



# NOTES ON 1 AND 2 PETER

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# LESSON ONE

## I PETER 1:1-12

**1 Peter**,—This is the name given Simon Bar-Jonah (son of John) by Jesus, from the Greek *Petros* (the equivalent of the Aramaic *Kephas*, *Cephas*), signifying “stone or rock.” See Matthew 16:17,18; John 1:42. It came to be the apostle’s regular name.

**an apostle of Jesus Christ**,—The word “apostle” (Greek *apostolos*, literally, “one sent”) here means a delegate with powers, one who represents the person who has commissioned him. As an apostle of *Christ*, Peter speaks authoritatively for Christ in the epistle at hand. Cf. Galatians 1:11,12; 1 John 4:6.

**to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**,—The word “elect” describes those who have been chosen of God to be His people, those whose acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour has made them heirs of eternal life in heaven. See Matthew 22:4; Romans 8:33; Ephesians 1:4; James 2:5. The technical Jewish phrase “sojourners [persons sojourning for a brief season in a foreign country] of the Dispersion,” describing Jews dispersed throughout the world, is taken over by Peter to describe the Christians to whom he writes. Cf. John 7:35; Acts 2:5,9; James 1:1. As those whose “citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20), they are now only exiles, aliens, foreigners, or strangers on the earth, residing here temporarily until God calls them home to claim the full rights of their heavenly citizenship. See 1:4,9.

The fact that the epistle was addressed to Christians residing in the Roman provinces named by Peter, covering practically the whole of Asia Minor, indicates that they were mainly of pagan rather than of Jewish background since the history of the origin of the churches in these provinces shows that they were composed to a large extent of Gentile believers. See 1:14,18; 2:10; 4:3,4.

**2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**,—Emphasized here is God’s part in the election of souls to be Christians and heirs of eternal life, the word “Father” implying their sonship as members of the divine family. Strictly speaking, the foreknowledge of God involves all that He has foreordained concerning His plan of election through the redemptive work of Christ, the efficacy of which is received by grace through faith. See 1:19,20; John 1:29; Romans 4:25; Ephesians 2:8,9. Cf. Romans 8:29; 11:2. In no way, however, does this divine foreknowledge preclude free will. Cf. Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17. Thus when any one exercises his free will in believing in, depending on, Christ for election, he comes within the scope of

God's foreknowledge. This foreknowledge can also signify the love and approval God promises to all who accept His Son as their Saviour and consequently live the Christian life. Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:3; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Galatians 4:9.

**in sanctification of the Spirit.**—The word "sanctification" denotes consecration or separation, which is the spiritual state of the elect. Such sanctification is the work of the Spirit, who through the gospel, the word of truth, directs the sinner's way to the consecrating, separating, redeeming power of Christ. See John 14:26; 17:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13. When the penitent believer is baptized into Christ, following the directions of the Spirit, he receives the remission of sins and is separated from the world to be consecrated to God, to walk in a new life as one who is elect of God. See John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5, 17, 18; Galatians 3:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

**unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.**—The purpose of the consecration or separation involved in being elected by God is obedience to the divine will. See Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:14. By such obedience Christians are continually sprinkled by the blood of Christ and thus are cleansed from all their sins (1 John 1:7). Cf. Hebrews 12:24.

**Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**—This wish Peter expresses for his readers is that they will possess grace and peace "in the fullest measure" (NEB). *Peace*, signifying tranquility of soul and mind, is due to *grace*, the good will and free favor of God. Cf. Jude 2.

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—The word "blessed" is from the Greek *eulogetos*, meaning "well-spoken of, praised, honored," and it is only used in the New Testament in reference to God. We praise and honor God for all that He has done for us, especially for His regenerating, saving mercy. He is here spoken of as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" to emphasize that it is through His blessed Son that His blessings to us are wrought.

**who according to his great mercy begat us again.**—Regeneration is primarily due to God's "great mercy," His active good will to us because of our misery in sin. See Titus 3:5. The phrase "begat us again" reminds us of Jesus' teaching in John 3:3-6. The first begetting pertains to physical birth; the second begetting, indicated by the word "again," pertains to spiritual birth. See 1:23, Ephesians 2:5, 6; Colossians 2:13; James 1:18.

**unto a living hope.**—As the result of being begotten again, becoming God's sons and heirs, Christians enjoy "a living hope." The word "hope" describes the believer's confident expectancy of the heavenly inheritance, its certainty being emphasized by the adjective "living." See Romans 8:24; Titus 1:2; 2:13; Hebrews 6:19, 20.

by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,—It is by means of Christ's resurrection that God's mercy gives us spiritual life so that we can enjoy a living hope. See 3:21; John 11:25,26; 14:1-6,19; Acts 17:31; Romans 4:25; 5:1,2; 6:4; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Hebrews 9:24-28.

**4 unto an inheritance**—As we have already noted, the living hope possessed by the faithful Christian pertains to the inheritance he shall eventually claim by virtue of his membership in God's family. See Romans 8:16,17. This inheritance is eternal salvation, with all its bliss and glory. See 1:9; 2 Peter 1:11.

**incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away**,—The *eternal* inheritance of the child of God is here contrasted with the *transitory* inheritances of this present world. See Matthew 6:20. It is *incorruptible* in that it is not subject to decay or death. It is *undefiled* in that it is not subject to the stain of sin. See Revelation 21:27. It *fadeth not away* in that, unlike all beautiful flowers, it retains its freshness, beauty, and bloom throughout all eternity. See 5:4; 1 John 2:17; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.

**reserved in heaven for you**,—"In heaven" signifies the locale, the place, where faithful Christians will enjoy eternal salvation. The Greek word for "reserved," *teteremeren* (*tereo*) here denotes "keep, hold, reserve, preserve" (Arndt-Gingrich). The meaning is that by the power of God our inheritance is being held and preserved safe from all changes, beyond all risk. Cf. Goodspeed, "which is kept safe for you in heaven." See Matthew 6:20; John 14:1-6; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:12; 4:8.

**5 who by the power of God are guarded**—The word "guarded" is a military term in the Greek, *phrougroumenous* (*phroureo*), literally signifying "guarding a garrison," defined by J. H. Thayer in its use here as "watching and guarding to preserve one for the attainment of something." Christians are defended and guarded by God's omnipotent power from all attacks of the devil so that they will be preserved for the attainment of the heavenly inheritance God is keeping for them. See John 10:28,29; 17:11,12, 15; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:1; Jude 1,24,25.

**through faith**—God's guarding power is not irresistible; it must be received through faith. The heavenly inheritance is only guaranteed by God to those of His children who continue to trust Him and His blessed Son. See Matthew 10:22; 1 John 5:4.

**unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**.—The end result of God's guarding power through faith is the eternal salvation which comprises the heavenly inheritance. This salvation will "be revealed" (Greek *apokaluphthenai*, *apokalupto*, uncover, unveil) at

the end of the present age, the gospel dispensation, when Jesus comes to judge the world and to receive His faithful ones unto Himself. See Matthew 25:31,34; John 14:3. When Christ shall so be revealed, eternal salvation will be revealed. The word "ready" signifies that this can happen at any time and that Christ's disciples should therefore always be *ready*. See Matthew 24:44; James 5:9.

**6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice,**—There is no greater cause for rejoicing than in the living hope one has of receiving the heavenly inheritance of eternal salvation, even though he is beset by afflictions. See 4:13; Matthew 5:12; Romans 12:12; 2 Corinthians 6:10; Hebrews 3:6.

**though now for a little while,**—See 5:10. The trials of life are only temporary. Whether they last for a few days or a lifetime, they are but a moment in comparison to eternity (2 Corinthians 4:17).

**if need be,**—The only afflictions that God allows His children to suffer are those that are needful, that contribute to the testing of their faith. The Christian must not borrow trouble. He must not invite or lay a cross on himself, but only take up the cross ("his cross") that God imposes (Matthew 16:24).

**ye have been put to grief in manifold trials,**—The word "manifold" pertains to the various, diversified trials or afflictions that beset the Christian: persecution, poverty, sickness, etc. James regards them as occasions of joy (James 1:2); Peter states that they produce grief, but that, paradoxically, the Christian's rejoicing is not in any way diminished thereby. See 4:13; Matthew 5:12, Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 6:10.

**7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire,**—The Greek word for "proof," *dokimion*, is explained by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as that at which, when one looks, he is able to form a judgment. The valid judgment to be made concerning a faith that continues to trust in the Lord throughout manifold trials is that it is genuine, the real thing. See 4:12; James 1:3,12. Such proven faith is infinitely more precious than gold which has proven to be genuine under the test of fire. Genuine gold, however precious it may be in terms of earthly value, must eventually perish; but genuine faith never perishes because it lays hold on eternal salvation. Cf. 1 Timothy 6:19.

**may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ:**—The word "revelation" refers to the coming of Christ to judge the world (4:13; 5:4; Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-12). In the searching judicial investigation of that great day, what the Lord finds to be genuine faith will be rewarded by His grace with "praise," verbal commendation (Matthew 25:21), "glory," the eternal glory

which is Christ's (5:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 John 3:2), and "honor," distinction or position (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 7:9).

**8 whom not having seen ye love;**—The antecedent of "whom" is Christ. Although the saints of Asia Minor had never beheld the Lord in the flesh, in His earthly personality, as Peter had, yet they knew him intimately by the "inner knowledge of spiritual communion" (B. C. Caffin), and had thus learned to love Him. And we today can enjoy this same intimate, loving fellowship with the Saviour. Cf. 1 John 4:20.

**on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing,**—The Christian's relationship to Christ is a matter of faith and not of sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). See John 20:29; Hebrews 11:1,27. Peter thus tacitly insists that although Christ is now out of sight, He is not out of reach, and that His followers can therefore depend on His spiritual presence for all-sufficient power to reach their heavenly goal. See Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13; Hebrews 4:14-16.

**ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory:**—Those who love Christ, realizing by faith His presence in their lives, have cause for great rejoicing. The joy that characterizes this rejoicing is "unspeakable," that can neither be completely expressed in words nor exhausted by words, and "full of glory," that is glorified by the unseen presence of the glorious Christ. Such joy and glory are a foretaste of the joy and glory in heaven.

**9 receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.**—See 1:7. The end result of a life of trusting, steadfast, obedient faith is eternal salvation in heaven, of which Christ is the author (Hebrews 5:9). See Romans 6:22. Concerning the word "receiving," see 5:4; Hebrews 10:36.

**10 Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently,**—Although the prophets received the message from God concerning the eternal salvation to be received from the Messiah Saviour, they could not fully understand it. The words "sought" (Greek *exezetesan*, *ekzeto*, scrutinize, examine) and "searched diligently" (Greek *exereunesan*, *exetazo*, inquire carefully, search anxiously) denote the intensity of their efforts to gain the understanding they so ardently desired. See Daniel 7:16; Matthew 13:17; Luke 10:24.

**who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:**—The eternal salvation foretold by the prophets is by grace, God's unmerited favor, and not that which the Christian can merit, earn, achieve, or deserve (1:13; Romans 6:23).

**11 searching what time or what manner of time**—In the preceding verse the "searching" pertains to eternal salvation; here it pertains to the basis for that salvation, the redemptive work of Christ. The prophets desired to know the time of the Lord's saving mission to the world



and by what sort of events it would be distinguished.

**the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto,**—The Spirit of Christ is the third Person in the Godhead, whose presence in the prophets inspired them to point unto, signify, the coming of the Messiah. See Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6; 2 Peter 1:21.

**when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.**—The sufferings of Christ are the unjust trials, cruel scouring, insults and reviling, and finally the pain and sorrow of the cross. The glories that were to follow these sufferings are the resurrection, ascension, exaltation as Lord of lords and King of kings, sending of the Holy Spirit, second coming to judge the world, and glorification with the eternally redeemed saints. See 1:18-20; Isaiah 53; Luke 24:26,27; John 14:2,3; Acts 26:22,23; Hebrews 2:10.

**12 To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things,**—The word “minister” does not here mean that the prophets did not benefit by the things they predicted concerning the redemptive work of Christ (see Hebrews 9:15), but that these things could never be enjoyed, appreciated, and understood by them as by those who would come under the full light of gospel truth, who would know in specific detail concerning the saving mission of Christ. See Matthew 13:16, 17; John 8:56; Hebrews 11:13,39,40. Specifically, the “you” refers to the Christians of Asia Minor, the recipients of Peter’s epistle, who had received the gospel through verbal teaching. But the full benefits of the prophecies concerning the Saviour pertain also to Christians everywhere of every generation who have had access to the good news in the written word.

**which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven;**—The Holy Spirit, who came forth from heaven on the great day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), had inspired Paul and the other preachers who evangelized Asia Minor to announce to Peter’s readers the fulfillment of that which the prophets had predicted concerning the Messiah. See John 14:26; Luke 24:44-48. Their testimony is now available to us in the New Testament.

**which things angels desire to look into.**—The term “look into” means to bend aside, in order to look at what cannot be easily seen. “Angelic spirits gaze wistfully into all that concerns the great work of redemption” (C. H. Irwin). Cf. Ephesians 3:10,11.

## LESSON TWO

### 1 Peter 1:13-25

**13 Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind,**—The word “wherefore” connects the readers’ responsibility to obey the exhortation that follows with all that Peter has previously said about their blessed relationship to God and their hope of heaven. The phrase “girding up the loins” literally refers to the gathering up of loose and flowing garments, so as to facilitate action and movement. Here it means to prepare the mental faculties, to make up the mind decisively, for a life that is always ready for the coming of Christ. See Luke 12:35,36; Ephesians 6:14; Colossians 3:1-4.

**be sober**—The Greek word *nephontes* (*nepho*) here means “to be free from every form of mental and spiritual ‘drunkenness,’ from excess, passion, rashness, confusion, etc., be *well-balanced, self-controlled*” (Arndt-Gingrich). See 4:7; 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:6,8; 2 Thessalonians 2:2.

**and set your hope perfectly**—The hope of the Christian is to be whole, unchangeable, unwavering, without doubt or despondency.

**on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;**—See 1:10. This grace is the free gift of eternal salvation to be brought to all steadfast, faithful Christian at the second coming of Christ. They can confidently say, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). See 1:5; 5:1; 1 Corinthians 1:7,8.

**14 as children of obedience,**—The writer now emphasizes that God’s purpose for His children is that they be obedient to His will (Romans 6:18-22; Ephesians 2:10; James 1:22; etc.). Christians, then, are to be “children of obedience” in the sense that “*obedience* is their characteristic and ruling nature, as a child is of the same nature as the father and mother” (A. R. Fausset). Cf. Ephesians 5:8. Contrast “sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2; 5:6; Colossians 3:6), who are consequently called “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3) and “children of cursing” (2 Peter 2:14).

**not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance:**—The Greek word for “fashioning” is *suschematizomenoi*, from *schema*, “the form of a thing, the fashion and mode of life.” The mode of life of Peter’s readers is not to be that of the sinful lusts, evil desires, that characterized their lives before they became Christians. See 4:2; Romans 12:2.

The word “ignorance” here means *pagan* ignorance, as in Acts 17:30; Ephesians 4:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:5. It is a fitting description of Christians who had been born and bred in the ignorance of the true

God and His moral law. This indicates that the apostle's readers in the main were converts from paganism rather than Judaism. The Jews had been well instructed concerning the moral law even though they failed to practice it (Romans 2:17-24). Thus the ignorance attributed to the Jews (Acts 3:17; Romans 10:3; 1 Timothy 1:13) was not of the moral law, as in Peter's reference here, but of the Person and redemptive work of Christ.

**15 but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living;**—The word “but” contrasts the statement to follow with that which precedes. Instead of having a mode of life that is characterized by evil desires, Christians are to mould their lives after the holiness that characterizes the altogether holy God. They are to be holy “in all manner of living.” This means that they are to be godlike, holy, in every phase of their lives, both private and public, in thought, speech, and action. The Greek word for “holy” is *hagios*, defined by J. H. Thayer in its context here as “in a moral sense, *pure, sinless, upright, holy.*” See Matthew 5:48; Luke 1:74,75; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4,7; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 3:11.

**16 because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.**—This quotation occurs five times in Leviticus. God had called the Israelites to be a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:5,6), and so also He has called Christians to be a “holy nation” (2:9). Peter would impress on his readers that it always has been and always will be God's will that His people, those whom He has chosen, be separated from all that is impure and consecrated to a life of holiness. That the apostle should quote the Old Testament for the benefit of Gentile Christian readers is not at all incongruous, corresponding to the fact that Paul frequently does so in his epistles addressed to those of the same background; for example, 1 Corinthians 1:19,31; 2:9; 3:19,20; etc.

**17 And if ye call on him as Father,**—The word “if” does not imply doubt, but expresses the reality that the readers do call on God as their Father. They thus assume the responsibility and privilege of obeying Him as “children of obedience” (1:14). Cf. Luke 6:46.

**who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work,**—That God is the spiritual Father of all believers does not conflict with the reality that He is also the supreme judge, who will judge all men through His Delegate Jesus Christ (John 5:22). As Edward Plumtre reminds us: “The sequel shows this attribute of Fatherhood is not thought of as excluding the idea of judgment, but gives assurance that the judgment will be one of perfect equity.” God shows no respect of persons in judgment in that He does not regard a person's wealth, education, social standing, etc., but only his work. Peter's use of the

singular "work" summarizes a man's life, whether bad or good, faithful or unfaithful, unselfish or selfish.

**pass the time of your sojourning in fear:**—See 1:1; Hebrews 11:13. The fear in which we are to spend the time of our brief earthly pilgrimage is not that which is cast out by love (1 John 4:18), not dread, but the holy awe that recognizes God as the One who is able not only to save but also to destroy. See 2:11; Luke 12:4; 2 Corinthians 5:6; James 4:12. One who so lives in this fear will continually show reverent respect for God and His will.

**18 knowing that ye were redeemed,**—The holy life that Peter has enjoined on his readers in verses 14-17 is prompted by the realization of the infinite price paid for their redemption. See 2 Peter 1:9. The word "redeemed" in the Greek is *elutrothete* (*lutroo*, from *luo*, to loose), denoting the idea of loosing by a ransom price. See Romans 7:14; 1 Corinthians 6:20.

**not with corruptible things, with silver or gold,**—Corruptible, transitory things can never pay the price involved in redemption, not even the most precious things of the world, such as silver or gold (literally here in the Greek, silver or gold *money*).

**from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers;**—The redeeming (ransoming) expressly spoken of here is from the readers' former "manner of life" and not from the guilt of sin incurred by that life. But the latter is necessarily implied by the former since the guilt of sin is always incurred by evil conduct, and to be ransomed from one is to be ransomed from the other. The word "vain" (Greek *mataios*, void of result) was an outstanding epithet for paganism. See Acts 14:15; Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:17.

The reference here to the former "manner of life" of the readers, which was void of any good result, mainly pertains to Gentile Christians. It is unlikely that Peter would describe the former sinful conduct of Jewish Christians as "handed down from your fathers" without some kind of qualification. Through successive generations, however, the evil habits and errors of the pagan world had been transmitted from father to child. See 4:3.

**19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ:**—The sole price of man's spiritual redemption is the blood of Christ, shed in the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. See Matthew 26:28; Mark 10:45; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:12, 14; Revelation 1:5; 5:9. His blood is *precious* as opposed to the "corruptible things" of verse 18 and the blood of animals (Hebrews 10:4). Only the infinite price of the blood of Christ can procure the infinite blessings of spiritual redemption.

As the lambs and other animals offered as sacrifices under the Old

Testament were to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 22:19-21), so Jesus, "the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,36), was without blemish, completely unspotted (unstained) by sin (Hebrews 7:26).

**20 who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world,**—The redemptive work of Christ was not an afterthought, not the result of a change of plans to meet unforeseen circumstances, but was held in the eternal counsels of God before the creation of the world, before the existence of time. See Acts 2:23; Revelation 13:8. All such references to the timelessness of God's counsels are beyond the range of human understanding.

**but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake,**—The word "manifested" refers to the earthly ministry of Jesus. See Romans 16:25, 26; Ephesians 3:8,9,11; Colossians 1:26; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:9,10; Titus 1:2,3. The phrase "the end of time" embraces the whole period of time from the first advent of Christ to His second coming. See 1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 1:2; 2 Peter 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18. The phrase "for your sake" affirms that the entire earthly ministry of Jesus was to serve men and to procure their salvation (Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10). See John 3:16.

**21 who through him are believers in God,**—Some commentators believe that this refers to Christians of Gentile background who had never believed in the true God until the good news of Christ had been preached unto them. Cf. Acts 17:22-31. But the more probable meaning in the context is that only through Christ can men believe (trust) in God for the reconciling, saving power that ultimately comes from Him. See John 14:6; Romans 4:24; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; 1 Timothy 2:3,4; James 1:17; 2 John 9.

