

2 so that you may be mindful of the words

were once Christians. They had come out of sin and were saved because of their obedience to the truth (1 Pt 1:22,23). They had obeyed the gospel, and thus, they had been washed of all sin (At 2:38; 22:16; Rm 6:3-6). However, they fell from grace by returning to the life of sin from which they escaped (Compare Ep 2:1-3).

The latter end is worse: It is worse because the sanctified life of godliness no longer had its appeal as it did when they were first converted to Jesus (See Mt 12:45; Lk 11:26). They have been desensitized to the appeal of the gospel (See comments Hb 6:4-6). **21 Better for them not to have known:** These apostates were condemned in their sin before they obeyed the gospel in order to be saved (Rm 6:23). They would have carried on in such sin and been condemned to hell in the end (Mt 25:41; 2 Th 1:7-9). Now they are again in a state of condemnation because of their return to the life of sin in which they lived before their conversion. However, in the process of their conversion and fellowship with the church, they have now mocked the name of Jesus in the communities in which they lived. They have blasphemed the name of Jesus by their conduct. At the time Peter wrote, they were in the process of leading innocent weaker Christians into their immoral and unscrupulous manner of life. The Holy Spirit here reveals the omniscient foreknowledge of God who envisioned their apostasy. God knew that they would apostatize from the faith. Because He knew, He can reveal statements as this, that is, that it would have been better for the church if they had not known the fellowship of the church (“the way of righteousness”). It would have been better that they had not known the way of righteousness in order that they not have caused the damage that they did to the innocent sheep of God. They have only intensified their sin by rejecting the grace of God after coming to a knowledge of what God has done for the world through the incarnation and cross of Calvary (See Lk 12:47). **22 Dog returns to his own vomit:** The Holy Spirit’s quotation of this repulsive proverb reveals what God thinks of those who apostatized from the way of righteous living in order to follow after the lust of the flesh (Compare Pv 26:11). Their actions manifest a total disregard for God’s love and grace that was poured out on the cross through the sacrificial offering of the incarnate Son of God.

Chapter 3

THE DAY OF THE LORD

In the first letter that Peter wrote, he alerted his readers to an imminent end of all things. “*But the end of all things is at hand*” (1 Pt 4:7). James also wrote to

Jewish Christians, “*to the twelve tribes who are scattered abroad*” (Js 1:1). James’ warning is the same as Peter’s. “*Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near*” (Js 5:8). Both writers wrote in the three to five years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Both forewarned Jewish Christians that there was an imminent judgment of God coming upon Jerusalem. When using the terms “coming” “at hand,” or “near”, neither writer was deceiving his readers into believing that the final coming of Jesus was imminent. Their reference to the coming of the end of all things, therefore, must refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Therefore, when we come to this chapter of 2 Peter, it is apparent that Peter at least had the coming of the Lord’s in-time judgment on national Israel in mind, which coming was prophesied by Jesus in Matthew 24. However, in understanding the metaphorical language of this chapter, as Matthew 24, there is certainly given a type of the final coming at the end of time. God’s final judgments will end all dispensations and kingdoms of this world. The judgment upon national Israel gave a physical signal to Israel that His covenant with them had ended at the cross. His judgment at the end of this world will finalize this world and this present dispensation. Therefore, as we study through the contents of this chapter, we cannot help but keep in mind the end of all things when Jesus comes again to do away with this world. Peter has in mind the finalization of national Israel, but progresses to the finalization of all things with the termination of the world as we now know it.

1 I stir up your pure minds: Peter here states one of his reasons for writing. It is to remind his Jewish readers of things they had already been taught. We would assume, therefore, that the verbal presentation of the contents of this chapter had already been taught to churches before it was written in this inspired letter. This would lead us to believe that the early apostles and prophets of the church did teach the churches the prophecy of Matthew 24 when they went throughout the Roman Empire. The subject of Jesus’ prophecy had direct relevance to the lives of Jewish Christians. Therefore, we would correctly conclude that what Jesus had prophesied was the subject of many midnight discussions among the first century Christians. **2 The holy prophets:** The church was built upon the foundation of the inspired preaching of the apostles and prophets (Ep 2:20). It was founded upon the apostles and New Testament prophets because God, through them, “*revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostle and prophets*” the mystery of the gospel (Ep 3:5). It could be argued that Peter in this context refers to the Old Testament prophets. However, though the Old Testament prophets prophesied

that were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through us your apostles.

