

AN EXPOSITION OF  
1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup>  
PETER

An Exposition of the Books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter as Delivered in  
a Series of Messages to the Congregation of Sequoyah  
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Cherokee, NC.

by  
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Tim James



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## A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The following manuscript contains the unedited, verbatim personal notes used to preach a series of messages on the books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. The reader may expect to find errors in punctuation, spelling, style, and some marginal and parenthetical notes which have no explanation.

However, even in this unedited format, the material is readable, simple, profound, and will prove useful to anyone who wants to gain a better insight into the books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter. For this reason, it is added to the library of works available on the Grace-ebooks.com website.

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# First Peter



# For The Saints

## 1 Peter 1:1-2

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

2, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

This is a general epistle or one that is written to the church as a whole rather than a specific locale. Simon Peter, though separated to the Gentiles early on when he was sent to Cornelius, is primarily the apostle to the converted Jews. Being such, the tenor of his words are often difficult for the Gentile mind. However, these words are words for the church, true Israel. The words that introduce us to whom he is speaking apply to the church. At the time of this writing, the church was under strong persecution from Rome and the “end-times” that are referred to probably speak of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Most date this book about AD 61. However, those references can also refer to the return of Christ.

Peter begins this book by declaring his apostleship. He speaks as one who walked with Christ. He was with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. He describes the church in several ways. These words still apply to the true church in the day that we live. Primarily the saints of God are strangers in

this world and strangers to its religion. These words mirror the words of Christ when he said that His people were in this world but not of this world. Their conversation (walk) was in heaven. They are described as scattered. This was due to persecution of the enemy, but that persecution was by providence to take the gospel to the entire world.

Look at blessed description that Simon Peter gives of every believer, every child of God. With these sweet and blessed words the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Peter to describe every saved sinner. Are you a believer? Then this is how God describes you. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” Here salvation is declared, in no uncertain terms as the work of all three persons in the Holy Trinity, (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). We are said to be “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”

The apostle then assures us that all the attendant graces of salvation are included in the salvation wrought by the thrice Holy God; “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” Salvation is God's work alone. Salvation is a work of God's grace involving all three persons in the Godhead. Salvation is an effectual work of God's free, sovereign omnipotent grace in Christ. Salvation includes all the multiplied blessings of grace and peace in Christ. Every sinner who was chosen by God's grace in eternity was redeemed by the effectual blood of Christ, sanctified by the regenerating operations of God the Holy Spirit, and blessed with grace and peace as long as they live on this planet. Notice the glaring absence of any condition, “if,”

“but,” or any such pollutant introduced into this fountain of free grace! I want us to consider four words that describe the salvation of the sinners by God's Sovereign grace. They are: Chosen, Sanctified, Redeemed and Blessed.

1. CHOSEN: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Every sinner who is the beneficiary of the manifold blessings of grace is so blessed because he was selected in eternity by God. The scripture is replete with this word, this sweet doctrine of electing grace. Psalms 65:4; John 6:37; John 6:65. And he said, therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. John 15:16. 19; John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. Acts 13:48; Ephesians 1:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 2:9. In our text Peter describes election in a particular way. He says we are “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” This is one of those passages that produce what I like to call the “Aha” factor in the genetic makeup of the mind of the man centered religion. When they read it, they say “Aha, there you have it, election is based on God's foreknowledge of our accepting Him. He chose us because He looked down through history and saw that we would choose Him”! Such blasphemous religious prattle makes God a common thief, taking credit for something that man did. Such blasphemy would make God's choice dependent upon our choice and would fly in the face of divine revelation. This passage teaches us that election is a matter of God's pure, free, sovereign, eternal grace in Christ. In the Word of God. God's foreknowledge is not foreknowledge of things. but of people. The Scriptures never speak of what

God foreknew, but whom he foreknew. Make no mistake here. Do not confuse God's foreknowledge with his omniscience. Omniscience is a divine attribute. Foreknowledge is a sovereign act.

In Holy Scripture, God's foreknowledge is declared in four ways.

1. God's foreknowledge is his act and decree of Foreordination. There is no need to speculate here. Since scripture is the interpreter of scripture, in this same context the very same Greek word which is translated foreknowledge in verse two is translated foreordained in verse twenty (1 Peter 1:20).