**that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God.**—Christ's blood can only be efficacious in redeeming sinners because God raised Him from the dead and received Him into the glory of heaven. See 3:22; Acts 2:24,32,33; 3:13; Romans 3:24,25; 6:4; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 2:9; 9:11, 12,23-26. By so raising Christ and exalting Him to the heavenly glory, God has laid the sure foundation of trust and hope in Him that He will eventually resurrect us unto eternal life. He who was able to raise Christ from the dead and give Him glory, is certainly able to do the same for us. See Acts 17:31; Romans 5:2; 8:11; 15:13; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:17-20.

**22 Seeing ye have purified your souls**—The word "purified" is from the Greek *hegnikotes* (*hagnizo*), appearing seven times in the New Testament. It is used four times of ceremonial purifying (John 11:55; Acts 21:24,26; 24:18) and three times of moral purifying (here and in

James 4:8; 1 John 3:3). The purifying of the soul from the guilt of sin through the Sin-offering Christ is designated by the Greek *katharizo*, as in Titus 2:14.

**in your obedience to the truth**—It is in obedience to the truth revealed in such passages as Colossians 3:5-8 and James 1:21 that we can morally purify our souls and thus prepare ourselves for the love of which the writer speaks in the remainder of the verse. See 2:1. Such moral purification makes possible the continual purification from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7).

**unto unfeigned love of the brethren**,—See 2:17; 4:8; Romans 12:9,10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1; 2 Peter 1:7; 1 John 4:7-21. The “unfeigned love” the apostles advocates, free from all pretence, cannot exist in a soul contaminated by selfishness, deceit, bitterness, hypocrisy, etc. Only a *pure* soul can have a *pure* love for the brethren. Cf. 1 Timothy 1:5.

**love one another from the heart fervently**:—One who loves his brethren “from the heart,” sincerely and genuinely, and “fervently,” constantly and strongly, will extend his efforts to the limit in the generous, unselfish service he renders them. See 1 John 3:18.

**23 having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth**.—The begetting spoken of here is the best argument for brotherly love. Since those so “begotten again” are all brethren, children of the one Father, they should be “loving as brethren” (3:8). The word “again” contrasts the spiritual begetting, pertaining to the second birth, to physical begetting, pertaining to the first birth. In 1:3 our being begotten again is related to God as the *source* and hope as the *object*; now emphasized is the *means* of our begetting, the word of God. Being corruptible, the seed of the first begetting issues in a transitory life; being incorruptible, the seed of the second begetting issues in eternal life. The word of God “liveth” because it has life in itself, and it “abideth” because it is not subject to death. See Hebrews 4:12; James 1:18; 1 John 3:9.

The divine word, the gospel, has the power to give life because it reveals Him who gives life (John 1:4; Colossians 3:4; 1 John 5:12), who is “the power of an endless life” (Hebrews 7:16). See Romans 1:16; Acts 4:12. Only those who accept the testimony of the gospel concerning the saving, life-giving power of Christ, consequently doing what the gospel enjoins on them in order to receive Christ in their lives, are “begotten again” to the incorruptible life as children of God. See John 3:36; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; 10:17; Galatians 3:26,27; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; etc.

**24 For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth**:—Here and in the

first part of the next verse, Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8, which in turn is based upon Psalms 103:15,16. The transient nature of that which is begotten of corruptible seed, "all flesh," is compared to the short-lived grass or herbage that grows in meadow and field. As the flower of grass has a certain glory about it, so has that which pertains to man's fleshly, earthly existence—beauty, wealth, honor, achievement, education, fame, strength, etc. But as the flower of the grass soon loses its glory, to wither and die, so also earthly, fleshly man soon loses his glory, to wither and die. See James 1:10,11.

**25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever.**—The Greek for "word" here and in the phrase to follow is not *logos*, as in 1:23, but *rhema*. This change is probably made because the term in the Septuagint of Isaiah is *rhema*. The divine word abides for ever because it is *incorruptible* seed, imparting eternal life to all who receive its saving, redeeming power. "The incorruptible seed, together with the new and noble nature which it conveys to them who are born again, will remain throughout all eternity" (James Macknight). See Matthew 24:35; John 6:51; 1 John 2:17.

**And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.**—Cf. Ronald Knox's translation, "And this word is nothing else than the gospel which was preached to you." The divine word has the power to impart eternal life because it reveals the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose redemptive work is the meritorious basis for eternal life. See 1:18-23; John 1:1,12,14; 11:25,26; 1 John 1:1,3. This saving message of "good tidings," the gospel, revealing God's love in Christ (John 3:16), had been faithfully proclaimed by Paul and his missionary companions. See 1:12.

## LESSON THREE

### 1 PETER 2:1-12

**1 Putting away therefore**—See Ephesians 4:22,25,31; Colossians 3:8; James 1:21. The word “therefore” connects what follows with what precedes: with the realization that they have been redeemed by Christ’s blood (1:18,19), begotten again by the incorruptible seed of God’s word (1:23-25), Christians are to put away (as one sheds a filthy garment) everything that is incompatible with their saved, regenerated state.

**all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings**,—The word “all” literally means *every* or *all manner of*. The Greek word for “wickedness” is *kakian* (*kakia*), here meaning “malice, ill-will” (Arndt-Gingrich), with the desire to cause hurt, injury, and pain to others. *Guile* is craft or cunning intended to deceive, mislead, others to their injury and to our advantage, the original meaning of the Greek *doulon* (*doulos*) being a bait for fish. *Hypocrisies* pertain to the various ways that one pretends to be what he is not, and not showing what he really is. *Envies* are the feelings of chagrin and discontent at the excellence or good fortune of another. The Greek word for “evil speakings,” *katalalias* (*katalalia*), occurs only here and in 2 Corinthians 12:20, designating slander, malicious gossip, derogation, ascribing evil motives to good acts—every kind of speech that is calculated to hurt another, the opposite of edifying speech (Ephesians 4:29).

**2 as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk**—The phrase “newborn babes” does not here mean new converts as such. It is addressed to all of Peter’s readers, some of whom were undoubtedly converts under Paul’s preaching, which had been done many years before. All Christians are “newborn babes” in their tender relation to God (Isaiah 40:11) and in respect of what they will be in heaven. Peter’s thought is that his readers, whether old or new converts, are to ardently long for, intently desire, God’s word as a newborn babe longs for its mother’s milk. See Matthew 5:6. The apostle does not here contrast *milk* with solid food, as in 1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12,13; 6:1, but uses the word to designate the entire word of God. It is noteworthy that as the divine word has power to create the new life in Christ (1:23), it has also the power to nourish and sustain that life.

The word “spiritual” is from the Greek *logikon* (*logikos*), defined by Arndt-Gingrich: “rational, spiritual . . . it is to be borne in mind that *logikos* means *spiritual* not only in the sense of *pneumatikos*, but in contrast to ‘literal,’ with the meaning ‘metaphorical.’” As literal,



physical milk is suited to man's physical being, so the figurative, spiritual milk, God's word, is suited to man's spiritual being.

**which is without guile,**—The phrase "without guile" is from the Greek *adolon* (*adolos*). "The sense of this adjective in 1 Pet. 2:2 is now set at rest by its constant occurrence in the papyri in the sense of 'pure, undulterated' " (Moulton and Milligan). The milk that is God's word, unlike the doctrines of men, is free from all error and deceit, perfectly pure and unadulterated; it is thus the only food that is able to sustain and strengthen man's soul. Cf. Galatians 1:6,7; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2.

**that ye may grow thereby unto salvation;**—The growth contemplated here does not refer to that of progress toward Christian maturity or manhood, which is the subject matter of such passages as Hebrews 5:13,14. Peter certainly recognizes that Christians are to develop this maturity in the service of God; but his emphasis in this passage, as we previously noted, is that all Christians should always be like newborn babes in longing for the milk that will nourish their souls and so make for their growth toward salvation. Whether he is in the childhood or manhood stage of the Christian life, the Christian who is nourished by God's word is prepared for heaven if he dies, having maintained a living, working faith in Christ and thus having grown unto eternal salvation. See 1:9; Revelation 14:13.

**3 if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious:**—See Psalms 34:8. The words "tasted" and "gracious" signify respectively *to experience* and *actively good, kind, benignant*. The word "if" does not imply doubt. Peter knows that his readers have experienced the active goodness and kindness of God in being begotten again and in the subsequent blessings involved in being His followers. See Titus 3:4; Hebrews 6:4,5. Such experiential acquaintance with divine grace was calculated to incite them to a greater longing for the spiritual milk, as it should do also for all other Christians. Cf. 2 Peter 1:9.

**4 unto whom coming,**—This coming to Christ is "a close and habitual approach and an intimate association" (Marvin Vincent). It is the constant dependence of Christians on Christ for everything they need to function as His loyal disciples. See John 15:4,5; Ephesians 1:3; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:22.

**a living stone,**—Unlike the inert, lifeless stones of the earth, Jesus is indeed a *living* stone, full of life and imparting life to all the stones that are built on Him. See John 5:26; 11:25; 14:6; 20:31; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 10:4; Revelation 1:17,18.

**rejected indeed of men,**—This is a fulfillment of prophecy: "He was despised, and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). Cf. Matthew 21:42; Acts 4:11.

**but with God elect, precious,**—Although Christ has been *rejected* of

men, He has been *elect*, chosen, of God to be the chief corner stone of the spiritual house, the church. Although He has been *despised* of men, He is infinitely *precious* (literally in the Greek, *honorable*) in the sight of God, who has “highly exalted him” (Philippians 2:9).

**5 ye also, as living stones,**—As Christ is a living stone, so also are all those who have vital union with Him. See John 1:4; 3:15,16.

**are built up a spiritual house,**—This house is described in 1 Timothy 3:15 as “the house of God, which is the church of the living God.” It is called *spiritual* in that it consists of living stones, saved souls, in contrast to the dead, material stones which composed the house made with hands, the Jewish temple. See Ephesians 3:6.

The phrase “are built up” in the Greek is imperative, literally meaning “be built up.” In obeying this imperative, Christians follow the injunction of Jude 20, “building up yourselves on your most holy faith,” living submissively to the power and will of Christ, who is not only the foundation but also the builder of the church (Matthew 16:18). See Ephesians 2:21,22.

**to be a holy priesthood,**—The footnote in the ASV reads, “a spiritual house for a holy priesthood,” emphasizing that the purpose of Christians being the house, temple, of God is to function as priests. All Christians are priests before God. They are called *holy* because they are consecrated to God, having been cleansed by Christ’s blood and committed to godly living. See notes on 1:14-16.

**to offer up spiritual sacrifices,**—A priest must “have somewhat to offer” (Hebrews 8:3). In contrast to the fleshly, animal sacrifices offered under the Old Testament, the sacrifices offered by the holy priesthood, the church, are spiritual, corresponding to the giving of the Christian’s whole self to God, which is his “spiritual service” (Romans 12:1). These spiritual sacrifices include acts of praise and benevolence (Hebrews 13:15,16; Philippians 4:18; 1 John 3:17)—everything indeed that is related to the new life in Christ.

**acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**—The Christian’s spiritual sacrifices are offered up through the great High Priest Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14; 13:15). Through Him alone they are acceptable to God because of His sacrificial death on our behalf (Hebrews 10:19-24).

**6 Because it is contained in scripture,**—The word “because” indicates that the scripture here quoted, Isaiah 28:16, warrants the way Peter has spoken of Christ in relation to the spiritual house, the church, in verses 4 and 5.

**Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:**—The chief corner stone is the foundation stone at the angle of a building that determines the whole structure. Answering to such passages as Ephesians 2:20-22 and 1 Corinthians 3:11, Peter affirms that the spiritual

house, the church, converges and rests on Christ, being held together by Him. Concerning "elect, precious," see notes on 2:4.

**And he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame.**—This quotation from the Septuagint, which corresponds to the Hebrew, "shall not make haste or flee," is aptly rendered by Richard Weymouth: "He whose faith rests on him shall never be disappointed." This is substantially the same rendering as Goodspeed, Knox, etc. The person who builds his life on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ does so securely. He will never be ashamed or disappointed in Him. His faith and hope in Him will never in any way be thwarted. Thus he will never flee from Him, but will stand solid and safe in Him forever. See Romans 9:33; 2 Timothy 2:12. Cf. Mark 8:38.

**7 For you therefore that believe is the preciousness:**—The preciousness, or honor, of Jesus, the living and chief corner stone, is imparted to all who are joined to Him. This is the greatest honor that any person can enjoy, in comparison with which all worldly honors are as nothing.

**but for such as disbelieve, The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner;**—In contrast to those who believe in Christ, Peter describes "such as disbelieve" in this verse and the one to follow, repeating the words of Psalms 118:22. The Jews, through the influence of their leaders, are primarily referred to as "the builders," who rejected Jesus as being unfit for the kind of house they wanted to make for Israel. But, paradoxically, their rejection of Him resulted in His redemptive work of dying on the cross, with His subsequent resurrection and ascension to become "head of the corner." This prophecy of Psalms 118:22 applies to all those today who are spiritually kin to the Jewish "builders" in their rejection of Jesus.

**8 and, A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;**—The Greek for "stumbling," *proskommatos* (*proskopto*), designates a collision producing hurt or injury. The Greek for "offence," *skandalou* (*skandalon*), originally was "the name of the part of a trap to which the bait is attached" (W. E. Vine), used figuratively here of that which causes a person to be lured into stumbling. The stumbling against a thing is followed by falling. Those who stumble against the chief corner stone do not injure it, but it injures them; they do not destroy it, but it destroys them as they fall into eternal destruction. See Matthew 21:44; Romans 9:32,33.

**for they stumble at the word, being disobedient:**—The phrase "being disobedient" here signifies obstinacy, willful opposition to the word. It is this obstinate spirit of opposition to the word that causes men to stumble at it. See 1 Corinthians 1:21-23. Stumbling at the word, the divine message, is equivalent to stumbling at the personal

Word Christ, the living stone.

whereunto also they were appointed.—The antecedent of “appointed” is “stumble” and not “disobedient.” God does not appoint men to disobedience, but it is His will that their disobedience should end in the evil consequences of stumbling at the word. Cf. Galatians 6:7,8.

9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,—In contrast to the Israel of the Old Testament, “the builders,” who in the main rejected the chief corner stone Christ and refused to become His disciples (2:7,8; Romans 9:1-4; 10:1,2), Peter now describes the new spiritual Israel of the New Testament, the church of the Lord, using terms taken from fleshly Israel. See Romans 9:6; Galatians 6:16. In the Old Covenant God elected or chose as his people the Abrahamic race through Isaac (Deuteronomy 10:15; Hebrews 11:18), but in the New Covenant He has elected or chosen as His people those of every race through Christ, who is a descendent of Abraham (Galatians 3:16; 4:28; 2 Timothy 2:8). Fleshly Israel was described as “a kingdom of priests” (Exodus 19:6). Following the Septuagint of this passage, Peter describes the Lord’s kingdom as a *royal* priesthood, emphasizing that the “holy priesthood” (verse 5) is composed of children of the most high God, who is infinitely superior to all earthly potentates. See Revelation 1:6 and notes on verse 5. As the nation of fleshly Israel was considered holy in the sense of being separated and dedicated unto God (Exodus 19:6), so also Peter now affirms concerning spiritual Israel. As fleshly Israel was God’s peculiar possession in the Old Covenant (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6; Malachi 3:17), so also is spiritual Israel in the New Covenant. Cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Titus 2:14.

that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:—The object of all the honor and privileges enjoyed by Peter’s readers, of which the apostle had just spoken, was that they should show forth, at all times and all ways, in word and in deed, the *excellencies* (virtues or perfections) of God. (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14; etc.). In their former sinful state, they had been in the darkness of the devil. But when they answered the gospel call, they came into the Lord’s marvellous light; and they were thus bound to reflect this light to others (Matthew 5:14-16).

10 who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.—Peter here paraphrases Hosea 1:9, 10; 2:23. These words were originally applied by the prophet to fleshly Israel, who in their disobedience were “no people,” but became “the people of God” when they repented and turned to Him. In Romans 9:24,25 Paul applies these

words to former Gentiles. Although Peter's readers were in the main converts from paganism rather than from Judaism, the Jewish converts were not excluded from the application of Hosea's prophecy. Before their conversion, both Gentile and Jew had been without God. As sheep without a shepherd, they were all "no people," having "not obtained mercy." But when they were called out of darkness into light, they became God's people, obtaining His saving mercy through Christ. See John 14:6; Romans 1:16; 3:9-30; Titus 3:4-6.

**11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims,**—The word "sojourners" signifies in the Greek "foreign settlers dwelling in a strange land." The word "pilgrims" signifies "visitors, who tarry in a foreign country, not permanently settling there." These words impress us with the fact that all Christian are citizens of the heavenly country, being only foreign, temporary settlers on the earth. Peter thus insists that obedience to the exhortation that follows is the only course that is compatible with their heavenly citizenship. See Hebrews 11:13-16; Philippians 3:17-20.

**to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;**—"Sojourners and pilgrims" should never lose sight of their eternal, distant home in heaven so that they will not follow the practices that are peculiar to the land in which they now live. See Colossians 3:1,2. The lusts of the flesh are those impulses and desires of man's carnal, fleshly nature that issue in the works of the flesh. See Romans 6:12; Galatians 5:16-21; Ephesians 2:3; James 1:14,15. These fleshly lusts "war against the soul" with the goal of destroying the soul. See Romans 7:23; 8:12,13. Peter uses the word "soul" here for man's entire spiritual nature.

**12 having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles;**—The word "Gentiles" is used to refer to the pagans, who were the main inhabitants of the countries enumerated in 1:1. The apostle urges his readers to be of good influence among these pagans, thus to honor the religion of Christ. See 1:15; Titus 2:10.

**that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers,**—The word "evil-doers" denotes here those whose activities are contrary to the established order. Because the apostle's readers worshipped no images, they were accused of being atheists; because they would not make sacrifices to the emperor, they were accused of being seditionists; etc. See Acts 17:6,7; 19:37; 28:22.

**they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.**—The word "behold" conveys the idea of personal witness with close attention, to carefully behold with one's own eyes—in contrast to "ignorance" (verse 15). Much of the slander of which Peter speaks was the result of heresy or, at the best, a super-

ficial, half-hearted look at the Christians' conduct. But when any pagan looked intently with his own eyes at the decent, unselfish, loving, generous, and helpful acts of faithful Christians, he would be prone to praise rather than to condemn them, to be drawn to rather than away from God, to glorify rather than to blaspheme God. That is certainly the import of the Lord's words in Matthew 5:16.

The "day of visitation" probably refers to the day of God's grace when He would visit the pagans through the preaching of the gospel. Undoubtedly, many of them obeyed the gospel because of the good works they had seen in the lives of Peter's readers, thus glorifying God.

## LESSON FOUR

### 1 PETER 2:13-25

**13 Be subject to every ordinance of man**—The phrase “every ordinance of man” literally denotes in the Greek “every human institution.” No special, exclusive form of government is advocated in the New Testament. No matter how much we American Christians may prefer democracy, we must realize that every form of government is included in Peter’s command here. See Romans 13:1,2. The apostle, of course, assumes that the limitation of the Christian’s submission to civil authority is only in matters that do not conflict with his obedience to the moral and spiritual precepts of Christ. See Acts 4:19,20; 5:29.

**for the Lord’s sake:**—This is the motive ascribed for the readers’ submission to human institutions, because in so doing they would submit themselves to the will of the Lord, who has ordained civil government as the means of affording all men the benefits of law and order, without which no human society can exist. They would consequently refute the false charge of civil disobedience leveled against them by the pagans (verse 15; Acts 17:7).

**whether to the king, as supreme;**—The word “king” is an abstract term for the person of chief authority. Peter expressly has in mind the Caesar, the Roman emperor, who was commonly designated by the Greek-speaking people as *basileus*, king.

**14 or unto governors,**—These are the procurators, who represented the emperor in the various provinces of the empire, such as Pilate, Felix, and Festus. Submission to the authority of the governors was tantamount to submission to the authority of the emperor and ultimately to the Lord’s authority.

**as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well.**—Here described is the ideal purpose of civil government: to punish lawbreakers and to commend those who obey the law. That this ideal was not always lived up to by either the emperors or the governors, many of whom were extremely corrupt and tyrannical, does not alter the fact that an imperfect government is better than no government at all, and that even imperfect governments generally aim to secure law and order.

**15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:**—The word “ignorance” in the Greek occurs only here and 1 Corinthians 15:34, meaning “culpable, self-caused, wilful ignorance.” The word “foolish,” Greek *aphron*, signifies “witless, senseless.” These senseless, culpably ignorant pagans were maliciously accusing the Christians of being seditious, lawbreak-

ing subjects. It was the will of God that His children engage in well doing, to live law-abiding, godly, loving lives, so that intelligent people would reject as false all the calumnies leveled against them, thus to "put to silence" (Greek *phimoun, phimoo*, literally, "to muzzle or gag") their enemies.