3 Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking after their own lusts, **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 creation.

5 For this they willfully forget, that by the word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of the water and in the water,

6 through which the world that then existed

of the present dispensation, they did not understand their prophecies (1 Pt 1:10-12). The full revelation of the mystery came only through the New Testament apostles and prophets (See Jn 14:26; 16:13). It came to the Old Testament prophets through inspired prophecy, which prophecy they did not completely understand. For this reason, it is best to affirm that Peter in this context is referring to the inspired New Testament speakers and writers. One point is clear concerning the prophecies of national Israel. Both the Old Testament and New Testament prophets proclaimed the end of national Israel. Both Isaiah (Is 10:20-23) and Daniel (Dn 9:24-27) spoke of the end of national Israel. The New Testament prophets (evangelists) went forth calling the Israel by faith out of national Israel in view of the fact that the end of national Israel was in the near future. **3 Scoffers will come in the last days:** Peter now seems to take his readers through a chronology of both biblical teaching and historical events. He states that they must first remember that it was previously spoken that scoffers would come in the last days. “Scoffers” here seems to be a specific signal of the presence of the last days. Those who ridiculed the pronouncements of Jesus concerning the fall of national Israel would reject the Christians’ belief that the end of all things was at hand (1 Pt 4:7). Around A.D. 67 Paul wrote a similar warning concerning the times. “*Know this also, that in the last days perilous times will come*” (2 Tm 3:1; see 1 Tm 4:1-3; 2 Tm 4:3-5). The existence of the scoffers and mockers was evidence that the disciples were in the perilous times of the last days of national Israel at the time Peter wrote. Therefore, we must not skip over 1,900 years in order to apply the above warnings to the end of the world. This is especially true in view of the fact that the “scoffers” and “perilous time” were already present and occurring in the immediate environment of the readers of both Peter and Paul (See comments 1 Jn 2:18). It was the last days of national Israel. The nation was coming to an end. Therefore, we must keep in mind that the term “last days” does not refer to a long period of time. The term itself defines the meaning. Reference is to the last days of a dispensation or long period of time. In this sense, therefore, Peter is not discussing the “Christian age” as the last days. He is discussing the finality of the dispensation of national Israel. **Walking according to their own lusts:** Paul said that they would be “*lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers ...*” (2 Tm 3:2-5). Jude said that they “*walk after their own ungodly lusts*” (Jd 18). Paul, Jude and Peter all record the nature of those who would ignore or scoff at the judgments of God. Such is the nature of nonreligious people who refuse to have the knowledge of God in their minds. They are not simply indifferent to the views of the Christian. They are antagonistic to them. But such is also the nature of the religious materialist about whom Peter, James and Jude wrote concerning