2. God's foreknowledge of his elect is his everlasting love for us in Christ (Jeremiah 31:3; John 17:23-24).

3. Divine foreknowledge is divine approval. Psalms 1:6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

4. God's foreknowledge of us is our absolute safety and security in Christ (2 Timothy 2:19). Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. The elect love the electing foreknowledge of God.

II.. SANCTIFIED “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit.” Sanctification is commonly and erroneously thought to be something the believer does for himself or with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Many think of sanctification as a work of progressive holiness by which a person incrementally becomes



more and more holy until at last, he is just too good for earth and must be swept up to glory on the wings of personal merit. The only problem with that way of thinking is that it just ain't so. Sanctification is never spoken of in Scripture as a work we do, or a progressive work by which we become more and more holy. Sanctification is a state of being.

The root meaning of the word “sanctify” is to set apart a person or a thing for God, for a holy purpose, or a holy use (The vessels of the tabernacle were sanctified—set apart. The priests were sanctified—set apart. The Lord Jesus Christ was himself sanctified—set apart). All God's elect were sanctified by God the Father in the eternal covenant grace, set apart from all the rest of the world, to be his peculiar people (Jude 1:1). In precisely the same sense we were sanctified, severed from the rest of mankind, to be God's peculiar (purchased), holy people by the sin-expiating blood of our beloved substitute. “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14). “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:9-10). “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). Here the Holy Spirit tells us that we were chosen to salvation “through sanctification of the Spirit.” That simply means this - If you are one of these elected ones, the day and hour will come when God the Holy Spirit will come to you in his omnipotent power and irresistible grace to sanctify you, to set you apart from the world, to set you apart unto himself, to set you apart unto Christ. It also means this - If you are a child of God, a believer, one who has experienced that blessed

operation of grace called the new birth, you have been set apart from the world by the grace and power of God the Holy Spirit, set apart for Christ. “Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

III. REDEEMED. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” When preaching the gospel, we do not proclaim to sinners that there is a possibility of redemption, but that redemption has been accomplished and secured by the blood of Christ (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:12; Isaiah 40:1-2). The obedience spoken of in 1 Peter 1:2 is twofold. First and foremost, the “obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” refers to the obedience of Christ as our representative and the redemption he accomplished as our substitute by the sprinkling of his blood. This takes us back to the Passover and to the sprinkling of the blood on the door posts of the house; and also, to the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat on the Day of Atonement. Both of those things were pictures of our Lord's great work of redemption. That Peter has this in mind is clear (1 Peter 1:18-21; Phil. 2:9). 2<sup>nd</sup>. The obedience and sprinkling of blood mentioned in our text also refers to “the obedience of faith” unto which we were brought to trust the blood of Christ (Romans 3:24). Read Hebrews 9:11-14. God the Holy Spirit sanctifies his elect, giving us faith in Christ, and as the sinner looks to Christ, he understands that the blood of Christ was sprinkled on the heavenly altar declares him redeemed, forgiven, justified, and holy before God. His conscience is purged. This is the testimony of every true believer. God has chosen us, sanctified us, and redeemed us in Christ.

IV. BLESSED. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you. and peace, be multiplied." This is not Peter's hope or desire for God's saints. He wrote this under divine inspiration. This is an assured promise to every chosen, sanctified, redeemed sinner, it is an absolute promise of grace. It is part of all things spiritual given the believer. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." This is God's promise to you. Grace shall be given (has been given; Romans 5:2) and multiplied to you as long as you need it, as long as you live in this body of flesh (saving grace, preserving grace, protecting grace, sufficient grace and in the end dying grace). Peace shall also be given and multiplied to you. because God the Father chose you. God the Spirit sanctified you. and God the Son redeemed you (The peace of divine forgiveness, the peace of divine providence, the peace of his divine presence, peace in life, peace in death, peace at the judgment seat and everlasting peace). Grace and peace, once given, shall only multiply, never divide, never diminish, and never end! We are chosen, sanctified, redeemed, blessed.

As we can plainly see, our salvation from conception, inception, through fruition and consummation is the work of the triune Godhead. No aspect of it is contingent upon anything we are, do, or could do. This is sovereign grace, plain and simple, from beginning to end. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. The believer can rejoice in the accomplished work of his God and Savior, Jesus Christ.



# Abundant Mercy

## 1 Peter 1:3-5

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

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

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

The apostle has introduced this epistle to the church by describing how the church came to be the church of Christ. They were chosen by God the Father, sanctified through the Holy Spirit and redeemed by the blood-death obedience of Christ, the Son of God and that according to the foreknowledge (foreordination) of the triune Godhead. The church is also promised grace and peace will be multiplied to them.