**16 as free.**—Those who are made free by God's grace will show their freedom by willing submission to constituted authority, "not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake" (Romans 13:5). But this does not mean that they owe unlimited allegiance to civil authority. They are free in Christ to disobey all civil laws that conflict with the divine will.

**and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness.**—The Greek for "cloak" signifies "a covering, a means of hiding; hence, a pretext, cloak" (W. E. Vine). The word "wickedness," Greek *kakias (kakia)*, is probably not used for evil in general, but here in the context for contempt for constituted authority. One's freedom in Christ is not to be used as a pretext for rebelling against civil authority, for disobeying every law that is contrary to his whims and selfish desires. See verse 13; Matthew 22:21.

**but as bondservants of God.**—Instead of using their spiritual freedom in Christ as a pretext for civil disobedience, for contempt for law and order, Christians are to use it as those who are bondservants (slaves) of God, who are bound to obey His will in all things, which includes the injunction "be subject to every ordinance of man." This slavery to God is the truest human liberty; serving Him is perfect freedom. See John 8:32,36.

**17 Honor all men.** "All" means exactly what it says: *all men without exception*, however physically and spiritually marred and defaced they may be—every man of every race, nationality, culture, and economic, social, educational level. We are to *honor* all men because they are *men*, human beings, made in God's image and of infinite worth to Him. See Matthew 12:12; 16:26. We are to honor *all* men because Jesus so honored them, "that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). How can any one who has been touched by the saving mercy of Christ possibly look down with contempt on any man whom Christ has so honored by dying for him? To honor *all* men is thus to love them for their common humanity, whom God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son to procure their salvation (John 3:16). Cf. Matthew 5:43-48.

**Love the brotherhood.**—The Greek word for "brotherhood," *adelphoteta (adelphotes)*, is peculiar to Peter, designating the aggregate of Christian brethren throughout the world, constituting the body of Christ. The word "love" is here synonymous with the apostle's



use of "brotherly kindness" in 2 Peter 1:7—that family affection we are to have for our fellow Christians, in addition to our love for them as human beings, because they are our *brethren*, of "like precious faith" (2 Peter 1:1).

**Fear God.**—The word "fear" denotes reverential respect. When it is motivated by love, it will cause us to be submissive to God's will in all things. This respect for God as King of kings will lead us to obey the command to follow.

**Honor the king.**—As in verse 13, the word "king" designates the person of chief authority in civil government. To Peter's contemporaries it was the Caesar; to us Americans it is the president. We honor this person in virtue of his office, the authority he represents as being ordained of God.

**18 Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear;**—The word "servants," Greek *oiketai* (*oiketes*) here designates slaves rather than hired servants, confirmed by the fact that the Greek word for their "masters," *despotais* (*despotes*), the derivation of our word "despot," "was strictly the correlative of slave, and hence denoted absolute ownership and uncontrolled power" (J. H. Thayer). *Oiketai* literally denotes household or domestic slaves, who were more exposed to the bad tempers of their masters than field slaves. The freedom in Christ that Peter's readers enjoyed made their bondage to human masters especially irksome, with the possibility that they would retaliate by impertinence and pilfering (Titus 2:9,10). But as loving, gracious followers of Christ, they would be in subjection, obedient, to their masters "with all fear"; that is, out of respect for the will of God concerning them in this matter (verses 15-17) and with a respectful attitude toward their masters (no disrespectful, disobedient behavior in any circumstance). See Ephesians 6:5-8.

**not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.**—As much as Christian slaves might hate their servitude in any kind of circumstance, they would find it comparatively easy to be submissive to masters who were good men, who treated them gently and kindly. But Peter insisted that they were to be just as submissive to masters who were "froward," Greek *skoliois* (*skolios*), literally, "crooked, similar to a piece of crooked wood that cannot be bent and is not fit for use, perverse, contentious, morose in disposition and behaviour" (John Lange). Cf. Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:17-21.

**19 For this is acceptable,**—The literal rendering of the Greek is "for this is grace (*charis*)." The action in the "if" clause to follow is both the result and the means of God's grace (unmerited favor). The faithful Christian is given divine grace to enable him to endure undeserved suffering, and when he so suffers he receives divine grace in the sense of

God's approval, approbation, and reward. See 5:5; Romans 5:2; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 12:9. This promise of God's grace was especially comforting to Christian slaves who had to endure mistreatment from froward masters.

**if for conscience toward God**—The sense of the Greek is "consciousness of God." Cf. verse 13. Christian slaves were to endure the suffering of their servitude with the consciousness, sense, or realization of God's presence in their lives. Realizing that He sees all, will strengthen and reward them, and having the guarantee that He will never forsake them, they would be incited to give Him their unreserved fidelity. And whatever suffering all other Christians face, they do so with the same consciousness of God's perpetual presence in their lives. See 1 Corinthians 10:13; Colossians 3:23; Hebrews 4:13; 13:5,6.

**a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully.**—The word "endureth" means to patiently bear up under. Christian slaves especially needed such patience in bearing up under the oppressive, painful burdens of their servitude. See Matthew 5:39.

**20 For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently?**—The word "buffeted" signifies in the Greek "to strike with clenched hands, to buffet with a fist." In the context, it is used literally; such blows were common in the lives of slaves. It has figurative meaning in 1 Corinthians 4:11 and 2 Corinthians 12:7. In its application to all Christians, it refers to every kind of suffering they can undergo as the result of their wrongdoing. The word "glory," Greek *kleos*, is used here to signify "praise, credit, or merit." Cf. Richard Weymouth's translation, ". . . what credit is there in bearing it patiently?" To patiently endure suffering as the result of wrongdoing is of no credit in the eyes of God, nothing to boast of.

**but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.** The Greek for "acceptable," *charis*, is the same as in verse 19. Christians who patiently endure suffering for well-doing enjoy God's grace in the sense of His favor or approbation. Cf. Luke 6:32,33, where *charis* is translated as "thank." See Matthew 5:10-12.

**21 For hereunto were ye called:**—All Christians of every generation, whether bond or free, have been called to suffer for well-doing, for righteousness sake. See 4:12-14; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Timothy 3:12.

**because Christ also suffered for you,**—Christian slaves could especially take comfort in these words, to realize that lowly though they were, considered as chattel by their masters, the King of kings and Lord of lords had suffered death on the cross to give them spiritual freedom.

leaving you an example,—The Greek word for “example” is *hupogrammon*, (*hupogrammos*), literally denoting a writing or drawing which a teacher would give his pupils for copying. The patient suffering of Christ was meant to be a model not only for Christian slaves but also for all other disciples of the master teacher. See Matthew 10:25; John 15:18-21; Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10.

**that ye should follow his steps:**—Here the figure of a model to be copied is changed to that of a guide along a difficult, narrow path, whose footprints or steps Christians must follow step by step if they would successfully complete the journey. See Luke 9:23.

**22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:**—See Isaiah 53:9. Peter emphasizes that Jesus did not suffer for wrongdoing, as His followers sometimes do, but that He was perfectly innocent both in action and in word, and that His suffering, therefore, was only for righteousness’ sake. The example of Jesus always speaking the truth, having a tongue free from all guile and deceit, would be especially meaningful to Christian slaves, who were often sorely tempted to deceive their masters as their only means of self-protection. Cf. Psalms 15:2,3.

**23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not;**—Jesus never sought to return evil for the evil done Him. Even when answering His adversaries with strong, cutting words (Matthew 7:5; 12:34; 16:3,4; 22:18; 23:15-33), there was never any hatred in them. They were words that stressed the sternness of genuine love, that were calculated to awaken His hearers to the realization of the doom that awaited them if they did not repent. When He was being unjustly tried, He was spat upon, mocked, and scourged; yet “he opened not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7). See Matthew 26:67; 27:26, 29-31. On the cross He suffered the cruelest torture ever devised by man, to be further reviled by His enemies (Matthew 27:35-44). Through all this terrible agony He suffered, not one word of reviling did He bring upon His persecutors, nor did He in any way threaten vengeance upon them even though He had the power to call for twelve legions of angels (Matthew 26:53). Instead, He lovingly prayed for their forgiveness (Luke 23:34). In all this He is the perfect example for His followers, who also must face reviling and suffering for righteousness’ sake.

**but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:**—The word “himself” is supplied in italics in the translation, indicating that it is not part of the original, literal text. Since Peter does not expressly say what Jesus delivered up to God, commentators widely differ as to the intended meaning. B. C. Caffin suggests that “He committed all, himself, his cause, his torturers, to him that judgeth righteously—he left it all to God.” Cf. James Moffatt’s translation: “. . . left everything

to Him who judges justly." Most translators feel that the context refers to Jesus' *cause*, so the footnote of the ASV. The two meanings, however, are much the same. In committing His cause to God, Jesus left the whole case or matter to God. Reviled, tortured, and crucified on the basis of perjured testimony, He knew that the righteous God would entirely vindicate Him of these false charges. He left the matter to God, who judges righteously, to determine what should be the destiny of His persecutors: to God's mercy if they were penitent, to His vengeance if they were impenitent. This example is set before us when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake; we also must commit our entire cause to God. See Romans 12:19.

**24** who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree,—The apostle has just spoken of Jesus as our example of steadfast bearing up under suffering; and now he refers to the infinitely more significant aspect of Christ's suffering: His death on the cross to bear our sins, which is the central theme of Christianity. In vicariously giving Himself on the cross, the sinless sacrifice Jesus took upon Himself both the guilt and punishment for our sins. The phrase "his *own self*" is most emphatic—He alone could bare our sins; none other could take upon himself the guilt and awful consequences of our sins. See Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 20:28; John 1:29; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:26,28; 1 John 2:2.

that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness;—The word "died" has the significance here of *separation* from the guilt, power, and practice of sin. Those who have so died are now bound to live righteous lives. Christ delivers both from sin and to righteousness. See Romans 6:2-6,17,18; Ephesians 2:10.

by whose stripes ye were healed. See Isaiah 53:5. The Greek for "stripes," *molopi* (*molops*), is used only here in the New Testament. It signifies a bloody mark or weal left on the flesh by a scourge or flagellum. Christian slaves, who were not infrequently subjected to the scourge, were bidden to remember the horrible beating which the Lord endured. This lacerated body which was nailed to the cross was the means of healing them, as well as all others who obey the gospel, of the sickness of sin.

**25** For ye were going astray like sheep;—See Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 9:36. This is a description of the plight of all accountable human beings who are not in the fold of the Good Shepherd, who have wandered off into sin.

but now are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.—Those sinners who appropriate to their souls the saving power of the cross, are returned to the divine fold, being under the care, protection, and guidance of their owner Jesus Christ. The word "Bishop,"

from the Greek *episkopon* (*episkopos*), signifies a guardian or overseer. The word “Shepherd” signifies the capacity in which Jesus oversees, that of the one who tends and feeds His flock. See 5:3,4.

## LESSON FIVE

### 1 PETER 3:1-13

**1 In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands;**—This command is applicable to all Christian wives, although, as the remainder of the verse shows, with special reference to those with unbelieving husbands. The phrase “in like manner” is related to the preceding exhortation to slaves; the apostle insists that the subjection of wives to their husbands is as sacred an obligation as that of slaves to their masters, however different the one subjection is from the other. See Ephesians 5:23-25; 1 Corinthians 11:8-10; 1 Timothy 2:11-14. The word “own” enforces the obligation Peter enjoins on wives, implying that they occupy a peculiar and special relationship to their husbands. As Christians they are to “honor all men” (2:17), which includes other women’s husbands, but not in the same sense as the honor they owe their *own* husbands.

**that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behavior of their wives;**—Here and in the next verse Peter gives the special reason why Christian women who are married to unbelievers should be in subjection to their husbands: to win them for Christ. Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19. The literal rendering of the Greek is “obey not *the word* (*to logon*), they may without *word* (*logon*).” The apostle is not saying that unbelieving husbands can be saved without *the word*, the gospel, which is “the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). It is obvious that these husbands have already been taught the word of God, but have refused to obey it. Nothing will be gained by any further direct effort to teach and persuade them, which will only tend to irritate and provoke resistance. Thus Christian wives are to avoid all such nagging discussion and argumentation. They are to depend not on word or conversation but on deed to gain their unbelieving husbands for Christ. The influence of their quiet submission to marital authority and their godly “behavior” (Greek, “manner of life”) in general, reflecting the light of the Lord, can be well-nigh irresistible.

**2 beholding your chaste behavior coupled with fear.**—Peter now specifies the manner of life that characterizes Christian women who would influence their husbands to come to Christ. The adjective “chaste” signifies morally pure in the whole life and not just sexually pure. This chaste manner of life is *in fear* (the literal meaning of the Greek); that is, in reverence toward God because of respect for both His holy nature and His holy will. See 1:17; 2:17. The word “beholding” reminds us of 2:12 and Matthew 5:16.

**3 Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding**

the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel;—This verse continues the thought of the preceding verse. The writer elaborates both negatively and positively on the chaste behavior of faithful Christian wives, particularly in the context of those with unbelieving husbands. The outward adorning of which the apostle speaks may attract husbands to their wives but not to Christ. It is a mistake, however, to conclude that physical adorning has nothing at all to do with chaste behavior, that dowdy, unclean, slovenly women can be of good influence in leading their husbands to Christ. Indeed, those women whose inward adorning is that which is spoken of in the next verse, will inevitably have a neat, attractive physical appearance. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:23. This conclusion is obvious from the basic meaning of the word “adorning,” from the Greek *kosmos*, “an apt and harmonious arrangement” (J. H. Thayer). This answers to Paul’s use of the kindred word *kosmios* in 1 Timothy 2:9 to refer to the *modest* apparel of Christian women. It is evident that such modest apparel is an orderly, clean, neat, decorous arrangement of one’s physical appearance. The “putting on apparel” refers to dressing in any kind of immodest apparel, that is not apt and harmonious.

What, then, is the import of “let it not be” in this verse? Simply, that Christian women should not take such extreme care of their physical appearance that they fail to give the necessary time to the care of inner spiritual and moral perception, which are of eternal significance and without which there can be no chaste behavior that will gain their husbands for the Lord. During apostolic times the braiding of hair, wearing jewels of gold, and putting on apparel was carried to ridiculous extremes by those who sought an ostentatious display of their physical attractiveness. But chaste women, who modestly adorn themselves, avoid such extremes, just as they also avoid the extremes of slovenliness and untidiness.

**4 but let it be the hidden man of the heart,**—Cf. Romans 7:22, “the inward man,” that part of man that cannot be seen by the physical eye, but that determines the issues of one’s life (Proverbs 4:23). When this inner, hidden man of the heart is regenerated, with its affections controlled by Christ and centered on God and His will, it issues in the chaste behavior of which the apostle has spoken. See 2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 3:10.

**in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit,**—Unlike the apparel that adorns the body, the apparel that adorns the inner man is not subject to corruption, not liable to decay. The “meek” spirit is submissive to God and His will; it is not self-assertive. Christian wives who possess this spirit will inevitably obey the Lord by being in subjection to their husbands (verse 1). The word “quiet” intensifies the virtue of

meekness. Christian meekness is always calm and tranquil; irate, quarrelsome speech is always incompatible with it.

When an unbelieving husband sees in his Christian wife the true beauty of a meek and quiet spirit, the opposite of vanity and display, he can be drawn to the One who is able to produce such a marvelous and lovely manifestation of divine grace.

**which is in the sight of God of great price.**—Redemption is wrought by the great price of Christ's blood (1:18,19); and the result of redemption, the regenerated life of a meek and quiet spirit, is also of great price in the eyes of God. Of infinitely how much more worth is such adornment of the inner man than the expensive, flashly, showy attire with which vain, worldly women attire themselves and which they prize so highly! See 1 Samuel 16:7.

**5 For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands:**—Peter's readers are now referred to the holy women of the Old Testament as an example of the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, who were in subjection to their husbands. The phrase "who hoped in God" is explanatory of the word "holy." These faithful women were holy, continuing to be so, because their hope was set toward and rested in God, the spring of all true holiness, who would eventually call them unto Himself in the incorruptible glory of heaven. See the description of the "worthy woman" in Proverbs 31:10-31.

**6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord:**—Sarah, the venerable wife of the patriarch Abraham, is singled out as an example of subjection to one's own husband. In calling him "lord," she recognized him as her head (Ephesians 5:23), being obedient to him. The Greek word for "obeyed" signifies *habitual* obedience, which was the pattern of Sarah's whole life in her relationship to Abraham.

**whose children ye now are,**—As all true believers are spiritual children of Abraham through Christ (Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:7), so also are all truly believing wives spiritual children of Sarah.

**if ye do well,**—By doing well, acting rightly—living holy lives, hoping in God, and being in subjection to their husbands—Christian wives follow the example of Sarah and thus are marked as having become her children by faith.

**and are not put in fear by any terror.**—The meaning of this phrase is "without fear of threat or intimidation." Christian wives who lived in a pagan society and had pagan husbands were especially confronted by threats or intimidations against them. Special efforts could be made by their neighbors and the authorities, as well as by their husbands, to frighten them into renouncing their faith in Christ. Their husbands could threaten them with violence if they disobeyed their orders that



were contrary to the will of Christ; for example, to throw out a female infant (as by law they had the right to do), or to compromise some religious conviction. But they were to continue in well-doing no matter what threats or intimidations were made against them, to keep calm and courageous however adverse the circumstances might be.

**7 Ye husbands, in like manner,**—Now that the apostle has exhorted slaves and wives to be dutiful respectively to their master and husbands (2:18;3:1-6), he exhorts husbands “in like manner” to be dutiful to their wives.

**dwelt with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life;**—Translators are divided as to the best rendering of the Greek text, which allows the possibility of different interpretations. This writer believes that the more probable interpretation is rendered by Gerrit Verkul’s translation: “live understandingly with your wives as the weaker vessel and rendering them honor as joint heirs of the grace of life.” See also the translations of James Moffatt and Richard Weymouth.

The physical bodies of both man and woman are *vessels*, which are to be used in God’s service and to His glory (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 1 Thessalonians 4:4,5), but the obvious fact is that the woman’s vessel is the weaker. Instead of taking advantage of his wife’s physical weakness to degrade and assault her, as was generally done among the heathen, the Christian husband is to recognize it as the ground for treating her with gentle, tender, courteous consideration. See Ephesians 5:25-29; Colossians 3:19.

A Christian husband who has a Christian wife is to give her that special honor, recognition, or respect due her because of her exalted position as being with him a joint-heir of “the grace of life.” This phrase can either mean “the grace of God which gives you life” (NEB) or “God’s free gift of life” (Richard Weymouth). This *life* is eternal life (Romans 6:23), the heavenly inheritance described in 1:4, which is actually the never-ending continuation of the life one receives when he accepts Christ as his Saviour (Romans 6:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

**to the end that your prayers be not hindered.**—The word “hinder,” signifying “to thwart,” probably refers here not so much to prayers that are powerless as to the neglect of prayer itself. It is assumed, of course, that any prayer offered by an unloving, inconsiderate, brutal husband, who fails to honor his wife as being a joint-heir of the grace of life, will be powerless. See Matthew 5:23,24; 1 John 3:21. But such a husband will find it exceedingly difficult to offer prayers to God in the first place, especially in concert with the wife he has offended and dishonored.

**8 Finally, be ye all likeminded,**—Now that the apostle has expressly considered the obligations of Christian slaves to their masters and of Christian wives and husbands to each other, he lays down some basic obligations that all Christians have to each other. The word “likeminded” in the Greek occurs only here in the New Testament, describing the harmony that should prevail in the brotherhood, with the intent of all Christians to be loyal to Christ and to be one in aim and purpose. See 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 2:2. Such harmony is not possible without obedience to the exhortations that follow in this verse.

**compassionate,**—The Greek is *sumpatheis* (*sumpathes*), the derivation of our word “sympathetic,” signifying “interchange of fellow-feeling in joy or sorrow.” See Romans 12:15; Hebrews 4:15; 10:34.

**loving as brethren,**—See 1:22; 4:8; Romans 12:10.

**tenderhearted,**—This expressly pertains to the sympathetic feeling toward those who are in any kind of distress or trouble, an attitude that faithful Christians have not only toward each other but also toward those of the world.

**humbleminded:**—One who has this quality does “not think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Romans 12:3). He thus obeys the injunction “in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself” (Philippians 2:3). See Romans 12:16; Galatians 3:28.

**9 not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling;**—This is a prohibition of retaliation, corresponding to the Lord’s injunction in Matthew 5:39. See 2:21-23; Romans 12:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:15. The Christian is to refrain from revenge in both word and deed, in his relation to both fellow Christian and sinner.