the last days of national Israel. The religious materialist had economically padded his environment with a religion of consuming things upon his own lusts (Jn 4:3). Those who are so involved in the world refuse to accept the fact that their material security will be destroyed. Their world is coming to an end. The world of the rich Sadducean Jews was coming to an end in the destruction of national Israel. **4 Where is the promise of His coming:** These scoffers would ridicule the message of Christians who believed Jesus’ pronouncements against Jerusalem. The fact that they mocked the teaching of the coming in judgment upon Israel is evidence that Christians had been proclaiming their belief of Jesus’ prophecy of Matthew 24. In Matthew 24 Jesus had foretold the nature of those who would reject impending judgment. “*For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until that day that Noah entered the ark*” (Mt 24:38). However, these scoffers had forgotten past judgments of God in time as the flood of Noah’s day, Sodom and Gomorrah, and even Jerusalem in the days of the Babylonian conquest of 586 B.C. Things had not continued as they were since the days of creation. God had before come in judgment in time upon Israel. All such judgments were to remind men of future comings in judgment. However, those who refuse to listen, will not heed the in-time judgments of God. **Promise:** Jesus made a promise of His coming. “*For as the lightning comes from the east and shines even to the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man*” (Mt 24:27,37-44). To persecuted Christians who believed Jesus’ promise, the fulfillment of this promise would be their deliverance from Jewish persecution. In a secondary sense, deliverance from the confines of the material world and persecution of the wicked at the end of time would also be a fulfillment of one of Jesus’ promises (See Jn 14:3; 1 Th 4:13-17). In general, therefore, we all look forward to a time of deliverance from the harshness that the world delivers to the Christian’s spirit (See vss 12,13). We look forward to a time when this world will pass away. Therefore, we look for a new heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness (3:1). **Coming:** The disciples preached the coming (presence) of the Lord in judgment on Israel. The unbelieving Jews never believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and thus, are here now scoffing about His coming again. These scoffers are mocking the preaching of the disciples concerning God’s judgment on Israel that was proclaimed by what they believed was a false messiah. **5,6 They willfully forget:** These scoffers of the Christian’s hopes willfully forgot that God once destroyed humanity from the face of the earth by a global flood (Gn 6-8). Only Noah and his faithful family were spared. Jude also stated that these “*mockers in the last time would walk according to their own lusts*” (Jd 18; see 2 Tm 3:1-5). Their presence in the lives of Peter’s and Jude’s immediate read-

was destroyed, being overflowed with water. **7** But the heavens and the earth that are now, are reserved by the same word, reserved for fire until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 ¶ But, beloved, do not be ignorant of this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a

thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness. But He is longsuffering toward you, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

ers indicated that they were in the last times of national Israel. Last times also existed before the destruction of the world through the flood of Noah's day. In the years previous to the flood, Enoch preached about ungodly characters in Noah's generation. Subsequently in the judgment of the flood, God came to execute judgment on the ungodly (Jd 14,15). This statement of Enoch that is quoted by Jude encourages us to keep the comments of both James, Jude and Peter in the historical context of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of national Israel. Jude's quotation of Enoch's prophecy is significant. Enoch spoke of the judgment of mockers in Noah's day. Their judgment was their destruction by the flood. Jude uses this "coming in judgment" in Noah's day to illustrate the coming in judgment upon Jerusalem (See comments Js 5:7,8). We would therefore not be out of context to use in-time judgments of God as the flood and the destruction of Jerusalem to warn of the final coming in judgment of the Lord at the end of time. By the time Peter concludes this chapter, he has progressed to the end-of-time judgment that is yet in the future. His immediate readers were going to experience an in-time illustration of the final judgment at the end of time. **The world that then existed was destroyed:** Peter emphasizes the fact that God can cause catastrophic judgment upon the physical world. The world that existed before the flood was destroyed by the waters of the flood. This passage teaches that more than humanity was destroyed by the flood that occurred in the days of Noah. Peter uses the Greek word *kataklythis* which means "to overthrow with water." The earth before the flood was "standing out of water and in the water" (See Gn 1:7-10). It was first formed a watery mass (Gn 1:1-3). When the waters and land were separated, there were the "waters" or canopy of firmament above and the watery mist that came up from the earth to water vegetation (Gn 2:6). However, by water God overthrew that world. The physical world that we now experience is far different from the physical appearance of the surface of the earth that existed before the flood. The flood radically changed the surface of the earth. This present earth is also destined for another change in the future. Peter's point is clear. Noah's flood was not a local washout by a local rainstorm. It was global (Gn 7:11). The God that created the world can cause such global judgments. Since He could, then certainly He could terminate local elements of persecution and world empires that existed at the time Peter wrote and at the time we now study this epistle. We must remember that the Lord can and will terminate the physical world which He created out of nothing. Peter wants to encourage the faithful that the God they serve is not a limited God who has been created after the image of man. He has power over all things (Hb 1:3). **7 Reserved for fire:** The world that existed before Noah,