These things are accomplished only by the triune Godhead. When these acts took place, the sheep had no knowledge that they had taken place. One of the aspects of predestination is that God has ordained that his people are made aware of what he has done for them (1 Cor. 2:7-12) Salvation is a complete thing and part of that complete thing is the full revelation of the gospel received by ordained faith (Matt. 13:10-11; Phil. 1:29). In the passage we will consider this morning, Peter declares

how this matter of faith came to the sheep and again, all glory for it belongs to God.

The word “blessed” does not suggest that by our words or deeds God receives a blessing. He is forever blessed in and of Himself. The root word in the original language is the word from which our word eulogy is derived. Peter, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is about to eulogize or say some nice and good things about God. Verse 3 is a reiteration of the actors in the things that are revealed. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are entirely responsible for what follows in the 3 verses.

First, the great benefits declared in these verses flow from one great source, the abundant mercy of God (v.3). Immediately, with these words, certain truths are established. First these blessings are sovereignly dispensed (Ex. 33:19-20). They are not available commodity to be accepted or refused. They come by God's abundant mercy and are given to those whom He has chosen, sanctified and redeemed. Secondly, since these come by mercy, they come to the undeserving. Only the pitiful, the ruined, the broken are objects of mercy. Mercy is for undeserving sinners. What ever follows has nothing to do with the worthiness or action of the recipient.

The first thing exacted in abundant mercy is regeneration. Conspicuously absent for this scenario is anything from man, whether will or decision (John 1:12-13; Romans 9:15-16). Many have written books about “How to be born again.” It is a foolish and vain endeavor. The new birth is God acting in

abundant mercy toward His elect. God begets His people by His Spirit, through His word (James 1:18). This new birth is “unto” something. The new birth is spiritual life, and that life is manifested in faith. Faith is here referred to as a lively or living hope. This adjective “lively” means true life worthy of the name, it means enduring, eternal life and carries with it the suggestion of full enjoyment, a hope that is full of vigor, efficacious and strong. This lively hope is assured by the fact that Christ was raised from the dead. In the truest sense, His resurrection is our life (Eph. 2:5-6; John 5:24-26).

Part and parcel with this life and hope is proof that the elect are indeed born into the family of God. This lively hope is to an inheritance. Those that are due an inheritance are so due by birth. One gets an inheritance because he is born to. This is a continual theme in the New Testament Paul used this truth as an argument against salvation by the works of the law (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 3:19; 4:4-7; Eph. 1:11). This lively hope ensures this inheritance and the language employed to describe it leaves no doubt. This inheritance is declared to be incorruptible, undefiled, and never to fade away. This lively hope is a sure hope stamped with the guarantee of the unchangeable God. It is reserved in heaven for the elect. At this time, the hope is invisible (Rom. 8:24) but soon to be realized.

Verse 5 is the capstone of all that has been said thus far. These who are chosen, sanctified, redeemed, born again to an inheritance are kept by the power of God (John 10:28-29). Those who can sing from the heart, “Prone to wander, Lord I feel it” find great comfort in the words, “kept by God.” There are manifold examples in scripture where God suffers his people to be themselves for a time and the results are never pleasant. The believer's prayer is “Lord keep me” (Ps. 17:8; 19:13; 25:20).

The believer rejoices in the fact that they are kept by God (Ps. 31:20). These are kept by the power of God. This too is a source of great confidence and is a declaration of distinction. We are not kept by our own power. Such a notion is foolish because we are, of ourselves powerless (Ps. 62:11). It is with omnipotent strength that God keeps us.

This power is recognized through faith. Faith is not the power; it is that gift that God gives His elect so that they can understand that they are kept by His power. This gift of faith believes that there is something great yet to take place. The salvation to be revealed, in the last time is about the doctrine of reduction. That salvation will not change what we have or what we are in Christ or what we now possess but will reduce us by one body, the body of the flesh, the body of this death. That revelation will be seeing Christ as he is (1 John 3:1-2). This is God's purpose for those he has redeemed (Jer. 29:11).