**but contrariwise blessing;** We are reminded of Luke 6:28, “Bless them that curse you” and 1 Corinthians 4:12, “being reviled, we bless.” This blessing of our enemies can be in deed as well as in word. Cf. Romans 12:20, “But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.” See Luke 6:27; Ephesians 4:32.

**for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing**—This blessing is eternal life, the first fruits of which God’s heirs, Christians, even now enjoy (verse 10). See 1:4. The Christian has been called both to bless and to be blessed. By blessing others, he is far more greatly blessed by God. See Acts 20:35; Matthew 25:34-40. And the knowledge that he has been called to obtain a blessing, incites him to bring blessings to others. Thus what he freely receives from God is the cause as well as the result of the good he does others. Cf. Matthew 10:8; Galatians 6:9,10.

**10 For, He that would love life, And see good days,**—Here and in verses 11 and 12, Peter loosely quotes from Psalms 34:13-16. The word

“for” introduces an elaboration upon the fact that to receive God’s blessings we must bless others. Primarily, the apostle has in mind the love of life and the seeing of good days in this world, portraying the Christian life as the preparatory stage of “inheriting a blessing” (verse 9), eternal life in heaven. No one is prepared for the heavenly life who does not enjoy the blessing of life with Christ in this world. One who *would* love life is one “who wishes to so live that he will not weary of life” (John Bengel), who wishes to have a life that is really worth living. Cf. Ecclesiastes 2:17; John 10:10.

**Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips that they speak no guile:**—Here and in the verse to follow, the apostle sets forth the conditions for loving life and seeing good days. Evil, deceitful speaking is entirely incompatible with the truly blessed, happy life in Christ. See 2:1; James 1:26; 3:8,9; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8,9; 4:6.

**11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good;**—The words “turn away” signify here in the Greek “one bending aside from his course at the approach of evil” (Marvin Vincent). Negatively, the Christian life is turning aside from everything that is evil; positively, it is the doing of everything that is good, to promote the welfare of one’s fellow man in any and every way. No one can truly love life and see good days who fails to obey this injunction. See Romans 12:9; James 1:27; Titus 2:12.

**Let him seek peace, and pursue it.**—The sense of this precept is “searching for peace and going after it with all his heart.” One who would live the abundant life in Christ must unstintedly labor to establish and maintain harmonious relations among all men. See Mark 9:50; Romans 12:18; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14.

**12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication:**—The word “for” introduces the reason for the kind of life the apostle has just advocated. Christians will always be incited to live such a life when they realize that they have the approval of God and that He gives an attentive ear to all their supplications, answering their every worthy prayer. Cf. Proverbs 28:9; James 5:16.

**But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.**—Christians must know of a certainty that when they depart from the Lord, engaging in evil, the Lord’s countenance is set against them. This expression denotes disapproval and the intent of punishing them.

**13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good?**—The sense of this rhetorical question may be that those who are zealous of good are less liable to incur the enmity of their fellow men than those who are evildoers. Cf. 2:14; 3:1,2; Matthew 5:16; Acts 10:22.

## LESSON SIX

### I PETER 3:14-22; 4:1-5

**14 But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye;**—The word “if” does not express doubt concerning Christians suffering for being zealous of good. Indeed, in 4:4,12-16, Peter plainly stated the fact of such suffering his readers were then enduring. See 2 Timothy 3:12. The apostle well knew that although well-doing is more apt to invite good will from the enemies of the cross than evil-doing, the general tendency of the world is to hate rather than love the light, thus to persecute the light bearers. See John 3:19,20. But what the apostle does insist upon here is that such suffering brings no lasting, ultimate harm but rather a genuine, deep, and true blessing, echoing the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:10-12. See 1:6-9; 4:14; Acts 5:41; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 12:9,10; Philippians 1:28,29.

**and fear not their fear,**—The construction of the Greek can denote “have no fear of their threats” (James Moffatt). Christians are to experience no fear nor intimidation from the threats of their enemies, knowing that God is always their helper and protector.

**neither be troubled;**—Those who love and trust the Lord can face all threats from their enemies with untroubled, serene, peace-filled hearts. See John 14:1,27; 16:33. In this verse and the one to follow, Peter alludes to Isaiah 8:12,13.

**15 but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord:**—The word “sanctify” (Greek *hagiazō*, akin to *hagios*, holy) signifies here the Lordship of Christ. Those who so hallow Christ in their hearts will always look to Him as their Leader and Master, to make loyalty to Him the principal concern of their lives, and thus to have hearts that are free from the fear and trouble of which the apostle has just spoken. See Romans 10:9; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:9.

**being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you,**—The Greek for “answer” is *apologian* (*apologia*), signifying a defense. Not only were Peter’s readers to defend the reason for their hope when interrogated by pagan magistrates, but also when questioned informally by any man, as all Christians of every generation are also so obligated. The “reason” for this wonderful hope is the indwelling Christ, sanctified in His disciples’ hearts as Lord, who alone is man’s access to God in heaven (John 14:1-6). See Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:1. To make defense of the heavenly hope is tacitly to make defense of the gospel, the divine message of saving power in Christ (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3). Cf. “defense,” *apologia*, in Philippians 1:16.

yet with meekness and fear:—The defense of one's hope in Christ is to be done with "meekness," gently, and "fear," holy reverence toward God (1:17; 2:17; 3:2). Such a defense will be calculated not only to win an argument but also to win men to Christ. See Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6.

16 **having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ.**—The phrase "having a good conscience" is probably connected with the proper manner of answering those who make inquiry concerning the Christian faith. When Christians make this answer in "meekness and fear"—gently, respectfully, courteously, lovingly, and reverently—they have the approval of their conscience that they have so spoken pleasingly in God's sight. And in this way those who have reviled, ridiculed, or molested them for their good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. See 3:9,15; 4:4; Proverbs 15:1; Romans 12:14,17,20,21; 1 Corinthians 4:12. But when Christians answer their critics caustically and insolently, they only tend to intensify the insults against them. Concerning the "good manner of life" being "in Christ," see John 15:1-5; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

17 **For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.**—It is obvious that the suffering any Christian undergoes for evildoing is exactly what he deserves (4:15; Luke 23:39-41). Some, however, may think that it is unjust and unfair to suffer when they are doing good. Not so! Such suffering is for their good, bring upon them the rich blessings of God, as we noted in connection with verse 14. But why does the apostle insist upon what is so obvious and seemingly trite; namely, that it is *better* for Christians to suffer for well-doing than evildoing? Probably to guard them from carrying a "chip on the shoulder" in their defense of the gospel. With such an attitude they would deliberately seek mistreatment from their enemies by provocative words and actions. Some of Peter's original readers may have been tempted to seek martyrdom by stubborn opposition to the power of civil authority, in direct opposition to his advice (2:13-17).

18 **Because Christ also suffered for sins once,**—The words "because" and "also" refer to Christ's sufferings as proof of the blessedness of suffering for well-doing. See Hebrews 2:9,10. As Christ suffered *once*, the specific reference being to the sacrifice of Himself on the cross, so "we are now suffering our 'once'; it will soon be a thing of the past; a bright consolation to the tried" (A. R. Fausset). See Hebrews 9:26,28; 10:10. The suffering involved in Christ's death was "for sins"; that is, as a sin-offering to atone for the sins of men (Hebrews 9:12; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 10:6, 8,18,26).

the righteous for the unrighteous,—The word “righteous” portrays Christ as the *sinless* One (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21); the word “unrighteous” portrays all the unsaved as the *sinful* ones (Romans 3:10, 22, 23).

that he might bring us to God;—When men’s sins are remitted by the power of Christ’s blood shed on the cross, they are then redeemed, reconciled to God, to be reckoned no longer as sinful ones but as righteous ones. See 1:18,19; Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:9,10; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;—The flesh of Christ is here put in antithesis with the higher part of His human nature, indissolubly united with His divinity. This contrast between flesh and spirit is found in such passages as Romans 1:3 and 1 Timothy 3:16. The Greek does not have the definite article before the words “flesh” and “spirit.” The literal rendering is “in flesh . . . in spirit.” It was in *flesh* that Jesus was put to death, not in *spirit*. His body died on the cross, but His spirit was made alive in the sense that, no longer being bound to time and space by a fleshly body, it was “endued with new and greater powers of life” (J. H. Thayer).

19,20 in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,—Numerous interpretations have been given of this passage. The limitation of space will not allow us to consider all of them, nor to deal at any length with those so considered. The following are the most prominent, none of which, in the opinion of this writer, is without theological difficulties:

1. That Christ preached through the instrumentality of Noah to the ungodly of his day, who were in prison in the sense of being held captive by their sins. See 2 Peter 2:5. In light of such passages as 1:11 and 2 Peter 1:21, this interpretation assumes that the “spirit” with which Jesus preached through Noah was the Holy Spirit, which does not agree with the use of the word in its context here. It is also noteworthy that Jesus is described as preaching to “spirits,” a word that is never used in the Bible to designate men in their earthly, fleshly state.

2. That Christ personally preached in His spirit, between His death and resurrection, to the spirits of those who had been disobedient in the days of Noah but now were imprisoned in the Hadean world. Cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 20:7. Some commentators believe that this preaching was of the gospel with the intent of bringing salvation to the hearers. This interpretation conflicts with the plain teaching of the Bible that men will be judged by their earthly lives. See Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

It is to be noted that the Greek word Peter used for “preached” is not the one that specifies the proclamation of the gospel, *euaggelizo*, but *kerusso*, which simply means to proclaim after the manner of a herald. The view taken by many commentators, to which the writer of these notes leans, is that in this particular context *kerusso* denotes Christ’s spirit heralding (announcing) the final doom awaiting those who had failed to repent of their sins while living on the earth during the days of Noah. Cf. Philippians 2:10.

3. That the preaching referred to was by Enoch. This interpretation assumes that the Greek phrase “*en o kai*,” rendered as “in which also,” was originally the name of Enoch but was changed by a scribal error (see Moffatt and Goodspeed). Those who hold to this view refer to the apocryphal Book of Enoch, which describes Enoch as being commissioned by God to announce a sentence of final doom on the rebellious angels, or sons of God, whose children by the daughters of men so demoralized mankind that the flood was sent (Genesis 6:1-7). They were spirits that had defiled themselves with flesh (Enoch 15:4) and were punished by being imprisoned at the flood (Enoch 54:7) in elemental chains (Jude 6,7). Enoch preached doom to them (Enoch 12:2-13:3), telling them that from God they were to have “no peace nor forgiveness of sins.” The best argument against this view is by Bruce M. Metzger in his *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, page 693, where it is pointed out that the word “Enoch” breaks the continuity of Peter’s argument by introducing an abrupt and unexpected change from the thought of verse 18.

**wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water:**—Water saved Noah and his family, the eight souls in the ark, by bearing up the ark and delivering it from the antediluvian world to the world after the flood.

**21 which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism,**—The similarity between the water of baptism and the water that saved the souls in the ark is plain. Before one is baptized he lives in the old world of sin; after he is baptized, immersed in water, he lives in the new world of righteousness. See Romans 6:4,17,18. The Greek word for “righteousness” is *antitupon*, literally meaning *antitype*. Peter first presents the type: the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark by the conditional means of the water of the flood. He then gives the antitype, the fulfillment of the type: the salvation of sinners by the conditional means of water baptism.

**not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God,**—When one is baptized, the efficacy of his obedience is not in the bodily dirt that is washed away but in the attitude that prompts him to so obey the Lord. The word “interrogation”

in the Greek is *eperotema*. J. H. Thayer has observed that "as the term of inquiry and demand often include the idea of desire, the word [*eperotema*] thus gets the signification of earnest seeking, i. e. *a craving and intense desire*." His translation of the phrase in this verse that includes *eperotema* is "have earnestly sought a conscience reconciled to God." Cf. Gerrit Verkuy's translation, "the earnest seeking of a conscience that is clear in God's presence." The penitent soul earnestly seeking salvation inquires, "What shall I do to receive the power of Christ's blood in the remission of my sins, to make my conscience void of offense toward God?" Peter affirms that water baptism is the answer to this question.

**through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;**—The merit of salvation is not in the act of baptism but in the redemptive work of Christ. Baptism is vain and meaningless apart from its relationship to the resurrection of Christ, "who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). See Romans 6:3-5.

**22 who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven;**—The resurrection of Jesus was necessary in order for Him to go to heaven "to appear before the face of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24), to offer His blood on the mercy seat of the heavenly Holy of holies as the atonement for our sins. Being now "on the right hand of God," "he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). See Acts 1:9; Romans 6:9,10; Colossians 3:1.

**angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.**—The fact that Jesus is now on God's right hand declares not only His intercessory, mediating, saving power, but also His divine honor and sovereignty (Psalms 110:1; Acts 2:33,36; 5:31). Peter stresses the unlimited sovereignty of Jesus by designating the subjection of the heavenly hosts to Him. The word "angels" describes them as the executors of God's will (Hebrews 1:13,14); "authorities," as those who exercise certain authority (Jude 9); "powers," as those endowed with great power and influence (Psalms 91:11,12; Acts 5:19; 12:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7).

**4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind;**—The apostle again reverts to Christ's suffering as our example. See 3:18. The Greek for "mind" is *ennoian* (*ennoia*), signifying "thought, knowledge, insight" (Arndt-Gingrich). Christians are to have the same insight into the value of suffering for righteousness' sake as Christ. Armed with this mind, they are prepared for ultimate victory in their fight against the devil and sin. See Matthew 10:24,25; Romans 13:12; Ephesians 6:10-18.

**for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;**—Those



who identify themselves with the suffering of Christ by suffering for His sake, which is for righteousness' sake, will cease from sin when they are released from their bodies in death. See 5:10; Matthew 5:10-12; 10:22; Acts 14:22; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Revelation 21:27. Cf. James 3:2; 1 John 1:8.

Peter's thought here may also be that one who suffers for the Lord's sake is strengthened to withstand temptation, that such suffering tends to purify his life so that, although he does commit sin, he will never be *dominated* by sin. See Romans 5:3,4; 6:12-14. Then, too, the apostle's thought may be that when one has the mind of Christ in suffering for righteousness' sake, it is evident that he has ceased from a sin-dominated life.

**2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.**—When one is armed with the mind of Christ in suffering for well-doing, his desire will be to live the rest of his earthly days in submission to the will of God and not in human, fleshly lusts. Since it is his ultimate goal to cease from sin forever in the incorruptible realm of heaven and his earthly goal to cease from the dominion of sin, he will give great diligence to avoid evil and do good in his life, to maintain a life of trust in God and submission to His will. See 1:14; 2:11; Matthew 7:21; Romans 6:12; 13:14; Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 4:12; etc.

**3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles,**—Note Richard Weymouth's translation, which clarifies the meaning here: "For you have given time enough in the past to the things which the Gentiles delight in." This statement and the remainder of the verse are ironical, for not even the past should have been spent in sin. Peter's readers, who in the main were converted Gentiles, were reminded of their wicked, unhappy past, when they engaged in those sins which the Gentile, pagan world so delighted in.

**and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings, and abominable idolatries:**—The past tense "walked" denotes a course of life now done with. See 1 Corinthians 6:9,10. The sins that the apostle enumerates are those which were more commonly practiced among the Gentiles. *Lasciviousness* (Greek *aselgeiais*, *aselgeia*) is a generic term meaning wantonness, debauchery, excesses of all kinds, when men let themselves go without check or rein. See Mark 7:22; Romans 13:13; 2 Peter 2:2,7,18. *Lusts* (Greek *epithumiais*, *epithemia*) is a generic term designating those fleshly lusts, inner desires, that prompt the outward excesses involved in lasciviousness. *Winebibbings* (Greek *oinophlugiais*, *oinophlugia*, derived from *oinos*, wine, and *phluo*, to bubble up, overflow) is a contemptuous word meaning wine-swilling, excess of wine. *Revellings* (Greek *komois*,

*komos*) refers to boisterous, wild merrymaking. See Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:21. *Carousings* (Greek *potois*, *potos*) refers to drinking bouts or parties. The word "abominable" is from the Greek *athemitois* (*athemetos*), literally meaning unlawful, emphasizing *idolatries* as violations of divine law.

**4 wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot,**—The word "riot" in the Greek, *asotias*, occurs also in Ephesians 5:18 and Titus 1:6, and it is used in the adverbial form to describe the wastefulness of the prodigal son (Luke 15:13). It describes the state of one who wastes his time and energies in dissolute, ungodly living. The word "excess" (Greek *anachusin*, *anachusis*, an overflowing) emphasizes the unrestrained limits of the riot referred to. And the word "run" describes the eagerness in which this riot is engaged in.

The Gentiles, who engaged in the dissolute, abandoned, riotous living of which the apostle speaks, thought it strange, were surprised and amazed, that their former compatriots would not continue to live as they, but were now living the Christian life. "It is strange unto a carnal man to see a child of God disdain the pleasures of sin; he knows not the higher and purer pleasures that the Christian is called to."

**speaking evil of you:**—This phrase literally denotes "blasphemy," injurious speaking. The Gentiles were maliciously and slanderously speaking against the Christians with the intent of injuring them, charging them with pride, peculiarity, hypocrisy, and secret crimes. See 2:12. In so speaking against those who were Christ's followers, they were tacitly guilty of blaspheming Christ Himself (James 2:7).

**5 who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead.**—The phrase "him that is ready" literally signifies in the Greek "having himself in readiness." Christ is always ready and prepared to fulfill the Father's plan for Him to return to judge all men, both the living and the dead, which can happen at any time. See verse 7, Matthew 24:36-44; 25:31-46; Acts 10:42; James 5:9. Peter thus tacitly exhorts his readers not to be disconcerted, confused, or discouraged, knowing that their defamers will eventually have to give an account in full for their evil speaking of them. Cf. Matthew 12:36.

## LESSON SEVEN

### 1 PETER 4:6-19

6 For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead,—The dead referred to here cannot be the subjects of the preaching in 3:19 since the word “preached” there is from *kerusso*, to herald or proclaim, whereas in this passage it from *euaggelizo*, expressly designating the preaching of the gospel as in 1:12. Furthermore, the apostle does not have in mind those who are spiritually dead, dead in sin, since he does not speak of that which *is* preached but that which *was* preached. Thus the word “dead” must here be taken in the same sense as in the preceding verse to refer to those now physically dead who had heard the gospel when they were among the living. The word “for” introduces the purpose of gospel preaching, which is expressed in the remainder of the verse.

**that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**—Gospel preaching is to prepare men for the judgment, referred to in the preceding verse. Being “judged according to men in the flesh” probably pertains to the fact that the dead will be judged in the same way as those now living or those living at Christ’s coming: according to “the things done in the body” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Those now dead who obeyed the gospel will receive the eternal blessing of “living according to God in the spirit”; that is, living with God, a completely spiritual life such as God lives. See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

7 **But the end of all things is at hand:**—This thought is connected with that of verse 5. When Christ comes to judge the living and the dead, He will then bring to an end all things of this present world. And since He is always ready for His coming, the end of all things is always “at hand” (literally in the Greek, “has come near”).

**be ye therefore of sound mind, and sober unto prayer:**—Since Christ is coming to judge all men at a time no one knows except God, it behooves every Christian to so live that he will always be prepared for this eventuality. The phrase “sound mind” denotes a calm, reflective, thoughtful, sane mental condition. Instead of panicking, losing their heads, as some of the early Christians did who dropped their work and duties in hectic anticipation of the Lord’s approaching coming and the end of the world (2 Thessalonians 2:2; 3:11,12), Peter insisted that his readers were to keep cool, calm, and collected.

To be “sober unto prayer” (the Greek literally signifies “prayers,” designating prayers of all kinds, both private and public), Christians are to exercise the self-control (self-restraint) that is necessary for an ac-

tive, rich, efficacious prayer life." Lives that are "overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life" (Luke 21:34) are never prayer-filled, prayer-oriented lives. See 1:13; 2 Peter 3:8-13.

**8 above all things be fervent in your love among yourselves;**—See notes on 1:22. The word "fervent" is from the Greek *ektene* (*ektenes*), from *ek*, out, and *teino*, to stretch, denoting both the ideas of *unfailing* and *fervent*. Such love should always prevail in the brotherhood. See 1 Corinthians 13:8.

**for love covereth a multitude of sins:**—See Proverbs 10:12. The intense, unfailing love of which the apostle speaks covers a multitude of sins in its fruitful efforts to bring erring brethren to repentance and thus to God's forgiveness. (Psalms 32:1; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19,20). When Christians so love, they will never stir up strifes, as hatred does, but will always promote unity and good will by a forgiving spirit that covers the sins committed against them by their brethren. See Matthew 6:15; 18:15-35; Luke 17:3,4. And when they labor to cover the sins of others, striving in every way to please the Lord by godly living, and depending on God's grace through the cleansing blood of Christ, they also cover a multitude of their own sins. See James 3:2; 1 John 1:7. Furthermore, love covers a multitude of sins in the sense of never revealing them except as God's will demands it. See Matthew 18:15,16; 1 Timothy 5:19,20.