perished by the waters of the flood. Peter now compares that world with the one that now is. It is a world that is stored up for destruction by fire. For this reason, we would conclude that Peter is turning in the context to the finality of all things at the end of the world. Noah's world physically perished in the sense that all humanity except eight souls died and the face of the earth was resurfaced by the waters of the flood. Peter makes a comparison with this present world which will also physically perish. We caution ourselves not to make too close a comparison between the two events. However, consider two things. The earth's surface that Noah knew before the flood perished in the flood. It was overthrown by water. Also, the wicked population of the world that existed before the flood was destroyed from off the face of the earth. In other words, face of the earth was changed and repopulated. A different "heavens and earth" existed after the flood than before the flood of Noah's day. However, this present heavens and earth as we now experience them are reserved for destruction by fire in the last day of God's final judgment of perdition, or destruction (vss 10-12). Disobedient angels have been reserved for the destruction of the last day (2:4; Jd 6). Peter stated that God knows how "to reserve the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment" (2:9). Therefore, everything is now in reservation or preservation for the judgment of the last day. **Perdition of ungodly men:** The ungodly of Peter's readers were being reserved for destruction in God's judgment on national Israel. However, Peter would certainly have in mind all the ungodly, whether living or dead, who are presently reserved as the fallen angels, for the judgment of destruction of the last day (See comments Lk 16:19-31; 2 Th 1:7-9).

8 Do not be ignorant: Christians must not forget that God is timeless. He is not bound to determine the occurrence of events by time. Peter's illustration of the timelessness of God is reminiscent of Psalm 90:4. "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past" When God makes a promise, man is confined to wait as time passes until the fulfillment of that promise comes to pass. However, from the viewpoint of an eternal God, when the promise is made it is as if it is already fulfilled. There is no waiting with God because He is not confined to time. Peter's point here is that because we are limited to considering time between promise and fulfillment, we must not lead ourselves to believe that God either thinks or behaves as men in reference to time. What God has said, He will do. What we might consider to be slowness on the part of God to fulfill His promise is not such from the viewpoint of God. **9 The Lord is not slack:** God is not slow to bring about His promise. He does not desire that men perish. The Greek word here for "perish" is *apollumi*. It means "to loose away" or "to destroy." God does not want men

10 ¶ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein will be burned up.

to be destroyed in the great destruction that will be coming upon those who do not obey the gospel (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9). On the contrary, God desires that men repent. He desires that they turn their lives to obedient behavior of the divine will (See Ez 18:32; Jn 3:17; At 17:30; 1 Tm 2:4; Hb 2:9). Therefore, we do not serve a mean God. He is not one who seeks to eternally destroy man from His presence. He is not a God who has predestined some to destruction. We serve a patient God who is timeless in His desire that men turn to serve Him. Though He is patient, there will be a time when He will bring about the destruction about which Peter has just spoken in this context. The unrighteous will then suffer the judgment of a fiery hell (Mt 25:41-46).

10 The day of the Lord: The "day of the Lord" is a common Old Testament reference to any time of God's judgment. In Old Testament contexts, reference was to judgments in time on the enemies of Israel (Is 2:12; 13:6-9; 19:1; Ez 30:1-4), as well as, the nation of Israel (Jr 4:13; Am 5:18-20). It is a day of judgment on the wicked in order to deliver the righteous (See Jr 46:10; Ez 13:5; 30:3; Jl 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Ml 4:1,2). If reference in the context of 2 Peter 3 is to God's judgment on Jerusalem, then the "day of the Lord" would be the same as "that day" about which Jesus spoke in Matthew 24:36. It would be a great day of calamity for national Israel. In the Old Testament, the term "day" in reference to God's judgment referred to the time when God brought judgment on nations (See Is 13:6-9; 28:5; Ez 30:3; Jl 1:15). In this context reference is possibly to the day of judgment upon national Israel. The destruction of Jerusalem was just another "day" of God's judgment days on Israel for their rejection of His will (See Is 2,3; Hs 4:3; Am 3:2; Ml 3:2ff). However, the last day of earth history will be the final day of God's judgment wherein He will destroy the world as we know it. It will be a day of destruction for both the wicked and the world. **Come as a thief:** That day would come as a thief to those who had no concern for the fulfillment of God's promises (See 1 Th 5:1-3). It would come as a thief to those who have allowed the possessions of this world to possess them. Jesus said that disobedient Jews would be "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" just as those who were destroyed by Noah's flood (Mt 24:38). To unbelievers, God's judgments always come as a thief in the night. They are not expecting His judgment simply because they have no belief in His word. They carry on with life as usual. When God's judgment comes, then to them the coming is as a thief. The materialistic mind is on things of this world. The materialist is possessed by possessions, and thus, controlled by the carnal. However, when the end comes, both in Jerusalem's destruction and the world's destruction, that which the materialist so coveted will be taken from him. **Will pass away:** As a thief takes away material possessions, so the Lord in judgment takes away the material. He takes that which diverts the minds of those who are not looking for His coming. The last thing the materialist wants is for a thief to come and take away his possessions. The last theology he wants to believe is a teaching that the things for which he has given so much time will ultimately be destroyed. On the other hand, the Lord's coming in