## For A Season

### 1 Peter 1:6-7

6, Wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

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

The children of God rejoice in the glorious fact that they are kept by the power of God. This joy of heart is an overriding aspect that takes into account every circumstance. The believer is not always happy, but his joy is not conditioned upon what is presently happening to him. Experience, for the child of God, is often painful and full of sorrow but no matter the case, his joy and ability to rejoice is not absent. Joy, rejoicing, has to do with understanding by faith that in the worst of circumstance, the believer is kept by the power of God. This being the case, the believer is aware, by faith, that even the difficult times are ordained and ordered by his benevolent benefactor.

This is what Peter is teaching us in these two verses. These words mirror the words of James in the first part of his epistle that dealt with the reason for and the necessity of trial in the believer's life (James 1:2-4).

In these two verses Peter gives a kind of synopsis of the believer's trials, the reason for them and the result of them.

Often, during trials, I have resorted to these verses because they form a step-by-step way of understanding the trial.

There are several things here.

First, we see the words “though now” set in direct reference to rejoicing in the knowledge that we are kept by the power of God. This immediately tells us that the trial that we are now experiencing has nothing to do with changing our standing before God. Though now we have fallen into diverse temptations, they occur while we are being kept by the power of God. This being the case, the trial cannot be against us. The description given of those who rejoice, found in w. 2-4, has not changed. These described as sovereignly blessed in abundant mercy are the same who “though now” are in “heaviness through manifold temptations.”

Secondly, the trial is temporary. It is “for a season.” It has a beginning and a point of termination. James refers to the extent of the trial as “patience having her perfect work.” Since God is the God of purpose and the God of order, we can be assured that the trial is according to intent and design. If it has a beginning and end while we're being kept by the power of God, then it comes to us by design. The manifold temptations that enter our lives are determined by our heavenly Father and are purposely set as to beginning, intensity and duration. Also, we can rest assured that since all things work together for our good, these trials are, in truth, gifts from above.

Thirdly, these manifold temptations are according to need. The general response to a prolonged trial is, “who needs this?” We need this! Because the spirit and the flesh are always contrary to each other, because with our mind we serve the law of God but with our flesh we serve the law of sin and death, because we do nothing wherein our carnal nature is not

involved, we find ourselves constantly in a state of struggle with the flesh. Our eyes wander from Christ to assess our circumstances, to come up with plans and plots and soon we find ourselves alone. So, the Lord causes us to fall into diverse temptations because we need them. Peter reminds of this fact with the words, “if need be” (v. 6).

Fourthly, the trials are particular to those that are previously described as being kept by the power of God (v. 5). They are kept by the power of God through faith.” As we saw last time, faith is not the power. Faith trusts the power and acknowledges it is by the power of God that they are kept. These manifold temptations are “trials of your faith.” The temptations that unbelievers face have nothing in common with the trials that attend faith, except that both are burdensome. The believer, alone, can rejoice in his trial because he knows its source and its intent and its end. Being a “trial of your faith,” its intent has to do with the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord sends us trials, we can be sure that we have taken our eyes from Him and turned to the power of the flesh. The trials come to strip us of the power of our flesh and finally bring us to turn our thoughts and our eyes to Him who, by His power alone, keeps us.

Fifthly, by faith, we are able to understand the value of the trial of our faith. The word “being” reveals that the trial, every aspect of it, the heaviness of it, the pain and struggle of it, the extent of it and while it is being endured is “being” much more precious than fine gold. Only faith can embrace this concept. Our carnal nature continually tells that this trial is because God is punishing us. Our conscience accuses us of our wrongdoing. But faith counts the trial valuable, the value as being much more precious than fine gold. The value of the trial is that its

result will never perish. Fine gold is used metaphorically because such quality of gold is only achieved through the process of purging by fire, wherein the dross is consumed, and the gold is refined. But the finest gold is but a perishable and perishing metal. When faith is purged of the flesh, the product will not perish. It is eternal and everlasting.

The reason for the trial is the result of the trial. That the tried faith will be found to praise and honor and glory in Christ. Faith always ends here. Faith ascribes all glory to Christ. Faith puts the crown on the deserving head. Though the believer will praise, honor, and ascribe glory to Christ eternally, the employment of the words “at the appearance of Christ” is an aspect having to do with time. The phrase may apply to the coming of Christ to wind up this universe and rightly so. The phrase can also apply to any appearance of Christ in time, for example, when we see Him in worship or in prayer, or in hearing the gospel, or in reading his Word. But context determines the interpretation of text. During the trial, when faith is being tried, when inwardly we rejoice in the truth of being kept by the power of God; when our tried faith is being much more precious than fine gold...that blessed hour of heaviness is found unto the praise and honor and glory for in that sweet hour of temptation our eyes are turned from self to see Him who is worthy of praise and honor and glory.