**9 using hospitality one to another without murmuring:**—The Greek for "using hospitality" (*philoxenoi*, *philoxenos*, to love strangers) literally signifies "being hospitable." See 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8. The noun *philoxenia* is found in Romans 12:13 and Hebrews 13:2. During the early days of the church, the friendship and love extended brethren who were strangers was especially necessary. Christians traveling from place to place would find no suitable shelter and food except in the houses of their fellow Christians. The inns were little better than brothels, and the itinerant Christians were usually very poor. Being hospitable to them could be costly, involving money, time, and effort; thus the injunction that it be done without murmuring or complaining. See 1 Corinthians 13:3; 2 Corinthians 9:7. And today whatever hospitality we can extend our Christian brethren, whatever the cost may be, must be done in this same loving, uncomplaining spirit.

**10 according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God;**—The word "gift" is from the Greek *charisma*, "a gift of grace," a favor that one receives without any merit of his own. It is fallacious to limit this word to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit that were in the church when Peter wrote this epistle, such as are described in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Of the gifts expressly mentioned in Romans 12:4-8, only prophecy can

definitely be considered as miraculous; the rest are natural endowments that are sanctified by the Christian's relationship to the Lord and are intended for the welfare of the church during all time. Each Christian is endowed with some gift or gifts of God's grace, which he must use for the general good of the church. The word "manifold" (Greek *poikiles*, *poikilos*, varied) describes the gifts of divine grace as taking various forms, so that all the needs of the church are adequately provided for. The expression "good stewards" denotes the fact that the gifts Christians receive from God do not belong to them outright, but have only been entrusted in their care to be used as the Bestower desires.

**11 if any man speaketh, speaketh as it were oracles of God;**—This speaking was not limited to the inspired teaching of the prophets and evangelists in the early church. Peter refers to the speaking of "any man" (Greek *tis*, any person, any one), meaning any Christian woman, man, girl, or boy. Were all of Peter's readers inspired? Evidently not. Yet everyone of them, without exception, was to obey this injunction. The word "oracles," from the Greek *logia* (*logian*), denotes sayings or utterances, that which is spoken. Thus God's oracles are those sayings or utterances that reveal His will. The faithful Christian's speech is always governed by God's revealed sayings or utterances, always in keeping with His will, such "as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Ephesians 4:29). Those who preach and teach are certainly bound to obey this injunction, but it also includes the common, daily talk of all Christians. See 3:15; Colossians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:2; Titus 2:1-5,8,15; James 3:1-12.

**if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ,**—Not only are we to serve others in speech but also in action. In verse 10, the word "ministering," Greek *diakonountes*, refers to the service we render others in both word and deed; here the kindred word "ministereth" (Greek *diaknoei*) is restricted to deeds. Such service is in "the strength which God supplieth," which is the fruit-bearing power of Christ in whom faithful Christians are branches. See John 15:1-8. And since it is through Christ that God's strength can be realized, it is also through Christ that God is glorified when His children engage in Christian service. See Philippians 4:13,19,20; Colossians 3:17. Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31.

**whose is the glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**—It is uncertain whether this doxology refers to God or Jesus Christ. Since, however, the glory Peter has spoken of in the preceding phrase belongs to God, the former view seems to be correct. See Ephesians 3:21;

Revelation 1:6.

**12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you:—**The word “beloved,” as in 2:11, expresses Peter’s affectionate, loving concern for his readers as they are enduring the trial of which he speaks. The intensity of this trial is described by the word “fiery,” in the Greek literally meaning “burning.” See Revelation 18:9,18. Peter makes two points concerning this burning trial:

1. It came upon his readers to “prove” (test) them. Just as metal is proved in a fiery furnace, so the faith and moral stamina of Christians are proved in the fires of persecution. This continues the thought of 1:7. See Proverbs 27:21.

2. It is not to be considered by the readers as something strange or unusual, as though what was happening to them was alien to their condition as being Christians, followers of Christ. Both Christ and the apostles plainly taught the necessity of Christians enduring the fiery trial of persecution in order to please God and to reach their heavenly goal. See 2:20,21; 5:9,10; Luke 6:22,23; Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3; 2 Timothy 3:12.

**13 but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice;—**The words “partakers of” mean “sharers in.” Christians are sharers in Christ’s sufferings when their experience is essentially the same as His, when they suffer as He did for the sake of truth and righteousness. See Matthew 10:25. As William Barclay observed, “When a man has to suffer and sacrifice for his Christianity, he is walking the way his Master walked, and sharing the cross his Master carried.” To the extent that Christians are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, they are to rejoice. Why rejoice? Because of the divine comfort and approbation that is presently theirs (3:14; 4:14; Matthew 5:10; Acts 5:41), and also because of the heavenly reward awaiting them (1:3-9; Matthew 5:12; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:8-14).

**that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy.—**The literal rendering of the Greek is “. . . ye may rejoice exulting.” See 1:6; Matthew 5:12. In this world faithful Christians rejoice in their sufferings; when Christ comes in His glory to receive them unto Himself, they will rejoice *exulting* in being forever free from suffering. See John 14:1-6.

**14 If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye;—**The word “if” does not imply any doubt; the obvious meaning is “*when* ye are reproached, reviled, slandered, or insulted.” When one is reproached “for the name of Christ,” it is because he belongs to Christ, because he bears Christ’s name, because he is a Christian, because he is living a Christlike life. See 4:16; Matthew 19:29; Acts 5:41; 9:16;

21:13. The blessing expressed here corresponds to the Lord's beatitude in Matthew 5:11. See 3:14.

because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you.—“The Spirit of glory” and “the Spirit of God” are the same person, the Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Godhead. Cf. Richard Weymouth's translation, “the Spirit of glory—even the Spirit of God.” The word “because” introduces the reason for the blessedness of being reviled for the name of Christ: the Holy Spirit's *real presence* in the life of the Christian, designated by the phrase “resteth upon you.” Cf. Matthew 3:16; John 3:34. When the Christian faithfully serves the Lord in the face of unjust criticism, he gives definite proof that the Holy Spirit dwells in him and that his life is thus divinely empowered. See Galatians 5:22,23; Ephesians 3:16-20. The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of glory” because of the holiness He sheds on the faithful Christian. Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18. His glorious presence is also a foretaste and pledge of the everlasting glory which God's saints will have in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:4,5; Ephesians 1:13,14).

**15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters:**—Reiterating his teaching in 2:20 and 3:17, Peter insists that any suffering his readers should undergo must not be from any wrongdoing on their part. The wrongdoing he here enumerates violates both the laws of the state and the ethic of Christ. Those Christians who engage in such activities can suffer the penalties laid on them by the civil authorities for disrupting public order; they can also suffer the persecution and reproach of their neighbors for the disparity between their avowal of loyalty to Christ and their actual practice. See 2:13-15; Romans 2:17-24; 13:3,4.

The words “murderer” and “thief” are to be understood in their literal sense: one who takes the life and goods of another. The word “evil-doer,” used also in 2:12,14, is from the Greek *kakapoios*, signifying one who does that which is contrary to law, whether divine or human. The word is used here to describe one who engages in forms of evildoing other than those which are specified.

The phrase “meddler in other men's matters” is from the single Greek word *allotriepiskopos*, found only here in the New Testament, literally meaning “an overseer of that which belongs to another.” The apostle may have in mind an insurrectionist, one who unlawfully meddles in state affairs, which would certainly bring punishment on him from the civil authorities. He may also may have in mind what we usually think of as a busybody, one who “sticks his nose in other people's business,” who fails to respect the privacy of others. Such interference can only bring trouble on its perpetrators. See 2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:13.

16 but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.—Instead of suffering for wrongdoing, in rebellion against the laws of God and of man, the disciple of Christ is to suffer as a Christian—because he belongs to Him whose name he bears and because he is living the life his divine Master enjoins on him. See 3:14,17. This suffering would certainly include that which was inflicted by the Roman state, which at certain periods had made it a crime to be Christian; for example, under the emperor Nero Christianity was considered as *religio illicita*, an illicit religion, banned by imperial authority and punishable by torture and death. But it also involves various forms of persecution from other sources, from those private persons who hate the Christian religion. Any church member who engages in any kind of unlawful activity deserves all the shame which the punishment of the state and the persecution of his neighbors bring upon him. But when one endures suffering because he is a genuine, faithful Christian, he can do so without any shame, holding his head high. Cf. Mark 8:38; Acts 5:41; Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8,12,16. By faithfully wearing the name Christian he so honors that name and gives glory to God, whose grace and mercy through Christ have given him his exalted position as God's beloved child. Cf. Matthew 5:16.

17 For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God:—The expression “the house of God” refers to the church of God, God's people under the New Covenant (2:5; 1 Timothy 3:15). The word “judgment” pertains to some kind of impending persecution the saints would undergo, a kind of disciplinary judgment designed to strengthen their faith and to purify their lives, not to condemn them but to keep them from being condemned. See 1:3-7; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Hebrews 12:3-13.

and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?—In light of the fact that judgment “begins first at us,” which judgment is calculated to keep us saved because of our trust in and obedience to Christ, the question the apostle asks is entirely rhetorical: the judgment eventually to be brought on sinners is obviously that of divine wrath, eternal condemnation. This corresponds to the plain declaration of 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 concerning the vengeance of Christ at His second advent: “. . . rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them, that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and the glory of his might.”

“If even the godly have chastening judgment now, how much more shall the ungodly be doomed to damnable judgment at last” (A. R. Fausset).



18 **And if the righteous is scarcely saved,**—“Scarcely” does not mean salvation by “the skin of our teeth,” that the righteous shall barely make it to heaven. Quite to the contrary, the apostle teaches, “For thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the everlasting kingdom. . .” (2 Peter 1:11). The Greek for “scarcely” literally means “with difficulty,” referring to the disciplinary judgment of which Peter has just spoken. There are many difficulties faithful Christians must face in passing through trying chastisements, but the entrance into the everlasting kingdom will be rich and abundant at last. See Matthew 7:14; 10:22; Acts 14:22; 1 Corinthians 3:15.

**where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?**—“The ungodly and sinner” are the same person. The former word pertains to his impious and irreverent attitude, whereas the latter word pertains to his sinful actions. He hates God and loves sin.

In this rhetorical question, Peter is saying that if the righteous is saved by the drastic means of submitting himself to God’s disciplinary judgment, it is obvious that one who has no regard for God and His word will merit divine wrath when he appears at the last judgment.

19 **Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.**—When God’s faithful children suffer at any time, they must do so submissively, recognizing it as being His will in their sanctification and salvation. The word “souls” designates that part of men made in the image of God, which the apostle had previously spoken of in 1:9,22; 2:11,25; 3:20.

The word “commit” in the Greek is *paratithesthosan* (*paratithemi*), which was the technical term for “depositing money with a trusted friend” (William Barclay). The Christian is to deposit his spiritual life, the most precious thing of all, in the care of the best friend of all, the Creator, the One who made him (Genesis 1:26,27), the Father of his spirit (Hebrews 12:9). This he is to do “in well-doing.” Even in the midst of suffering he must “be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:8). In so doing, he recognizes his Creator as being “faithful,” whose perfect fidelity will keep him safely through all temptation, trials, and tribulations to final rest in the heavenly home. See 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:57,58; Galatians 6:9; Colossians 3:23,24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 6:10.

## LESSON EIGHT

### 1 PETER 5:1-14

**1 The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder,**—The elders (Greek *presbyteroi*, older men) here addressed are the experienced, seasoned, qualified men who serve as the God-ordained leaders of the church. This term, as we shall see in the verse to follow, is used interchangeably with “bishops” and “pastors.” Their qualifications are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. By not asserting his apostolic authority but rather referring to himself as a fellow-elder, Peter puts himself in the same position as those whom he exhorts, to show empathy concerning the problems they face. He thus gives his exhortation to follow a more receptive hearing. Cf. 2 John 1; 3 John 1.

**and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,**—As one who had seen the Lord taken into custody by wicked men, to be beaten and spat upon, and had probably watched His suffering on the cross among them who stood afar off (Luke 23:49), Peter was well-qualified to tell his fellow-elders to suffer for well-doing after the example of their Saviour and in submission to His disciplinary authority.

**who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:**—As both a witness and partaker of Christ’s sufferings, Peter confidently expects to be a partaker of His glory when He comes again.

**2 Tend the flock of God which is among you,**—This exhortation to the elders definitely designates their function in the church as shepherds (pastors) since the word “tend” is from the Greek *poimante* (*poimaino*), meaning “to act as shepherds,” from *poimen*, shepherd. See Ephesians 4:11, where *poimen* is translated as “pastor.” The word *poimainein*, corresponding to *poimante*, is used in Acts 20:28, where the elders previously mentioned in verse 17 are told to “feed the church of the Lord.” “The flock . . . which is among you” is the local church, the only sphere of the elders’ function according to the New Testament pattern (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). Cf. James 5:14. All passages bearing on the subject teach that each local church is to have a plurality of elders. That the flock is “of God” lays stress on the fact that it belongs to God and not to the elders. Faithful elders realize that they are stewards of God’s flock, not its owners. They will never treat it carelessly or for any selfish reasons, but will shepherd it in every way that will contribute to the spiritual growth and welfare of the sheep that compose it. See 4:10; John 10:14; 21:15; Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 4:2; Hebrews 13:17.

**exercising the oversight,**—This phrase is from the Greek *episkopountes*, answering to *episkopos*, the word uniformly rendered as

“bishop” in the New Testament, plainly showing that the elders-pastors are also the bishops. This is corroborated by Acts 20:17,28 and Titus 1:5,7. The literal injunction “exercising the oversight” explains the figurative “tend the flock.” For elders to oversee is to shepherd, and vice versa.

**not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God;**—In tending the flock of God among them, exercising the oversight, elders “must not grudge time and pain in the service nor resent the onerous responsibilities of the position” (James Moffatt). The word *anagkastos*, “of constraint,” is a form of *anagke* in 1 Corinthians 9:16, “. . . for necessity is laid upon me.” The only constraint (necessity) laid upon the elders is “the will of God,” which they *willingly* accept so that the service they render is not just something they *have* to do but what they *want* to do. That is the import of Peter’s words here.

**nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;**—It is entirely possible that some of the elders among Peter’s readers gave their full time to the work, receiving financial support from their brethren. That this was their right if they so chose is taught in 1 Timothy 5:17,18. But the apostle insists that this is not to be the motive for any man serving as an elder, but that he is to be motivated unselfishly by “a ready mind,” from the single Greek word *prothumos*, implying zeal and enthusiasm, which is a stronger meaning than the preceding word “willingly.” See Isaiah 56:11; 1 Timothy 3:1,3; Titus 1:7. Cf. 2 Corinthians 9:7.

**3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you,**—“Charge” is from the Greek *kleron* (*kleroi*), the plural of *kleros*, designating persons assigned to one’s care. Each elder has the responsibility to care for the Lord’s people allotted to him, his pastoral duties being limited to the local church of which is part. The diocesan form of church government is foreign to the New Testament. The phrase “lording it over” brings to mind the Lord’s words in Matthew 20:25. Certainly the elders are “over” the flock in a legitimate sense (1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:7), but they are not to exercise high-handed, dictatorial rule, with the “I am the boss” attitude.

**but making yourselves ensamples to the flock.**—The Greek for “ensamples” is *tupoi*, the singular *tupos* meaning “a pattern or example to be imitated.” See Philippians 3:17. Instead of bullying and driving the disciples to fulfill their responsibilities, the elders are “to prove a pattern to the flock” (James Moffatt), to lead the way in every good work. How wrong we are when we assume that the elders are merely a decision-making body! Without denying their authority in this area, it is definitely certain that elders who fail to set a good example are guilty of lording it over the flock, no matter how wise and appropriate their decisions may be. True leadership is exampleship, not dictatorship.

4 and when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away.—The Greek for “chief shepherd” is *archipoimenos* (*archipoiimen*). It can be rendered either as “archshepherd” or “archpastor.” Since Christ is the *chief* Shepherd, all the pastors, elders, or bishops in the local church are completely responsible to Him. It is a title that belongs *only* to Him, not to any human being. Cf. John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20.

When Jesus “shall be manifested” at His coming, His faithful elders will be rewarded with “the crown of glory,” which the Lord has promised to all His faithful ones. See 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10. The word “crown” is from the Greek *stephanon* (*stephanos*), “a garland of victory,” which originally designated the prize in the Grecian games, consisting of ivy, parsley, myrtle, olive, or oak. This prize was a perishable crown, but the crown of which the apostles speaks is incorruptible, “that fadeth not away.” The word “glory” is descriptive of the crown itself, denoting the grandeur, distinction and beauty of the heavenly prize to be given to those who are victorious in Christ. As Christ was “crowned with glory and honor” (Hebrews 2:9), Peter assures the faithful elders that they will share in His glory, as the apostle had the same assurance concerning himself (verse 1). Cf. John 17:22.

5 Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder.—The view that this exhortation pertains to the responsibility of younger people to older people in the sense of chronological age is not in keeping with the context (although such is the teaching in 1 Timothy 5:1). “Younger” pertains to all members of the flock, young and old, who do not function as elders (pastors or bishops). The word “likewise” connects what follows with what precedes. Peter has told the elders their responsibility to the flock; now, “likewise,” he tells the flock its responsibility to the elders. As the elders have the rule over the flock, so the flock is to “be subject” unto the elders. See Hebrews 13:7. As the elders are to lead, so the flock is to follow.

Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another:—The Greek word for “gird yourselves” is *egkoubosasthe*, meaning “bind yourselves up.” It was the word associated with the dress of slaves, which was the badge of their servitude. So the Christian is to bind himself up in humility. Only those who are so dressed will fulfill the responsibility “to serve one another.” The elders, the overseers, who are so dressed will not lord it over the younger, but will be their servants. And the younger, the overseen, who are so dressed will never balk at the leadership of the elders, but will also be their servants. Each will do all he can to help the other. See Matthew 20:28; John 13:4-17; Galatians 5:13; 6:2.

for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.—This quotation from the Septuagint of Proverbs 3:34 clinches Peter's argument here, widening and deepening the duty of humility. See James 4:6. The humble are recipients of God's grace (unmerited favor) because they are submissive to His will. But the proud, who resist God's will in their unwillingness to serve others, find themselves in turn resisted by God.

**6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;**—See Matthew 23:12; James 4:10. When we humble ourselves under God's mighty hand by submitting to the pressure of that hand in chastisement and by relying on its power to protect, lift up, and save, God will exalt us. See 1:6,7; Exodus 32:11; 1 Samuel 2:6-9; Proverbs 3:5; 18:12; 22:4; Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 14:7-11; Hebrews 12:5-13. God's exalting grace is given "in due time," which is always the right time according to His infallible wisdom. He will exalt the humble both here and hereafter.

**7 casting all your anxiety upon him,**—The anxiety spoken of here, from the Greek *merimnan* (*merimna*), is that of trouble, disquietude, painful uneasiness of mind, and not that of solicitous concern as in 1 Corinthians 12:25 and kindred passages. The word "cast" in the Greek denotes "an act once for all." Thus "*all* your anxiety" denotes "not every anxiety as it arises, for none will arise if this transference has been made" (Marvin R. Vincent). Carefully read Philippians 4:4-7.

**because he careth for you.** This is the reason ascribed for the preceding exhortation. Since God's care for His children is that of watchful interest and affection, of solicitous desire for their happiness and peace of mind, they can commit their lives to Him as free from anxiety. When any Christian truly humbles himself before God, he will turn his life, with all its anxieties, over to Him. Pride and anxiety go together. It is humbling to cast everything on another, to place oneself under his care and protection. See Matthew 6:25-33; James 4:6,7.

**8 Be sober, be watchful:**—"Be sober," Greek *nepsate* (*nepho*) signifies "be self-possessed under all circumstances" (Arndt-Gingrich), whereas "be watchful," Greek *gregoresate* (*gregoreo*), signifies "*give strict attention to, be cautious, active:*—to take heed lest through remissness and indolence some destructive calamity overtake one" (J. H. Thayer). Both of these verbs are found in 1 Thessalonians 5:6. Cf. Matthew 26:40,41. In order to resist the devil, it is absolutely imperative that Christians be sober and watchful, to be self-possessed and cautious at all times. See notes on 4:7.

**your adversary the devil,**—"Adversary" in the Greek is *antidikos* (from *anti*, against, and *dike*, lawsuit), literally meaning "an opponent in a lawsuit." Here it means an adversary in general. The devil works

against us in every possible way to affect the destruction of our souls.

**as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:**—The “walketh about” of the devil stresses his incessant activity in seeking to “devour” (literally in the Greek, “to swallow or gulp down”) God’s children. “As a roaring lion,” the devil does not walk about noisily announcing his intention of gulping down his intended victims; he is as stealthy in stalking his prey as a literal lion. But he is like a roaring, raging lion in his ferocity and fierceness.