judgment will not be as a thief to the believer. Believers are expecting His coming. They are "looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" (vs 12). Both Jesus' and Peter's exhortations are parallel. They are saying that believers must not become caught up in the material things of life, and thus, forget that God has made a promise both to deliver the righteous from the world, as well as, to deliver them from the worries of possessions. The righteous, therefore, must set their "minds on things above, not on things on the earth" (Cl 3:2; see Rm 12:2). This helps us to understand the tremendous thought behind warnings as John's in 1 Jn 2:15. "Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him." If we interpret that the immediate context of 2 Pt 3 refers to the imminent destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, then we would view this in-time judgment to metaphorically illustrate the final coming in judgment at the end of time. It would be metaphorical simply because there is no in-time judgment that would literally and accurately portray what will happen at the end of time. The final coming of the Lord and destruction will be unique. It will be different than any coming of the Lord or destruction by the Lord throughout history. Bible students commonly interpret the words "coming" and "destruction" in passages that refer to the judgments of God to refer to end-of-time destruction of this present world. However, whether reference in this context is directly to Jerusalem's destruction or the earth's destruction, we must recognize that metaphorical figures are being used by Peter. There are no words in human language that would adequately define that which has never happened in human experience. Since the final coming and termination of this present heavens and earth has not yet occurred in human history, then we suppose that Peter has no words in his dictionary to adequately explain things concerning an end-of-time event. We must be cautious, therefore, in placing literal meanings on words that are used here by the Holy Spirit to explain something for which there are no earthly definitions to explain. If the words in the context refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, then they would still be used in a metaphorical sense in reference to the destruction that will come at the end of time. The elements of Jerusalem did not melt. The physical stones of the city did not burn out of existence. We must remember that in the metaphor of prophecy, God wants us to look beyond the metaphor to something that is greater, and often spiritual. It is possible that as Jesus progressed from in-time judgment to end-of-time judgment in His prophecies of Mt 24 and 25, Peter moves from talking about a specific in-time judgment on national Israel to a general end-of-time judgment on the world at the end of time. Assuming that this is true, then the Spirit metaphorically uses the following words of this passage to explain the final event of world history. **Pass away:** The present heavens and earth will be done away. We wonder if they will be terminated completely, and thus, annihilated from existence. What Peter is possibly saying is that the present heavens and earth as we now know them will pass away. **Great noise:** Noise occurs in the presence of atmosphere. Atmosphere is something of this

11 Since all these things will be dissolved, what sort of *people* you ought to be in holy conduct and godliness,

12 looking for and hastening the coming of

the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, will be dissolved and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