# The End of Faith

## 1 Peter 1:8-9

8, Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9, Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Last week we saw that the trials of our faith are designed, and heaven sent for the purpose of diminishing the influence of the flesh by turning our eyes (of faith) to view our Lord Jesus Christ. This makes the trial of faith a necessity and of great value. In the two verses we will consider this morning, Peter sets forth the glory and wonder of the faith by which the believer lives. Though faith, in this day, seems to be referred to as little more than a common thing, the more I see it in the Word of God, the more fascinated I am by it, and the more I understand it, the more I get why it is foolishness to the world. For someone to bank his eternal life on One whom he has never seen and believe in Him and believe things about Him without any empirical evidence must seem foolishness to the world. But that is the wonder of God-given faith. It is especially wonderful amid trial because the world looks at the circumstance, deals with the circumstance and assesses the circumstance while faith, looks not at what is seen but at what is unseen.

Peter describes this truth in a beautiful and distinctive way. He speaks not of himself in the first phrase of verse 8 because

he has personally been with Christ while he was on the earth. He speaks first to those who have believed through the preaching of the gospel after Christ's ascension. "Whom having not seen" applies to every one who names the name of Christ after He went to glory. Faith resides in the hearts of believers on this earth, but it operates in an entirely different world. It operates in the real world, the eternal world where the invisible controls all things, even the things of the visible world. It is a secret world, a spiritual world where the invisible God rules with absolute sway. There is no proof the truth of this, but faith rests its soul here and here alone.

To further add to the dilemma of the unbeliever and at the same time cause the believer to rejoice, Peter declares that the one whom ye have not seen, ye love. This makes this matter of faith to be personal. Faith embraces the doctrinal truth of the Word of God. Faith believes all things that God has inspired men to write and that they were inspired to do so (2 Peter 1:19-21). But the faith that God gives is more. It establishes a personal relationship with the Savior. Faith establishes a viable interest in Christ and a true communication with Christ. This being the case, the believer esteems Christ above all and is willing to give himself to Christ and for the cause of Christ. The believer not only knows about someone according to that which is written, he knows someone and is bound to that someone in a loving relationship. The believer communes with Christ. He speaks to Christ, lays out his heart to Christ, rolls all his troubles on Christ and does so because he loves Christ and is loved by Christ. The believer is jealous for the glory of Christ because he loves him. Again, this is ridiculous to the world but for faith it is normal life. The believer knows Christ and this is his life (John 17:2-3).

The first phrase of verse 7 addresses the fact that the child of God has never seen Christ, yet loves him. The second phrase declares the truth that we, who believe, do not now see him. The believer claims no vision of Christ, nor does he accept anyone else's vision. He does not see Christ with natural eyes. He does not claim to be able to produce visible, tangible evidence that he is a child of God. The believer does not care to, even shuns any notion that he can prove himself. The believer is dead to the world and its religious opinions and requirements. He does not now see Christ, yet he believes. Faith can act no other way. The child of God is not a believer because he believes; he believes because he is a believer (John 10:26-27).

However this phrase does not begin with our faith but rather the object of it. The two words "in whom" declare the source, the sum and the substance of all we have received from God. We not only believe in him, having confidence that what He has promised He is able to perform, but it is "in Him" that we believe. It is in Him, in that vital union with Him, that we believe. This is what those who are in Him do; they believe. The suggestion that a person can lose faith is utter foolishness. The believer is in Christ, chosen in Him, separated in Him. redeemed in Him and in Him the child of God believes. Notice also that the one who has not seen Christ and yet loves Him, is said to not now see him yet is believing. This is in the present tense and the active voice. Taken in the context of the trial of faith, this becomes all the more precious. During the worst of trial, we are actively loving and believing Christ, because we are in Him. This, then, brings us back to where Peter started inverse 6. Believing, ye rejoice in the very midst of the trial (James 1:2; 2 Cor. 12:7-10). That rejoicing is with joy unspeakable. This simply means that the joy, like the believing

that produces it cannot truly be uttered. This joy is inward. Though we may speak of it, the truth of it this joy does not reach the voice box. It is spiritual communication between the suffering child and His blessed Savior. If it could be expressed, it would be diminished. It is unspeakable and full of glory. It is filled to the brim, pressed down, and overflowing with praise from the heart for him who is worthy.