**9 whom withstand stedfast in your faith,**—Cf. James 4:7. The withstanding (opposing) of the devil by Christians is qualified by the word “stedfast,” Greek *steroi* (*stereos*), signifying “firmness” (its kindred verb *stereo*, “to strengthen,” is used in Acts 3:7,16; 16:5). This firmness is actually of divine origin, but the Christian’s access to it is his faith in the Lord. Carefully note Ephesians 6:10,11; 1 Corinthians 15:56-58; 1 John 5:4. The devil must go down to complete defeat by those whose active, submissive faith causes them to walk in the strength of the Lord. See 1:5; Galatians 2:20.

**knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world.**—The apostle encourages his readers to withstand the devil by informing them that they are not alone in their sufferings, that their brethren in the world endure the same. These sufferings probably pertain to Satan’s harassment in the world—widespread persecution under Nero, which broke out in 64. Not only Christians living in the areas mentioned in 1:1, to whom Peter’s epistle was addressed, were subject to the temptation of the devil to give up their faith in the face of persecution, but also all Christians throughout the rest of the Roman empire. The Greek for “your brethren” literally means “your brotherhood.” The apostle uses the abstract “brotherhood” rather than “brethren” to indicate that although some Christians were untouched by persecutions at this time, yet the whole body of Christ was considered as being affected by them (1 Corinthians 12:26).

**10 And the God of all grace,**—All power to live well and to endure the onslaughts of the devil is ultimately of the grace God bestows on His faithful ones (2 Corinthians 9:8; 12:9; 2 Timothy 2:1; Hebrews 4:16; 12:28).

**who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ,**—Christians, who compose the *ekklesia*, the church, are those who are called (selected) by God for eternal glory, eternal life in heaven. See Romans 8:29,30. “In Christ” denotes the sphere in which the calling and its heavenly results take place. See 5:4; John 14:6; Colossians 1:27; 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Peter 1:3; Revelation 21:23.

**after that ye have suffered a little while,**—The sufferings that all

Christians endure at one time or another are only a short duration in comparison to the eternity of heavenly glory (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). This is of great comfort. The equipping that God gives us is needed now and not after all the suffering is over. The suffering we patiently undergo from time to time makes it possible for God's grace to enable us to endure until the end, so to receive the crown of glory (Matthew 10:22).

**shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you.**—“ ‘Perfect’—that no defect may remain; ‘establish’—that nothing may overthrow you; ‘strengthen’—that ye may conquer all adverse power” (John Wesley).

**11 To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**—This is similar to the doxology in 4:11.

**12 By Sylvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him,**—Sylvanus was one of Peter's companions that Paul refers to by the same name in 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1. He was probably the companion of Paul known in Acts as Silas (15:22; etc.). The phrase “as I account him” does not mean that Peter was speculative of Sylvanus' faithfulness. It simply means “as I reckon, think, or believe.” The apostle was fully persuaded that Sylvanus was a “faithful brother”; he would not have had him as companion if he were not.

**I have written unto you briefly,**—The construction of the Greek does not demand the conclusion that Peter did not actually write this letter himself but had it written by Sylvanus. The preferable meaning is that Sylvanus was the messenger who delivered the apostle's message to its recipients. See Acts 15:23. Although it is written “briefly,” with few words, it is of great and significant import, worthy of careful attention by its readers.

**exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein.**—Peter identifies his message with the true, valid, reliable grace of God. Evidently, all that he had written in this epistle, calculated to build his readers up in the most holy faith, was expressive of and focused on the saving, sustaining, strengthening unmerited favor of God.

The words “exhorting” and “testifying” denote respectively “urging” and “bearing witness.” Peter not only bore witness concerning the true grace of God in his epistle, but he also urged his readers to accept this grace by standing fast in it. See verse 10; Romans 5:1,2. Cf. Galatians 5:1.

**13 She that is Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son.**—The word “she” could possibly refer to some prominent woman (Peter's wife?) or to the church in Babylon. The church is probably Peter's thought here, the feminine form being used

in the Bible to refer to God's people (Isaiah 37:22; 2 Corinthians 11:2). The apostle, along with the church and Mark, greets his readers, those who are also elected (chosen) by God (1:1).

Babylon, the place of the writing of Peter's epistle, has been identified by some as a cryptic name for Rome. A basic rule of Biblical interpretation is that words are to be accepted in their literal meaning unless the context demands otherwise. There is nothing in the context here that demands a figurative meaning. We therefore conclude that Peter refers to literal Babylon, the ancient city of Meopotamia on the Euphrates River.

In referring to "Mark my son," Peter undoubtedly had in mind John Mark, the author of the second gospel. He was in all probability Peter's son in a spiritual sense, as one who had been nurtured in the gospel by the apostle. Cf. 1 Timothy 1:2; 1 John 2:1.

**14 Salute one another with a kiss of love.**—This was the oriental custom of showing friendship to another, just as the handshake is the occidental custom. It was a kiss of *love* in that it was to express the love Christians had for each other. Cf. Romans 16:16.

**Peace be unto you all that are in Christ.**—Here, for the second time in this epistle, we have the phrase "in Christ," which permeates the epistles of Paul. The peace that Peter wishes on his readers could only be theirs by their redeemed relationship to Christ, the Prince of peace. See Philippians 4:6,7.



## LESSON NINE

### 2 PETER 1:1-13

**1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,**—Peter is the name given the writer by Jesus Christ, whereas Simon (Greek *Simon*, hearing) was his original name. See Acts 15:14, where the variant spelling of the name is *Symeon* (Greek *Sumeon*), which was originally given to the second son of Jacob by Leah. In addition to describing himself as an apostle, here and in 1 Peter 1:1, Peter also considers himself as a “servant” (Greek *doulos*, slave) of Jesus Christ, as is common with his readers and all other Christians. This combination of servant and apostle occurs in no other apostolic salutation.

**to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us—**“Obtained” in the Greek literally signifies something obtained by lot, as in Acts 1:17. The words “us” and “them” most likely refer respectively to Jewish Christians, of whom Peter was one, and to Gentile Christians, who had been chosen to share in the gospel with the Jews. The “like precious faith” signifies the faith of the Gentiles as equal in value to that of the Jews. Compare the word “precious” in 1 Peter 1:7,19; 2:4,6,7.

**in the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ:**—The footnote in the ASV gives the literal rendering of the Greek as *our God and Saviour*, applying these words to Jesus with the intent of stressing both His Deity and saving power. The word “righteousness” probably does not refer to justification (saving righteousness) but to just, fair dealing. Jesus, along with God the Father, is no respecter of persons. See Acts 10:34,35. And so the faith of both Jews and Gentiles comes through the righteous dealing of Jesus.

**2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied—**See notes on 1 Peter 1:2.

**in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;**—The Greek for “knowledge” is *epignosei* (*epignosis*), meaning “exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition.” It is primarily used here to designate the knowledge the Christian has of the persons of God and the Lord Jesus, the ultimate source of the grace and peace of which the apostle speaks (Galatians 1:3).

**3 seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,**—The word “life” signifies the new life that all redeemed, saved persons enjoy in Christ (Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17). “Godliness,” Greek *eusebeian* (*eusebeia*), denotes the godward, reverent attitude that issues in a godlike life. Everything that pertains to this new life in Christ, with its reverence toward God, has “divine power” as its source. The words “hath granted” are from the

Greek *dedoremenes*, meaning “to grant or bestow as a gift.” See James 1:17.

though the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue;—The word “knowledge,” as in verse 2, pertains primarily to experimental, personal knowledge of Deity, the ultimate source of “life and godliness.” See John 17:3. On the word “call,” see notes on 1 Peter 2:9,21; 3:9; 5:10. This calling is by the Lord’s “own [peculiar] glory and virtue,” being the explanation of “his divine power.” “We are called by His glory because the whole dispensation of the Gospel is the outshining of the glory of God (Heb. 1:3), and it is the exhibition of his virtue” (M. F. Sadler). The word “virtue” signifies here the Lord’s moral energy, force, or strength that issues in His moral excellency, which, along with His glory, is the power that makes possible the moral energy and excellency of His faithful followers. See Galatians 2:20.

4 whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature,—“Whereby”—that through His own glory and virtue God has given us His promises which make possible our partaking of the divine nature. These promises primarily pertain to our salvation by God’s grace through Christ, to our walk in newness of life, and to the enjoyment of vital union with Christ, the source of all power for the godlike life. They also pertain to the certainty that God answers prayer, that in the blood of Christ we have continual cleansing from sin, and that the Holy Spirit dwells in us—all of which are absolutely necessary for partaking of the divine nature. The *divine power* involved in God’s promises make it possible for us to partake of the divine nature. See Matthew 21:22; John 15:1-8; Acts 2:38; 5:32; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 6:16-18; 7:1; Ephesians 3:16,17; 1 John 1:7.

For the import of “precious” see notes on 1 Peter 1:7,19. The words “exceeding great” denote these promises as being the greatest, as concerning the greatest of things. “Partakers” is from the Greek *koinonoi* (*koinos*), “a partaker, a sharer.” Closely associated in meaning with this word is *koinonia*, “fellowship, association, communion.” One, then, who is a *partaker* of the divine nature is one who has *fellowship, association, or communion* with the divine nature. It is through Christ that we enjoy this great blessing (1 Corinthians 1:9; Colossians 2:9,10; 3:4; 1 John 1:3-7). To partake of the divine nature is to share in the life and holiness of Deity (John 6:51,53-57; Hebrews 7:26; 12:10; Ephesians 4:24; 1 Peter 1:15,16).

having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust.—Man’s fleshy lust is the root of the corruption that is in the world. Only through the redeeming, sanctifying power of Christ have

Christians “escaped” (as by flight) from corruption. See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Cf. 2:18.

**5 Yea, and for this very cause**—On this account, because you have become partakers of the divine nature.

**adding on your part all diligence**,—“Diligence” in the Greek is *spouden* (*spoude*) meaning “earnestness, earnest application, “diligence” (Harper). Christians are active, not passive, in building the Christian personality. It takes constant, unremitting application on their part. True it is that “it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13); but it is just as true that in cooperation with the divine power that works in us, we must heed the command of the preceding verse, “. . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” See Colossians 1:28,29; Hebrews 6:10-12; 2 Timothy 2:15.

**in your faith supply virtue**;—Here through verse 8 the apostle presents what are known as the Christian graces (for a fuller treatment of them see James M. Tolle, *The Christian Graces*, one of the Tolle Publications mature adult studies). We first notice that Peter does not designate faith as one of the Christian graces, but rather as their basis. As each grace is to be an instrument by which the one that follows is to be brought out, all of them are to be traced to faith. In other words, faith is the root from which all the Christian graces spring. On the significance of faith, see Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 6:16,18; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 5:4.

The Greek for “virtue” is *arete*, generally defined as “goodness, good quality of any kind, virtue, uprightness.” This is obviously the meaning of the word as it is rendered in Philippians 4:8 (virtue) and 1 Peter 2:9 (excellencies). But as one of the Christian graces it cannot mean uprightness (goodness) in a general sense because it is only one such out of seven. Here it means “moral power, moral energy; viz. moral vigor” (John Bengel), with the idea of manliness, moral courage and strength. Without this grace no one can stand up for truth and righteousness in the battle of life. See 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 13:5,6.

**and in your virtue knowledge**;—“Knowledge” (Greek *gnosei*, *gnosis*), the second Christian grace, signifies in the New Testament “the general knowledge of the Christian religion” (J. H. Thayer). The importance of such knowledge is emphasized by the fact that one cannot do the Lord’s will unless first he knows that will. Thus the injunction of Ephesians 5:15-17. See 3:15,16,18; John 8:32. True knowledge and faith are inseparable (Romans 10:17). So are knowledge and virtue. The courage and moral stamina of virtue is necessary in the fearless pursuit of divine knowledge (Romans 3:4; 1 Thessalonians

5:21). And the knowledge of God's will keeps one from letting his moral courage degenerate into blind recklessness (zeal without knowledge). See Romans 10:2,3.

**6 and in your knowledge self-control;**—The Greek for “self-control,” *egkrateian* (*egkrateia*), is defined by lexicographers in general as “temperance, continence, self-control.” The faithful Christian has mastery of himself in both body and mind as one who “exerciseth self-control in all things” (1 Corinthians 9:25). See Matthew 16:24; Romans 12:1,2; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 9:24-27. Where self-control, however, is not guided by true spiritual knowledge, it degenerates into fanaticism. And where it does not exist, there cannot be the spiritual discernment of true knowledge. Dissipation destroys the disposition and energy to seek the knowledge of God's will. Moreover, knowledge itself must be kept under control (1 Corinthians 8:1).

**and in your self-control patience;**—The word “patience” is from the Greek *hupomonen* (*hupomone*), generally defined as “endurance, a holding out, a bearing up under, steadfastness, constancy, and a patient, steadfast waiting for.” Self-control tends to make one patient (steadfast) in the face of all adversity, and patience tends to make one self-controlled in the face of all allurements to sin.

**and in your patience godliness;**—On the meaning of “godliness” see notes on verse 3. It is not to be confused with *godlikeness*, which characterizes all the other Christian graces. See 1 Timothy 6:11. It denotes that reverence (respect) for God which is the sincere feeling of the heart in view of His nature and character. Its relationship here to patience indicates that the incentive to the latter is definitely religious, not mere stoical holding on in the face of adversity. The basis of all patience is to be holy reverence for God (Hebrews 11:27). Then, too, the patient person tends to develop a greater sense of godliness as he is steadfast in the Christian life. Each works advantageously on the other.

**7 and in your godliness brotherly kindness;**—In the Greek “brotherly-kindness” is *philadelphian* (*philadelphia*), from *phileo*, to love, and *adelphos*, brother. It here depicts the feeling of affection and good will toward fellow members of the family of God. See Galatians 6:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; Hebrews 13:1. “Not suffering your godliness to be moroseness, nor a sullen solitary habit of life, but kind, generous, and courteous” (Dean Alford). Then, too, the attitude we have of reverence toward God should contribute to the attitude of filial affection toward our brethren.

**and in your brotherly kindness love.**—*Love* (Greek *agapan*, *agape*) completes the list of Christian graces. It is the love, good will, we are to have for all men, even our enemies, because they are *men*, human

beings, made in the image of God, infinitely precious in His sight. He who loves all men will inevitably exercise brotherly kindness, and he who loves his brothers in Christ is able to love all others for whom Christ also died. See Hebrews 2:9.

**8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**—More than merely possessing the Christian graces, we are to “abound” (Greek *pleonazonta*, *pleonazo*, “to superabound”) in them. To so abound is not to be “idle” (Greek *argous*, *argos*, from *a*, not, and *ergon*, work). Only by working at the supplying of the Christian graces in our lives can we avoid being unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ. The word “knowledge” in the Greek is the same as in verses 2 and 3. Primarily, the rich bearing of the fruit of the Christian graces, as well as all other fruit of Christian discipleship, depends on vital union with Christ. But, secondly, it depends on cooperation with the Lord’s fruit-bearing power by the obedient knowledge of His will.

**9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins.**—The word “blind” is qualified by the phrase “seeing only what is near,” from the single Greek word *muapazon* (*muapazo*), meaning “nearsightedness.” One who is deficient in the Christian graces is indeed spiritually nearsighted. He sees only things that are present and not heavenly. He fails to look back to the time when he was cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ, rising from the grave of baptism to walk in newness of life. It is axiomatic that no one will bear the fruit of the Christian graces who does not gratefully, lovingly remember “the cleansing from his old sins.”

**10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble:**—Whenever one answers the gospel call, he is then elected (chosen) by God to be His child, redeemed by the Saviour. See Matthew 22:14; 1 Corinthians 1:9. The Christian gives the “more diligence” of making his calling and election certain and irreversible by doing “these things,” the Christian graces, with the promise that he will “never stumble.” The word “stumble” in the Greek is *ptaisete* (*ptaio*), meaning here “to fall into misery, become wretched (often so in the Gk. writ.): of the loss of salvation 2 Pet. 1:10” (J. H. Thayer).

**11 for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**—Peter now describes the eternal outcome of a life that is characterized by growth in the Christian graces, with the word “richly” implying the fulness of future blessedness. The term “supply” echoes verse 5: supply in your faith the Christian graces, and you in turn will be *supplied* the abun-

dant entrance into the heavenly kingdom. See Matthew 25:31-34; Romans 6:22; 2 Timothy 2:10-12; 1 Peter 1:3-9.

**12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you.**—The apostle's readers have already learned the things about which he has been writing, being "established" (Greek *esterigmenous*, *sterizo*, "to fix, make fast") in the truth they have received. This presupposes that they had been instructed in the whole body of divine truth by inspired evangelists and teachers before Peter wrote his epistle to them. But the apostle expressed the necessity of always being ready to remind them of these things because they were in danger of forgetting them and becoming unfaithful. And Christians today, who have received the truth through the written word, also need to be continually reminded of what they have learned lest they, too, become spiritually negligent and fall short of the heavenly goal.

**13 And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;**—Peter speaks of his earthly life as that of dwelling in a "tabernacle" (Greek *skenomati*, *skenoma*, "dwelling place"). He is convinced that it is right and proper as long as he is alive in this world to "stir up" (literally in the Greek, "keep stirring up") his fellow Christians by doing what he has mentioned in the preceding verse: reminding them of their need for a life of faithfulness in order to inherit the blessings of the eternal kingdom. And the need of such reminding is still applicable to Christians today.

## LESSON TEN

### 2 PETER 1:14-21; 2:1-3

14 knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me.—This reference is to Peter's speedily approaching death, when his immortal soul would leave its earthly residence to go into eternity. See 2 Corinthians 5:1. The apostle is undoubtedly an old man now, and he recalls the prophecy given him by Jesus many years before concerning the violent death he should die (John 21:18,19). In light of the short time left for him in this world, he feels the great urgency of reminding his readers of the truth they have learned.

15 Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance.—Peter describes his impending death by the Greek word *exodon* (*exodus*), meaning "outgoing." In Hebrews 11:22 it denotes the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt. The import of the apostle's declaration here is that in light of his impending departure from the world, he will be so diligent in reminding his readers of the things they have learned concerning God's will that they will be able to recall them at any moment during their earthly stay, never to forget them. Cf. 1 Peter 3:15.

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,—“Cunningly devised” is from the single Greek word *sesophismenois*, a form of *sophizo*, used only here and 2 Timothy 3:15. In the latter passage it has the good sense of “to make thee wise.” Here it is used in the bad sense to mean “artfully framed by human cleverness” (Marvin Vincent). Cf. “feigned words” in 2:3. “Fables” is from the Greek *muthois* (*muthos*), the derivation of our word “myth,” meaning “tale, story, legend, myth, fable” (Arndt-Gingrich). See 1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:4. Peter insists that the report of him and his fellow apostles concerning the Lord's “power and coming,” His miraculous works and His risen power which will be culminated at His second advent, are not a handful of illusions. They are not fabricated tales as those who discredit the historical testimony of the gospel would have us believe, nor are they the fantastic Gnostic speculations.

but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.—The apostles' report concerning Christ is not heresay but of “eyewitnesses” (Greek *epeptoi*, *epeptes*, denoting “one who watches or oversees, an overseer”); it is the testimony of those who are actually at the scene. Illustrative of this, as noted in the next two verses, was the beholding of the majesty of Jesus at His transfiguration by Peter, James, and John, when “his face did

shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light" (Matthew 17:2).

**17 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:—**Concerning God the Father as the "Majestic Glory," see Psalms 21:5 and the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 33:26. Not only did Jesus receive great "glory and honor" when His physical appearance was transfigured, but also when God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," echoing the words that came from Him at the Lord's baptism (Matthew 3:17). But in the description of the events of the transfiguration in Matthew 17:5, God has added the words, "hear ye him." Why did not Peter, an eyewitness, also record these words? Probably because his intent was not to show that Jesus superseded the law and the prophets, which was the intent of the original account of the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8), but rather to show that this majestic, glorious event confirmed the prophetic word concerning Jesus. This the apostle notes in verses 19-21.

**18 and this voice we ourselves heard bourne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount.—**These eyewitnesses not only saw the resplendent appearance of the transfigured Jesus, but they also heard the voice of God that came out of heaven to pronounce His approbation on His beloved Son. No one has been able to authoritatively locate "the holy mount." The traditional claim that it is Mount Tabor is entirely speculative. Peter calls this mountain "holy" because of the holy events that transpired on it. Cf. Exodus 3:5.