13 But we, according to His promise, look

world. At the end, we wonder if there will be a sudden explosion or implosion. It is certain that Peter uses the metaphor of great noises, that both startle and make aware, to refer to the termination of that which is to be an event that will not be hidden or secret. The words Peter is using are meant to excite the believer and terrify the unbeliever. **The elements ... the earth:** Peter's reference is to those things that now exist. What is perceived through the senses by the physical eyes of man and experienced in daily life will be "melted." This could possibly refer to termination. It would refer to termination if we would place our literal understanding on the metaphor "burned up." However, we must caution ourselves to at least try to be consistent in our interpretations of highly metaphorical passages. In our dictionary, "melted" does not mean annihilation. "Burned up" also does not mean annihilation. "Burned up" simply means that what is physical has changed in state of existence. It may exist as ashes, but it exists. However, the state in which it first existed has been changed in the sense that it no longer exists as it did before being burned up. Its previous form of existence has been terminated. **Fervent heat:** No known fire is able to destroy the elements of the present material world. Intense heat, according to the second law of thermodynamics, can destroy the usefulness of matter or change its composition. A match can be "burned up," but there still remains the charcoal. The heat the match produced in its transformation has escaped into space where it cannot be recovered. The charcoal cannot be burned again or changed back into a match. In a sense, therefore, it has "burned up." However, the remains of the burning still exist. Therefore, the matter (the match) has only been transformed into what is less useful. The "fervent heat" about which Peter speaks is in some way metaphorical of what will happen at the end. The metaphor illustrates what is greater than the metaphor itself. Therefore, the "fervent heat" would be greater than the definition of the words themselves as we understand them. Peter is simply trying to explain that God has a method of destruction that will get the job done. We must not worry ourselves about the details. **The works:** We use earthly things to generate works that manifest our accomplishments. However, Peter says these works will also be terminated. All those precious accomplishments over which men have boasted with pride will be consumed in the great bomb fire to come. All the time spent on such great works will profit nothing toward that which will exist in eternity. We cannot help but think that Peter's real message here is about our senseless concern for the material things and accomplishments of this world. After all, it is the materialist in the context who is scoffing, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Peter's message is to the same group of materialistic Jews as those whom James wrote who should weep and howl because of the coming miseries (See comments Js 5:1-3,5). **Burned up:** As literal fire consumes the usefulness of that which exists, then we assume that there will be consumption of this present world by something in the future. Peter identifies the earth as

that which will be consumed. That which will consume will be "fire," whatever is meant by this. At least in our understanding, "fire" is a most powerful consuming thing or event. We would assume that this metaphor represents something greater than the literal fire we experience. The meaning is certainly that things will be changed from how they presently exist or terminated from existence. **11** Whether Peter is discussing the destruction of Jerusalem or the final coming, the point is the same. Since the material world on which we place so much emphasis and time is going to be done away, then Peter reasons that our minds should be on things that are above this world (Cl 3:1,2; Rm 12:2). He mentions two things that should characterize those who recognize the termination of the things of this world. (1) **Holy conduct:** "Holy" is from the word that means "to separate." The believer's conduct should be as one separated or detached from what will be terminated. Christians must not become attached to the material world which in verse 10 will have its end in the consuming fire. Their minds must be on things that are above. Their minds must be on those things that will permeate the consummation of all earthly things (Rm 12:2; Cl 3:2). (2) **Godliness:** In maintaining an emotional and spiritual detachment from the things of the world, the Christian must seek after God's ways. He must conduct his life as God would direct through His word. Peter's lesson is clear. The more we understand the temporary existence of this world, the more we will focus our attention on that which will permeate the final destruction of all things. The same lesson would apply to those Jewish Christians who were still trusting in the security of national Israel. If Peter's context is directed to them, then they must trust only in what will permeate the ashes of Jerusalem. That which would last would be Jesus and His church. There were possibly too many Jewish Christians in Peter's audience who still gave some allegiance to the hope that national Israel would somehow be restored to her former national glory. However, God would in their lifetime, and in just a few years from the time Peter writes these words, erase from the earth the objects of their national pride. Therefore, the destruction of national Israel, which included the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, would help Jewish Christians take their minds off their past and help them focus on Christ and the future. **12 Looking for and hastening the coming:** Christians are looking for the day of the Lord because it will be a day of deliverance from the confines of this present world and the sufferings of persecution of this environment. We are "eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Co 1:7). Paul compared the agony of suffering in this present state with the glory of that which is to come. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us" (See comments Rm 8:18). In other words, the glory that will be rewarded to the Christian will far outweigh the most intense suffering one might incur in waiting for it. "For our light affliction that is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and

for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

14¶ Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless.