**19 And we have the word of prophecy made more sure;—**In the context, the word of prophecy was made more certain to Peter and his fellow apostles, "fresh confirmation of the prophetic word," by what they witnessed on the holy mount. For that matter, the prophetic word was confirmed to them by everything they witnessed of the signs connected with the Lord's earthly life. Cf. John 20:30,31. Origen wrote that "clear proofs of the Old Testament could not be given until Christ came to earth. Till then the law and the prophets were liable to suspicion as not being truly divine, but the coming of Christ set them forth clearly as records made by the gracious aid of heaven" (*De Principiis* 4:6). Then, too, in seeing the prophetic word made more sure by the events that transpired on the holy mount, the apostles were given great assurance that the prophecies concerning His second advent would be fulfilled.

**whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,—**In light of the prophetic word being made more sure to the apostles by their witness of the transfiguration, we will do well to give careful attention to it. These



prophecies concerning the work of Christ on our behalf are worthy of our "heed," close and careful attention.

**as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:—**The prophetic word fulfilled in Jesus and His earthly ministry is indeed a light shining in the dark world of sin. See John 8:12. But the fullness of Christ's redemption will not come to pass until the prophecies of His second coming are fulfilled. Then will come into the hearts of His faithful ones the fullness of His glorious light, when He, the divine day-star, comes in the fullness of His resurrection glory. See Isaiah 66:14,15; Matthew 25:31; Luke 21:27,28; Acts 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2.

**20, 21 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.—**"Knowing this first" emphasizes the basic importance of the prophetic word as originating with God and not with man, that the ones who originally delivered it were inspired to do so by the Holy Spirit. Cf. Galatians 1:11,12.

The statement that "no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation" has been given many and varied meanings. It is a favorite text used by the Roman Catholic Church in the attempt to prove that the Bible cannot be interpreted by the mill and run of its members, the so-called laity, but only by the clergy, especially by the pope and church councils. This means that the average person can understand the Bible only as he accepts the official interpretation of "the church." This runs contrary to the plain teaching of such passages as Acts 17:11; Ephesians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 1 John 2:12,13. The obvious meaning of these words of Peter is that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation because it did not come by the will of man. If prophecy were the production of any individual person, then that person himself who uttered it would be the one to give its interpretation. But the prophets of God were not masters of themselves in their prophetic utterances. They were "moved" (Greek *pheromenoi*, *phero*, "borne along, or impelled") by the Holy Spirit, even though they may not have known the meaning of their prophecies. Cf. 1 Peter 1:3-12. Once a prophecy has been fulfilled, any careful Bible student can correctly interpret it. For example, it takes no official pronouncement of "the church" to inform any person of reasonable intelligence to see that, in light of Acts 8:30-35 and related New Testament passages, the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4-8 was fulfilled in the trials and crucifixion of Jesus.

**2:1 But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers,—**The word "but" introduces a

contrast with those prophets who were moved by the Holy Spirit. Among "the people," obviously the Jews (Matthew 1:21), there arose false prophets (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 1 Kings 18:16-19; Jeremiah 6:13; etc.). Now Peter predicts that among his readers there will also be false teachers. Note that Peter speaks of them as the *future* and Jude (verse 4) as the *present*. The Greek for "false teachers" is *pseudodidakaloi*, occurring only here in the New Testament. Whoever they were, they were wicked men who were out to fleece the flock of God for their own gain, noted in the next two verses.

**who shall privily bring in destructive heresies,**—The Greek for "shall privily bring in" occurs only here in the New Testament. Its kindred adjective occurs in the phrase "false brethren *privily* brought in" (Galatians 2:4). The figure of speech is that of spies or traitors introducing themselves in a neighbor's camp. The Greek for "heresies" is *haraseis* (*haresis*), defined by W. E. Vine as "self-willed opinions, which are substituted for submission to the power of truth, and lead to division and formation of sects, Gal. 5:20." Such self-willed opinions can only lead to destruction.

**denying even the Master that bought them,**—These false teachers had, in fact, been bought by the Master Jesus to become real children of God. See 1 Peter 1:18,19; Revelation 5:9. But now they had gone so far in their false teaching and wicked ways that they denied the One who had purchased them, no longer recognizing Him as their Master and Saviour. Their denial of the Lord might also refer to their inconsistent life, their immorality being a virtual denial of Him as their Master. See Jude 4.

**bringing upon themselves swift destruction.** However long God may have delayed this destruction, it would come at last speedily, as in an instant. And noting the brevity of human life, it would certainly come quickly. In no way could these false teachers escape God's wrath. See Hebrews 10:26-31.

**2 And many shall follow their lascivious doings;**—The Greek for "lascivious doings" is the plural form of *aselgeias*. For the meaning of this word, see notes on 1 Peter 4:3. The wanton acts of these heretical teachers would influence their fellow members of the body of Christ to imitate their wicked ways. It is noteworthy that false teaching and false living have a close affinity for each other. See Matthew 7:16,17; 1 Corinthians 13:6; Titus 1:10,11.

**by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of.**—When Christians fail to live the life in keeping with both the example and ethic of Christ, they bring discredit on the whole Christian system, called here "the way of the truth." Cf. Romans 2:23,24. What hard, blasphemous things have been said about Christianity and Him

who is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) by unbelievers who have seen the ungodly, indecent lives of some who claim to represent the gospel! In the homily called 2 Clement (XIII) we read, "When pagans hear from our lips the oracles of God, they marvel at their beauty and greatness, but afterwards when they discover that our deeds are unworthy of our words, they turn to malign the faith, declaring it to be a fable and delusion."

**3 And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:**—The preposition "in" indicates that covetousness (avarice, greed, unprincipled getting for personal advantage) was the essential motive of their false teaching. See 1 Timothy 6:5; Titus 1:11. "Feigned words" in the Greek is *plastois* (*plastos*), "to mould, as a clay or wax." The words that the errorists used were moulded at will to beguile their listeners—made-up tales of their imaginations. "Make merchandise" in the Greek is *emporeusontai* (*emporeuomai*), "to traffic, trade, to make gain of." In James 4:13, the word is used of the business man who seeks to "get gain." In making merchandise of their listeners, these greedy teachers were exploiting them for their own selfish advantage—false shepherds who were fleecing the flock. See Jude 11,16. Their breed still lives in the modern religious racketeers who pose as gospel preachers.

**whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.**—The sentence (judgment) that God had from of old pronounced on all ungodly men would surely overtake these false teachers, no matter how secure they seemed to be in their errors and sins. They might even ridicule the idea of divine retribution; but they were doomed men, on the verge of everlasting destruction. "Judgment does not loiter on its way; destruction does not nod drowsily. Both are eager, watchful, waiting for the appointed hour." Cf. 3:3-8.

## LESSON ELEVEN

### 2 PETER 2:4-17

**4 For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;**—The sin of these angels is described in Jude 6: “kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation.” The implications seems to be that they were prompted to this by ambition. They were not content with the proper place God had assigned them, but desired to find a more exalted place. Cf. 1 Timothy 3:6. Because of their sin, they were consigned to “hell,” from the Greek *tartaros* (*tartarus*), which represents the hell of the ancient Greek people. It is not here treated as the equivalent to *gehenna*, the hell that is represented in the scriptures as the final abode of the wicked, which follows the last judgment. See Matthew 10:28; 23:33; Revelation 10:11-15; 21:8. *Tartarus* is a place of detention preceding the last judgment. It is the place of darkness to which the fallen angels are committed “to be reserved unto judgment”; that is, “keeping them in reserve for judgment” (Richard Weymouth). “The use of the word ‘Tartarus’ as the place where the degraded angels were in bonds would impress Gentile readers all the more forcibly because they would recall the fate that had overtaken the Titans who had incurred the displeasure of the mighty Greek deity, Zeus” (Shirley Jackson Case).

**5 and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;**—The antediluvian flood is given as another example of God’s retributive power over sinners, only eight out of the entire world at that time being saved. Cf. 1 Peter 3:20. Noah is described as “a preacher of righteousness.” Nowhere else in the scriptures is he so described. But being an inspired man, Peter obviously states a fact here. It is entirely reasonable that such a righteous person as Noah, with his knowledge of the fast-approaching vengeance of God, would warn his generation to break off their sins and to embrace the righteousness of God’s will. Indeed, the Greek for “preacher,” *keruka* (literally, “a herald”), implies one to whom a message is given to deliver. It is quite probable that Noah’s preaching was done under God’s direction. Josephus presents the age-old tradition that “Noah being grieved at the things which were done by them, and being displeased at their counsels, urged them to change for the better their thoughts and actions; but seeing that they did not yield, but were mightily mastered by the pleasure of evil, fearing lest they should kill him, he departed from the land, and his sons and the women which

they married" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, I.3.1).

**6** and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow,—Still another example of God's retributive power against sinners is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone. See Genesis 18:1-33; 19:1-29. The word "overthrow," from the Greek *katastrophe*, the derivation of our word "catastrophe," answers to "turning . . . into ashes," describing the complete destruction of these two cities of the plain.

having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly;—The purpose of such examples of God's retribution against sinners as the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah is to warn all sinners of the terrible doom awaiting them if they continue in their ungodly ways. Jude 7 is even more emphatic in its reference to the destruction of these cities of the plain as an example for sinners: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:6,11.

**7,8** and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds):—Lot was granted deliverance because he was *righteous*. Three times this word is applied to him. That does not mean he was without fault. See Genesis 19:30-36. " 'Righteous' is a comparative term; and we must think of Lot in relation to the defective morality of the age and in view of the licentiousness of those with whom he is compared" (Robert Tuck). Lot's righteousness is seen in his hospitality extended to the angels of God (Genesis 19:1-7) and here, in the context, in his attitude of abhorrence toward the wickedness of those about him. This attitude is vividly expressed in the words "distressed" (Greek *kataponoumenon*, *kataponeo*, "to wear down with toil") and "vexed" (Greek *ebasanitzen*, *basanizo*, "to torment"). In seeing and hearing the wickedness about him, Lot suffered great weariness and torment. "Out greatest security against sin lies in being shocked at it" (John Henry Newman). The shocking wickedness of the plain's people is denoted in the phrase "lascivious life of the wicked," literally signifying in the Greek, "the behaviour of the lawless in wantonness (licentiousness)." The phrase "lawless deeds" describes those who defy the divine law. Because of such wanton, defiant behavior, God brought destruction upon the cities of the plain, from which righteous Lot was granted deliverance.

In the verse to follow, Peter sums up the underlying thought of verses 4-8 that God will act as He always has done to save the faithful and to

punish sinners. This is His essential character in the moral order, and it may be entirely relied upon.

**9 the Lord knoweth how to deliver the ungodly out of temptation,**—The Greek word for “temptation” is the same rendered as “trials” in 1 Peter 1:6, “. . . ye have been put to grief in manifold *trials*.” The apostle now affirms that God “knoweth how,” is able, to deliver us from all such trials, just as He was able to deliver Noah and Lot from the trials confronting them. Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13, where the reference is to God’s way of escape from the temptation that is an inducement to sin.

**and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment;**—As God is able to deliver the righteous, such as Noah and Lot, from the fiery trials of life, so also He is able to keep the unrighteous “under punishment [in *tartarus*, “pits of darkness” (verse 4)] unto the day of judgment.”

**10 but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion.**—See Jude 8. Peter has in mind the worst of sinners, such as the false teachers he has described in verse 1; thus they are named “chiefly,” *especially*, as those most deserving of the wrath of God. Cf. Luke 12:47,48. The phrase “walk after the flesh,” the opposite of walking after the Spirit, denotes those who follow the dictates of the flesh. To so walk is always characteristic of those who owe no higher allegiance than to their fleshly desires, who seek in life to “do their own thing.” Cf. Romans 8:4,5. The word “defilement,” from the Greek *miasmou* (*miasma*), meaning “the act of defiling or polluting,” denotes the depth of the moral degeneracy that Peter is describing. Whereas godly men shrink from defilement, moral degenerates actually lust after, diligently seek for, the muck and filth of this present evil world. See 2 Timothy 3:13.

The words “despising dominion” always characterize the attitude of the mind of the flesh rather than that of the Spirit. The highest dominion of all is Deity. In “denying even the Master that bought them” (verse 1), the libertinistic false teachers refused His Lordship over their lives, preferring to be dominated by the licentious, covetous desires of the flesh.

**Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities:**—The Greek for “daring” is *tolmetai* (*tolmetes*), used only here in the New Testament, signifying “the sense of not dreading through fear, shameless and irreverent daring.” “Self-willed” in the Greek is *authadeis* (*authades*, from *autos*, self, *hedomai*, to please), denoting “a self-pleasing spirit; one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will.” The degenerative spirit of the libertines whom Peter described, shamelessly daring and intensely self-pleasing,

manifested itself in blatantly and boldly "railing" (Greek *blasphemountes*, *blasphemeo*, "to blaspheme") at "dignities." The footnote of the ASV puts "glories" for "dignities." What are these "glories"? Some commentators believe they are angels; others consider them to be the political authorities ordained of God (Romans 13:1). Still others apply the word to Christ in light of 1 Peter 1:11, "the sufferings of Christ, and the *glories* that shall follow them." Perhaps all three are included here. These self-willed, daring degenerates certainly held nothing sacred. In denying the Master that bought them, it was not beyond them to blaspheme Him directly; and in railing against God's messengers, the angels, and the political powers He had ordained, they were tacitly guilty of blaspheming God Himself. Cf. Romans 13:2.

**11** whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord.—The moral degenerates of whom the apostle speaks railed at (blasphemed) the dignities, those who were their superiors. The extreme absurdity and enormity of this is explained by the contrasting refusal of the angels, who were far beyond these "daring, self-willed" libertines in "might and power," to bring a "railing judgment against them before the Lord." The word "railing" is from the Greek *blasphemon*, which indicates that men can be blasphemed as well as God. Any denunciation of men, even though spoken with truth, becomes blasphemous when it is expressed in scurrilous, profane, irreverent language. "This is indeed the language of hell. Angels do not rail, devils do; angels do not curse, devils do. Your curse is an arrow shot against a stone, it shall wound yourselves" (Thomas Adams). Those who realize they live "before the Lord" will never set themselves up as judges of evil men (James 4:12); and even when justifiably rebuking those in error and sin, they will not resort to profane, obscene, irreverent language (Colossians 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:2). See Jude 9.

**12** But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant,—The blasphemous libertines described in verses 1,2,3,10 acted more like animals than human beings. Instead of living like those who realize that they are made in the image of God and thus take delight in "partaking of the divine nature" (1:4), they had descended to the level of the brute beast, partaking of the carnal nature, and refusing to use the reasoning power that God gave them to imbibe Him and His will in their lives. Their irrationality was also shown in the railing, blasphemous utterances against things of which they were ignorant. If they had used the reasoning power with which they were endowed to respect the "dignities" (glories), they would never have railed against them.

shall in their destroying surely be destroyed,—The wanton, covetous, blasphemous conduct of these false teachers was destroying in its influence, leading many of their blood-bought compatriots astray (verse 2). But in so doing, they were sowing the seeds of their own destruction. In leading others to God's wrath, they would surely bring the same punishment on themselves. See Jude 10. Cf. Proverbs 1:18,19.

**13 suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing;**—“Suffering wrong” corresponds to “destruction” in the preceding verse. It is the wages one is paid who has hired himself out to wrongdoing. Cf. Romans 6:23. These false teachers would eventually receive the wages due them in eternal death.

**men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time,**—This phrase denotes the extreme depravity of the wanton errorists. To “revel” (engaging in luxurious, self-indulgent, disgraceful activities) in the day-time was bad enough, but to “count it pleasure” to do so in open daylight characterized those who were virtually totally lacking in plain, common decency. See Isaiah 5:11; Acts 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:7. They are further described in the phrase to follow.

**spots and blemishes,**—R. C. H. Lenski suggests that these words express Peter's disgust: “filth spots and scabs.”

**revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you;**—Considering this phrase in connection with Jude 12, it is highly probable that Peter had in mind the love-feasts of the early Christians. Indeed, any feast in which Christians jointly participate should involve the love they are to have for each other. So degraded were the errorists that they “revelled,” took sensual pleasure, in their deceivings of the faithful brethren when they feasted with them. What was the nature of their “deceivings” (deceit)? It may be that they practiced deceit in making a hypocritical show of love for their brethren, when, in light of verse 3, no such love existed, thus making mockery of the love-feasts. Or it may be that within the sanctity of the Christian gatherings they practiced some of the revelling they took pleasure doing in day-time, such as gluttony and drunkenness, deceiving their brethren into believing that they had the right to engage in such conduct. See verses 18,19. Still another meaning is indicated by Charles B. Williams' translation, “Deceitfully living in pleasure while they continue feasting with you.”

**14 having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin;**—“Adultery” in the Greek literally means “adulteress.” Every attractive woman was to the errorists a prospective companion in adultery. Cf. Matthew 5:28. Such temptation had become virtually irresistible to them so that they could not cease from engaging in adultery at every opportunity.

**enticing unstedfast souls;**—“Enticing” signifies “the laying of bait”



(Greek *deleazontes*, *deleazo*, from *delear*, bait). This would be an appropriate word from Peter, who had been a fisherman. Unsteadfast, unstable souls could be easily entrapped by their slick-tongued, libertinistic brethren. Cf. “feigned words make merchandise of you” (verse 3). See 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:58.

**having a heart exercised in covetousness;**—See verse 3. So habitually did they practice the lust of their greed that they were well-exercised in it.

**children of cursing;**—The meaning here can be those who are devoted to cursing. See verse 10. Cf. “sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6); that is, those who are devoted to disobedience. See Mark 3:17; 1 Peter 1:14; James 3:10. Or the meaning can be those who are marked by a divine curse, noting that “cursing,” from the Greek *kataras* (*katara*), can be rendered as “curse.” Cf. John 17:12, “son of perdition”; that is, one who is marked by (destined for) perdition.

**15 forsaking the right way, they went astray,**—This statement concerning the false teachers unquestionably implies that they were children of God, those who had at one time been converted to Him who is “the way” (John 14:6), having thus begun on the straitened way that leads to life (Matthew 7:14). Indeed, the apostle had already described them as being bought by Jesus (verse 1). And now he affirms that they had forsaken the right way, having gone astray—plainly affirming their apostasy, as those who had fallen from grace and thus faced the destruction pronounced on them in verses 1, 12, 13.

**having followed the way of Baalam the son of Beor,**—It is here implied that Baalam was at one time a true prophet of God, but that in yielding to the temptation of covetousness, he forsook God—just as the false teachers in the church also had forsaken God.

**who loved the hire of wrong-doing;**—See notes on verse 13. Baalam’s “wrong-doing,” “transgression” (verse 16), was that, “although as a prophet he knew the blessedness of Israel, and although God gave him leave to go only on condition of his blessing Israel, he went still cherishing a hope of being able to curse, and so winning Balak’s promised reward” (Alfred Plummer). See Numbers 22:1-20.

**16 but he was rebuked for his own transgression: a dumb ass spake with man’s voice and stayed the madness of the prophet.**—Read Numbers 22:21-30. “Was rebuked” signifies in the Greek “had a conviction.” Baalam’s own beast convicted him of his *own* transgression, the word “beast” in the Greek literally signifying “a beast of burden.” The ass was the ordinary animal used for riding in Palestine. This *dumb* beast spoke in man’s language, marking the miraculous nature of the act. The *fact* that the words were miraculously spoken was what helped convict Baalam of his perversity and madness in disobeying

God, not the *meaning* of the words, which only rebuked him for the cruel beating he gave his beast. Joining the beast in convicting Baalam of his transgression was the angel sent by Jehovah.

**17 These are springs without water,**—The false teachers were all show and no substance. They were like springs that indicate their existence by the foliage surrounding them, but that have no water at all. One of the most bitterly disappointing things to the travelers in the desert is to see such a sight, anticipating the drinking of thirst-quenching water from the springs, and to find no water there.

**and mists driven by a storm;**—The errorists are referred to in Jude 12 as “clouds without water.” According to Peter, they are like mists seemingly full of rain, but which are driven across the sky so that no rain falls on the parched land below. Those below would see the mists and anticipate rain, only to face bitter disappointment.

**for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved.**—The word “blackness” emphasizes the dismal, forlorn nature of the darkness which the apostle had already referred to in verse 4. See Jude 13. What a terrible doom the false teachers faced because of their erroneous teaching and ungodly lives!

## LESSON TWELVE

### 2 PETER 2:18-22; 3:1-7

18 For, uttering great swelling words of vanity,—The Greek for “great swelling” is *huperogka* (*huperogkos*), literally meaning “excessive bulk.” In its connection here with the phrase “words of vanity,” it denotes a kind of speech full of high-sounding verbosity, but lacking in substance. Such speech is the devise of all false teachers who would lead their fellow Christians astray. See Romans 16:18; Colossians 2:4.

they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness,—On the meaning of “entice” see notes on verse 14. The bait used by the false teachers to lead unsteadfast souls back into a life of sin was *lasciviousness*, the word that characterizes licentious behavior in general. See verse 2. “. . . they beguile with the sensual lure of fleshly passion” (James Moffatt).

those who are just escaping from them that live in error;—Those least resistant to erroneous teaching are the ones who are in the early stage of their escape from a life of sin, who have yet to be confirmed and established in the truth. “Those in error” signifies “the company of misconduct” (James Moffatt); “those conducting themselves in error” (R. C. H. Lenski). In the context, it denotes the Gentiles (pagans), from whom Peter’s readers had escaped.

19 promising them liberty—The “great swelling words of vanity” which the errorists used to entice their brethren into licentious living were those that promised them liberty. This was not the liberty to serve God, not the liberty in which the truth makes free—but the liberty that consists in license to follow the dictates of the flesh, to which new converts are especially susceptible. How hard it was for these neophytes in the faith to resist the specious argument that Christian freedom means freedom from moral law! See notes on 1 Peter 2:16. The “new morality” is a philosophy that promises liberty—freedom to “do your own thing” and not to be bound and enslaved by the Biblical principles of decency and morality, which are considered antiquated by many who think of themselves as intelligent moderns. This “new morality” is, in fact, the “old immorality” in modern guise.

while they themselves are bondservants of corruption;—The errorists could glibly promise the new converts freedom in a lustful life, but they themselves were slaves of the very moral corruption they were enticing others to embrace. They could make slick, specious arguments about freedom in licentious living, but their own lives eloquently declared that such was not real freedom but the worst kind of bondage.

for of whom[*what*, footnote in ASV] a man is overcome, of the same

he is also brought into bondage.—It is clearly evident that when one is brought under the control of sin, allowing it to become his master, he then becomes the slave of sin. See John 8:34; Romans 6:16.

**20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world**—This reference is to those who were truly converted, “having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust” (1:4), corresponding to Romans 6:18, “and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.” See verse 18.

**through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,**—This phrase denotes the means of escape from the slavery of sin. The word “knowledge” in the Greek is *epignosei* (*epignosis*), meaning “full knowledge, discernment, recognition” (W. E. Vine). One has the saving knowledge of which the apostle speaks when in heart-felt response to his knowledge of what he must do to be saved, he knows Christ personally as his Saviour. See John 17:3; Romans 6:17,18.

**they are again entangled therein and overcome,**—The Greek for “entangled” is *emplakentes* (*empleko*), literally signifying “to weave in,” like the prey that has been entangled in the net woven by a spider. See 2 Timothy 2:4. “Overcome” in the Greek is *hettetai* (*hettaomai*), signifying “to be made inferior, or enslaved.” These words emphatically portray the unhappy plight of the backslider. Peter places the responsibility on the new converts themselves. They may be unsteady souls, raw recruits in the Lord’s army; but they are morally accountable for their actions in being enticed back into a life of sin.

**the last state is become worse with them than the first.**—This is clearly reminiscent of the Lord’s words in Matthew 12:45, quoted in the parable of the evil spirit who returned to the empty house, where the latter state was worse than the first because the evil spirit brought other evil spirits along with himself at his return. “A reconquest of the evil one cannot but be associated with more tyranny and cruel subjugation than his first dominion” (M. F. Sadler). So those who followed the advice of the errorists found themselves in a far more evil state than that from which they had originally been rescued.

**21 For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them.**—“The way of righteousness” corresponds to “the way of the truth” (verse 2) and “the right way” (verse 15). It refers back to Christ Himself, “the way, and the truth . . .” (John 14:6). “The holy commandment” is the entire revelation of God to Christians, the New Testament, which reveals everything one must know to live a life divinely well-pleasing—“all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (1:3). It is described in Jude 3 as “the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.” Peter insists that one is bet-

ter off not to have known the saving power and will of Christ than to be a Christian who has turned back from the faith. The alien sinner who has never known the true way is better off than the backslider because his punishment is less severe (Matthew 10:15; 11:22,24; Luke 12:48). Cf. John 9:41; 15:22; James 4:17. He is also better off than the backslider because he is much more approachable with the gospel message, much more amenable to the saving call of Christ. Cf. Matthew 11:23; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26,27.

**22 It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.**—The sight of few things in nature is more repulsive than that described in this proverb, illustrating the utter loathing with which the return to sin should be regarded. The first part of the proverb is from Proverbs 26:11; the second part is from a non-Biblical source. Cf. Acts 17:28. “Those who after their baptism returned to the impurities they had renounced, were, in the apostle’s eyes, no better than the unclean beasts. In the union of the two types of looseness we may, perhaps, trace a reminiscence of our Lord’s teaching in Matthew 7:6” (James Plumptre).

**3:1 This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you;**—These words assume not only the fact of the first epistle of Peter, but that it had been sent only a short while before. “This is the second letter I have already written unto you” (James Moffatt). The address “beloved,” used four times in this chapter, expresses the apostle’s affectionate concern for his readers.

**and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance;**—See notes on 1:13. Cf. Jude 5. The word “mind” (Greek *dianoian*, *dianoia*, literally, “a thinking through”) here denotes the faculty of knowing and understanding concerning moral and spiritual things. The word “sincere” is from the Greek *eilikrine*, occurring only here and Philippians 1:10; the corresponding noun *eilikrineia*, sincerity, is found in 1 Corinthians 5:8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2:17. It denotes here a mind that is unmixed with any false, impure motive, *solely* fixed on knowing and doing God’s will.

**2 that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets,**—The things that Peter would stir up his readers to remember, as the context shows, pertain to the eventuality of the judgment at the Lord’s second advent, which was originally predicted by the prophets. See Daniel 12:2,3; Jude 14,15. It is noteworthy that great stress is laid on prophecy in both of Peter’s epistles. See 1:19; 1 Peter 1:10-12.

**and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles:**—The apostle now exhorts his readers to remember what has

been spoken to them by Jesus through their apostles concerning His second coming and the last judgment. It is a "commandment" because it directs the Lord's disciples to look for and ever be ready for these last things. See Matthew 24:42,44; Luke 12:35-40; etc. This "commandment" is said to be "of the Lord and Saviour" because it expresses His supreme authority, which He has communicated to us through the apostles. See Matthew 28:18-20; John 14:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:10-12; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 4:6; etc. Jude 17 speaks of the apostles as being of "our Lord Jesus Christ"; here they are referred to as "*your* apostles." They are Christ's apostles because they were sent by Him, laboring under His orders. They are the apostles of God's people because they were sent for their benefit, to teach them the Lord's will, just as the angels of God are also called the angels of the Lord's little ones (Matthew 18:10). Cf. "our gospel . . . gospel of Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:5; 3:2). See 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. It is possible that Peter may have had in mind those of the apostles with whom his readers had had personal contact.

**3 knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery,**—For the meaning of "last days" see notes on its equivalent designation in 1 Peter 1:20, "end of the times." See 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1; Jude 18. The first thing that Peter wants his readers to know is that in this last dispensation there will be those who mockingly deny the Lord's second coming, implying that the second thing they must know is the eventuality of this great event unfrustrated by its deniers. "Mockers . . . with mockery" is a play on words in keeping with the common Hebrews intensifying idiom: "going beyond all mockers in their ridicule and profanity."

**walking after their own lusts,**—"Lusts," evil desires, are the source of mockery concerning the coming of Christ, as well as the ridicule of all other holy matters. See 2:1-3,10.

**4 and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.**—The apostle now quotes the actual words of the mockery of those who were denying that Christ would come again. "Fell asleep" was the recognized term in Christian usage for death. See Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 15:6,18. "The fathers" are the Christian predecessors of Peter's readers. He wrote his second epistle more than thirty years after the Lord's ascension. Many of the first generation of Christians had already died, among whom were such prominent names as Stephen and James the son of Zebedee. These who had died knew of the promises concerning the Lord's coming but had not lived to see their fulfillment. In the question, "Where is the promise of his coming?" the mockers were saying in effect, "The fathers looked

in vain for the Jesus' coming, and you who now believe in this promise are also looking in vain." Their specious argumentation is further seen in their reference to the continuation of the order of things in the physical world since the beginning of creation. They argued that such an event as the second advent, with its attendant destruction of the physical cosmos, would be contrary to the natural order of the world being what it had always been, with the laws of nature working with their changeless uniformity. Toward the end of the first century, scoffers were still arguing in the same vein, as noted in Clement I.28, where the writer refers to certain skeptics of his own day: "We have heard these things even in the days of our fathers, and here we have grown old and none of these things have happened to us." On the expression "the beginning of creation," see Mark 10:6; 13:19; Revelation 3:14.

**5 For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God;**—The apostle now begins his answer to the arguments made by the scoffers against the second advent and the end of the world. The sense of this passage, along with verses 6-11, is that the same word of God that had the power to create the heavens and the earth (Psalms 33:6; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10; 11:3) has the same power to alter, change, and even destroy the physical cosmos. This the mockers refused to remember.

Concerning the phrase "an earth compacted out of water and amidst water," M. F. Sadler observed, "What the apostle seems to mean is that the earth rises above the water and is surrounded by it." James Moffatt gives the following translation: "An earth which the word of God formed of water and by water," adding the comment, "This is an allusion to the cosmogony of Genesis I, where God's word fashioned the earth or dryland out of the primeval watery chaos by separating the waters of the seas." R. C. H. Lenski believes that the meaning is that the earth exists out of water and between the water of the heavens. Cf. Genesis 1:6-10; Psalms 24:2; 136:6.

**6 by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:**—"By means of which" literally signifies in the Greek "through which things." The most obvious antecedents are "heavens" and "an earth" of the preceding verse. This corresponds to the reference in Genesis 7:11 that both the heavens and earth contributed to the antediluvian flood: ". . . on that same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." This destruction of the world of living creatures was answer enough to the mockers who held to the absurdity that all things had continued unchanged from the beginning of creation. As the word of God had

brought forth the physical cosmos, so that same word brought forth the deluge. "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth" (Genesis 6:13). "For if God . . . spared not the ancient world . . . when he brought forth a flood upon the world of the ungodly . . ." (2:4,5).

**7 but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire,**—The same word that created the physical cosmos and brought forth a flood upon the ancient world, has "stored up," "treasured up" (James Moffatt), the heavens and earth for fire; that is, fire will be the means of their eventual destruction. Here and in verse 10 is the clearest prophecy in the Bible concerning the final conflagration of the entire physical universe. Cf. Isaiah 66:15,16; Daniel 7:10; Malachi 4:1.

**being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.**—The fire that will eventually destroy both the heavens and earth is being reserved until the time of Christ's coming, when judgment and destruction will come upon ungodly men. The Greek for "destruction" is *apoleias* (*apoleia*), corresponding to *apoleto*, "perished," in verse 6, indicating that the destruction of the ancient world by water typifies the destruction of ungodly men at the last judgment. The destruction of the evil antediluvians did not destroy the earth as such; it was left essentially intact. But more than the destruction of the wicked at the Lord's coming will be the destruction of the entire physical universe, which is further described in verse 10. Another reference to the flood as a type of the judgment and destruction of ungodly men is found in Matthew 24:37-44.



## LESSON THIRTEEN

### 2 PETER 3:8-18

**8** But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.—This is the second answer to the skeptical argument that since Christ had not come He would never come. God does not exist in time as we humans do; His habitation is in eternity. All human thoughts are set in time, but not God's. His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his way our ways (Isaiah 55:8). What seems delay to us is absolutely none to Him. The human distinctions of short and long time are meaningless in the sight of God; delay is a purely human conception. The scoffers had willingly ignored this fact, but Peter exhorts his readers to remember it. In so doing they would never become skeptical nor impatient concerning the Lord's coming. Jesus *will* come again, men *will* be judged, and the world *will* be destroyed—all in God's due time. This must be remembered with faith and hope by Christians of every generation. Cf. Psalms 90:4. The Lord declared, "I come quickly" (Revelation 22:20). So far as we measure time, it has been almost two thousand years since these words were spoken, but each of these two thousand years is but a single day in the sight of Him who inhabits eternity.

**9** The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.—The Lord here is God the Father, who alone knows the time of Jesus' coming in judgment (Mark 13:32). The Greek for "slack," *bradunei* (*braduno*), is rendered as "tarry" in 1 Timothy 3:15. Peter uses the word to signify "to be slow." God had promised that His Son and the end of the world would come quickly (Hebrews 10:37; 1 Peter 4:7). This promise will surely be fulfilled, although it seems slow from the human concept of time. And what to us is seemingly delay, is actually God's longsuffering (forbearance) extended to sinful men. The loving Father does not want any one to eternally perish, but that every person should come to "repentance," the change of mind concerning sin that results in salvation and a life committed to Christ and His righteous will. As Augustine expressed it, "God is longsuffering because he is eternal." He who is from everlasting to everlasting can afford to wait in His holy desire to bring men to repentance. See Ezekiel 18:23,32; 33:11; Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 2:3,4; 2 Timothy 2:25; 1 Peter 3:20.

**10** But the day of the Lord will come as a thief;—The word "Lord" here refers to Jesus, "the day" being the time when He comes again. Cf. "day of Christ" (Philippians 2:16). See 1 Corinthians 1:8. His coming

as “a thief” signifies that it will be suddenly and without warning. See Matthew 24:43,44; Luke 12:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; Revelation 3:3; 16:15.

**in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,**—Here and in the remainder of the verse is described the dissolution of the entire physical cosmos at the coming of Christ, which the Lord had predicted in Matthew 24:35. “The heavens” denotes all the physical universe surrounding the earth, both the atmosphere and all that is beyond. The phrase “with a great noise” can signify “with a crackling roar” (James Moffatt) or “with a tremendous crash” (Gerrit Verkuyl).

**and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat,**—The apostle further describes the passing away of the heavens, referring here expressly to the dissolution of that part of the heavens which constitute the “elements” (*heavenly bodies*, footnote in ASV). This will take place in a great conflagration of heat. Cf. Isaiah 13:10; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24,25; Luke 21:25.

**and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.**—This describes the completion of the destruction of the physical cosmos. “The earth” is equivalent to the terrestrial globe, and “the works that are therein” are all things that men have built on the earth. See Psalms 102:25,26; Isaiah 66:15,16,24; Malachi 3:1-3; 4:1; Hebrews 1:10-12; Revelation 20:11.

**11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness,**—That Jesus is coming in judgment at the end of the world, suddenly and without warning, should cause every Christian to so live that he will always be prepared for this great day of the consummation of the ages. See Matthew 24:44-51. “What manner of persons” in the Greek literally signifies “of what country.” It probably affirms the truth that the commonwealth of which Christians are citizens is heaven (Philippians 3:20). The life they are to live is literally signified by the plural in the Greek: “all holy *livings* and *godlinesses*,” meaning all aspects of upright conduct and attitude. See notes on 1:3 and 1 Peter 1:15.

**12 looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God,**—Since the day Jesus will come has been appointed by God, it is here called “the day of God.” Faithful Christians are “looking for,” confidently expecting, Jesus to come some day. Thus the scriptures speak of the crown of righteousness to be given to “all them that have loved his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8) and of Christ appearing “a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

The footnote in the ASV for “earnestly desiring” gives the alternate reading of “hastening.” Those who earnestly desire Christ to come

again, in whose hearts is the constant prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20), do, in a sense, hasten the day of God by working out their own salvation and helping spread the gospel to the whole world, so rendering the longsuffering of God no longer necessary. See Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 3:19-21; Philippians 2:12.

**by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?**—"By reason of" refers back to "the day of God," which must come to pass so that the old order may give place to the new. See the verse to follow and notes on verse 10.

**13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth,**—The apostle uses the physical cosmos, the old order, consisting of heavens and the earth, to symbolize the spiritual cosmos, the new order. This is a depiction of heaven, the eternal abode of the saints. See Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; 2 Corinthians 5:1,2; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:5; 3:1-4; 1 Peter 1:4; Revelation 21:1.

**wherein dwelleth righteousness.**—See 1 Peter 1:3-9. *Only* righteousness can exist in heaven, the new cosmos. We are reminded of Revelation 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life."

**14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.**—Since Christians look for the coming of Christ, with the end of the old order and the beginning of the new, they are exhorted to "give diligence" (earnestly strive) to be found at peace with both God and man (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18; Philippians 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 3:11). They are also to imitate their Lord, the "lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19), in living lives before God that are untainted by sin and blameless. Cf. Ephesians 1:4, ". . . that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love." Not only is peace involved in living a spotless, blameless life, but it is also the result of that life. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21).

Those who so live as the apostle here directs will not be completely free from the *practice* of sin (James 3:2; 1 John 1:8), but they will be completely free from the *guilt* of sin by the blood of Christ so that they will indeed be found perfectly at peace, without spot and blemish at the coming of Jesus (Romans 5:1; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 22:14). See 1 Corinthians 1:7,8; 15:57; Philippians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:12,13; 5:23.

**15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;**—We should consider God's longsuffering not as "slackness"

(verse 9) but as “salvation.” Scoffers count the delay in judgment as slackness, but Christians should recognize it as giving mankind ample time and opportunity to come to repentance and salvation. Not only is God’s longsuffering meant to be salvation for alien sinners but also for backsliding Christians.

even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you;—“Even as” refers to the whole discussion thus far, beginning with verse 2, which Peter’s readers had also been informed about through the divinely endowed wisdom of Paul’s writings to them. In the phrase “our beloved brother,” Peter expresses a warm, affectionate feeling toward Paul.

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things;—In all the epistles of Paul that were extant when Peter wrote these words, reference was made to the second coming of Christ, God’s longsuffering toward sinners, etc. Cf. Romans 2:4; 9:23,24; 13:11,12; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6; etc.

wherein are some things hard to be understood,—“Wherein” probably refers to the contents of Paul’s epistles in general. Throughout these epistles there are profound truths that are anything but easy to understand. An illustration of this is indicated by Alfred Plummer: “Certainly the difficulties with which 2 Thessalonians II bristles are well expressed by ‘hard to be understood,’ and they relate to the very point in question—the time of Christ’s coming. Moreover, scoffers could easily turn them to account by arguing that ‘the man of sin’ had not yet appeared, and that therefore there was no likelihood of the end of the world coming just yet.”

which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.—See notes on 2:14 for the meaning of “unstedfast.” The ignorance of those here described would keep them from understanding the knotty things of Paul’s epistles, as well as the other inspired epistles. And being unsteadfast, their ignorance would cause them to wrest the scriptures to their eventual destruction. “Wrest” is from a Greek word that literally signifies “to strain, torture, distort.” For example, ignorant, unsteadfast men could read Paul’s statement “for ye are not under law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14) and conclude that it means “free from moral chains,” consequently to distort this passage as an excuse for living immoral lives, the end of which would be their own destruction.

In referring to “the other scriptures,” Peter definitely implies that Paul’s epistles were ranked as *scripture*—writings inspired of God.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness.—As Peter draws to the close of his epistle,

he gives one last warning to his readers concerning the danger of falling from their steadfast state in Christ. The Greek for "carried away," *sunapchthentes* (*sunapago*), is the same word used by Paul of Barnabas, when he dissembled with Peter at Antioch under pressure from the Judaizers: ". . . even Barnabas was *carried away* with their dissimulation" (Galatians 2:13). The Greek for "steadfastness," *sterigmou* (*sterigmos*), meaning "a setting firmly," occurs only here in the New Testament. The "ye" is emphatic; the false teachers have gone astray, but "continue ye faithful in the Lord's service." To know beforehand the plain, pointed warning the apostle has given concerning the licentious, covetous, scoffing errorists is to be prepared to steadfastly resist their soul-destroying teaching and influence. Indeed, "to be forewarned is to be forearmed." See 1:10,11; Mark 13:23; Ephesians 4:14; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8,9.

**18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**—Spiritual and moral growth is necessary for steadfastness. The Christian cannot persevere unless he continually advances in the faith. The Greek word for "knowledge" is the same as in 1:6 (see notes), depicting one of the Christian graces. The Christian can grow in the Lord's grace, the grace of His approval and His enabling grace that makes possible every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8), only as he feeds on the knowledge of the Lord's word. See John 6:63; Hebrews 5:11-14; 1 Peter 2:2. Those who are uninformed concerning the Lord's will are always easily susceptible to false teaching, with its evil consequences. See Acts 20:32; Ephesians 4:12-15.

**To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.**—It is noteworthy that ascribed here to Christ is the glory that elsewhere is given to the Father (Revelation 1:6). There is no doubt that in this doxology Jesus Christ is given homage as being Deity, true God. We are reminded of the hymn which Pliny, in his famous letter to Trajan, says the Christians of Bythinia (one of the provinces mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1) were accustomed to sing to Christ as God. The Greek for "for ever," *eis hemeran aionos*, literally means "unto the day of eternity." Augustine explains it: "It is only one day, but an everlasting day, without yesterday to precede it, and without tomorrow to follow it; not brought forth by the natural sun, which shall exist no more, but by the Christ, the Sun of Righteousness."