15 And regard the longsuffering of our Lord as salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul

also according to the wisdom given to him has written to you,

16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable distort to their own destruction, as *they do* also the other Scriptures.

eternal weight of glory" (2 Co 4:17). Paul's argument is that our affliction is only momentary in comparison to the eternity of the glory to come (See 2 Co 4:18). This is precisely Peter's point in this context. We look forward to the passing of the things that are seen in order to enter the glory of that which is presently not seen. Christians that are spiritually detached from what will pass away will be anxiously hastening the coming of that glory which is without end. That which is without end will arrive only when that which is temporary is dissolved. Therefore, the Christian seeks the termination of this world in order to encounter and partake of the heavenly world to come. **13 His promise:** The promise refers to the new place of dwelling. In the Old Testament era, Isaiah looked forward to a "new heavens and a new earth" (Is 65:17; 66:22). The fulfillment of this prophecy was realized in the establishment of a spiritual kingdom reign of Jesus that is manifested within the hearts of people on earth who have submitted to His lordship. When the will of the Father is done on earth as it is done in heaven, then kingdom reign is established in the hearts of men and manifested on earth as the church (See comments Mt 6:9,10; Lk 17:20,21; At 2:36-38). Those who submit to the kingdom reign of Jesus have their names enrolled in heaven (Ph 4:3). Their citizenship is in heaven (Ph 3:20). **A new heavens and a new earth:** As opposed to the kingdom relationship that national Israel had with the Father, Christians now enjoy a "new heavens and earth" in their covenant relationship with the Father as members of the church. The church is a spiritual dwelling. It is a spiritual environment on earth where the kingdom reign of Jesus is seen in the hearts of men by their godly living. Peter, however, is directing our minds to another dwelling. He is directing our attention to another "new heavens and earth" that is beyond the church and yet in the future. **In which righteousness dwells:** It is an environment "in which righteousness dwells." Isaiah contrasted the kingdom relationship of Israel with the Father to the coming kingdom relationship of the church with Jesus. Peter seems to be using the same figure (new heavens and new earth) to compare the present kingdom relationship of the church with Jesus to another new kingdom relationship that is yet to come. The physical earth is not here under consideration in reference to the new heavens and new earth that is to come. As Isaiah did not bring into consideration the physical world when discussing the new heavens and new earth in the church, so Peter is not considering the physical world when comparing the present "new heavens and new earth" (the church) of Isaiah's prophecy with the future new heavens and new earth in eternal glory. Peter is pointing us to a new heavenly environment as opposed to this one of persecution, ridicule, mockery and scoffing by unbelievers. The one to come will be a dwell-

ing place of righteousness. The resurrected Christian will not be a "floating spirit" in an environment of space. In the context, Peter is possibly emphasizing the "location" wherein dwells "the righteous saints." This interpretation would be affirmed by viewing the new heavens and new earth in contrast to the present heaven and earth that is being "kept in store" by the word of God (vs 7). It could be that as the world and heavens were changed by the global flood of Noah's day, so this present structure of the world will be "restructured" by fire that will destroy this world as we now know it. As the world that then existed perished (vs 6), so this present world which now exists will perish by "fire." The world certainly did not disintegrate after the flood. It was only drastically changed. Some Bible students believe that this will be the case at the end of time. We must keep in mind that the flood is the best illustration of destruction of this present world the Holy Spirit has to use to metaphorically help us understand that which is to come. However, simply because the world was not completely destroyed in the flood does not necessarily mean that it will not be at the end of time. Whatever the case, we look forward to a new heavens and earth wherein only the righteous will exist. Therefore, we are looking for and hastening the coming of the Lord (vs 12). What this new environment will be for the righteous we do not know. We simply believe that our changed bodies will dwell in an environment that is suitable for a body that has put on incorruption and immortality.

14,15 Look for these things: Peter's reference to "these things" certainly has in mind the events he has just explained. Christians look forward to the occurrence of these things in order to pass into the new environment. On the other hand, the delay in the occurrence of these things gives Christians more time to reach the lost. Christians are in the business of populating the new heavens and new earth by the preaching of the gospel (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16). The more God delays the destruction of this present heaven and earth, the more opportunity we have to enroll citizens in the world to come. Therefore, the longsuffering of the Lord leads to the salvation of more people. On the other hand, the delay of His coming also leads to the condemnation of more people than are saved simply because more people of the world's population reject the gospel than obey the gospel. **The wisdom given to him:** Peter is speaking of the inspiration of Paul (See comments 1 Co 2:10-14; 2 Tm 3:16,17). These things about which Peter is writing were also revealed to Paul. **16 Hard to understand:** Because the future events have no parallel in either present or past experiences, there are some things that are hard to understand. However, there are those who presume to understand all things, and thus, twist the Scriptures. They do so because they are untaught and unstable. Peter says

17 ¶ You therefore, beloved, seeing you know *these things* before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

18 But grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen.

that they are hard to understand, but not impossible to understand. Peter was an inspired Christ-sent apostle. The Holy Spirit did not inspire him to understand these statements by Paul. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to inspire the material to be written. It was not His work to inspire men to understand what was (See comments 1 Pt 1:10-12). Our difficulty in understanding is often the result of our lack of study. It may also be our carnal thinking (1 Co 3:1,2). Whatever the case, God did not reveal those things that are fundamental to our salvation in a manner that is difficult to understand. It is only when revelation is made of those things that are beyond the experience of our lives that we have difficulty in understanding. It is then that we must trust in God who has all things in control. **Untaught:** These are ignorant of the word of God. They do not have a spirit to study or be taught, and thus, twist the Scriptures to conform to their own imaginations or a life-style that is patterned after this world. **Unstable:** They are unstable in the sense of being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine (See comments Ep 4:11-16; 2 Tm 4:3,4). **To their own destruction:** If reference here is primarily to those mockers who refused to listen to the prophecy of Matthew 24, then they would be destroyed in the fire of Jerusalem's destruction. The same is true if reference is to the end of time. Those who refuse to listen to the warnings of Scripture concerning the coming of Jesus will be destroyed from the presence of the Lord (See comments 2 Th 1:7-9). **The Scriptures:** The term "Scriptures" was used by the Jews to refer to those writ-

ings by godly men that were proven to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures thus referred to the thirty-nine Old Testament books that composed the canon of inspired Old Testament Scriptures. It is significant to note here that Peter classifies Paul's writings as a part of the Scriptures. He thus considers Paul's writings to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and a part of the canon of writings that should be accepted by the church as the word of God. All the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were accepted as inspired Scripture, and thus, accepted to be the final word of God for all men (Jd 3; Rv 22:18,19).

17 Beware: Peter concludes by warning Christians not to be led astray by the immoral conduct of those who have given themselves over to the lust of the flesh (2:18; Ep 4:14). Therefore, we should seriously take to heart his warning, lest we be overcome with a sense of false security in our own minds (See comments 1 Co 10:12). The faithful can be led into sin, and thus lose their souls. **18 Grow:** It is the responsibility of each Christian to spiritually grow. The realm for growth is within the grace and knowledge of Jesus. One's realization of God's grace and knowledge that Jesus is the manifestation of the sacrificial Lamb who took away our sins, should stimulate us to spiritually grow. God has provided the motivation for spiritual growth through the revelation of His grace on the cross (Ti 2:11). It is the responsibility of Christians to grow in response to God's grace and the knowledge that Jesus sacrificed Himself for their salvation.

The First Letter Of John

1 John

Author

John the apostle and son of Zebedee does not identify himself as the author of this book. However, he has been given credit for being the inspired writer because of the similarity of grammar, writing style and content the book has with the gospel of John (See "Author" in introduction to Jn). The second century church leader, Irenaeus, quoted Polycarp who was one of John's personal disciples. In his quotation of Polycarp, Irenaeus stated that Polycarp affirmed that John wrote this letter. There is little question among biblical students today concerning John's authorship of this letter.

Date

There are two views concerning the date of writing. According to the writings of the church leaders of the second century, John lived to be an old man in the regions of Ephesus. Writers as Irenaeus affirmed that John wrote the letter from Ephesus the latter part of the first century, possibly around A.D. 90. Many students have accepted this possible date because John supposedly does not mention any judaizing problem in the church, which problem prevailed at the beginning of the church and is quite evident in the epistles of Paul. The lack of emphasis by John on the Jewish problem in the church is used as evidence to affirm that the destruction of national Israel in the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 had already taken place by the time John wrote (See comments Mt 24).