It is receiving the end (the realized purpose and intent) of your faith. In the trial, you believe that you have been saved (not could be or might be) and that the trial is not punishment but the expression of loving chastisement. The trial is not designed to make you doubt. It is designed to make you realize the reason why Christ gave you faith. The trial is designed to have you believe Christ and rejoice in Him and give glory to His name. This is the only way the believer can give thanks for all things. Though the words may never reach your lips, the joy is full of glory.



# Tis' Mystery All

## 1 Peter 1:10-12

10, Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

11, Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12, Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

We have, in the last few weeks, been privileged to look at and ponder the wonder of our salvation as it was accomplished by the triune Godhead and it is maintained by the same in providential trials that culminate in fixing our hearts and minds on Christ. That salvation, wondrous and invisible and foolishness to the world, is the driving force and motivation for everyone who is chosen of the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, and redeemed by Christ and His accomplished work on Calvary. To the world it remains a mystery while, to the one whom God had granted the gift of faith, it is the revelation of eternal life promised, purchased, procured, proclaimed and

preserved in Christ. Paul referred to our salvation by Christ as the mystery revealed in the gospel alone (Romans 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; Col. 2:2; 4:3; Rev. 10:7).

David wrote of this mystery in Psalm 9. It was written to the chief musician upon Muthlabben. "Muthlabben" is a complex word, which means the mysteries of the death of His Son? Simon Peter, in the passage that we will consider this morning, speaks of the mystery of our salvation, which is the end of our faith (v. 9). Peter reveals that the subject of our salvation, the accomplishment of it, has always been the singular point of interest of all those whom God inspired to pen the words of the Old Testament. Though they wrote of things that took place in history, and these things were truly reported, within the events and people they reported, there was another story. They, being spiritual men, had some knowledge of a great day, when God would demonstrate the salvation of Israel.

All the law (word) and the prophets gave witness to the coming Messiah, but the words were shrouded in mystery. The words of our passage tell us that these holy men of old knew that what they were recording contained much more than the obvious. They knew their words spoke of salvation and more than salvation from Egypt, or deliverance from Babylon or from the Assyrians. They knew that what they were writing down had to do with spiritual salvation, the salvation of the soul. What it must have been like for them to know of such things but were unable to fully grasp them! Just beyond their perception's ability was this wonder, the salvation of the soul. As they lay down their heads at night, they pondered what we have as full and complete revelation. The word says that they inquired and searched diligently about this salvation. They

prophesied of the grace that should come to the believer. They knew that it was not a common thing. It was not general in application. They spoke of it as “the” grace, which should come. They knew that the gracious treatment that they had received was only a picture of what was to be fully revealed (v. 10).

That they were spiritual men, men of faith and saved men is without question. Verse 11 declares that the Spirit of Christ was within them. That is not a misstatement, and it speaks to the glory of this salvation. They were born from above, born again because they had the Spirit of Christ in them. This declares that though they did not fully grasp the grace that was to come, they were the recipients of that same grace, by the same means (Gal. 3:8). Men may balk at the concept of eternal salvation but millenniums prior to the physical appearance and manifestation of Christ on this earth; he had accomplished the salvation of the elect and spiritually indwelt them (which occurred after his ascension). He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Peter, in his life and in his writings, is pragmatic and very specific. When asked how the lame man was healed, he could have spoken truth and saved his hide, but he was very specific (Acts 3:1-16). Peter might have said that these men of old in our text were given the spirit of prophecy and have told the truth, but that would not have been the whole truth. He specifically declares that they had the Spirit of Christ in them. And it was the Spirit of Christ that did signify of nothing other than the gospel. They wondered about what would specifically take place and the way it would take place, but the subject has never been in question (v.11; compare Luke 24:25-26; 9:30-31). The Spirit of Christ in them acted precisely as does the Spirit of Christ in us (John 16:8-15). They knew that something was

going to take place in the gospel age that they would not witness but what they wrote would be the witness of God concerning the salvation of the souls of the elect (v. 12).

They ministered to us the things that would be reported to us, namely the gospel, the mystery hidden from the ages, the Old Testament, which was revealed to be the gospel of Christ. What they recorded was what was preached to the elect and it was the gospel. When the apostles and the preachers were sent into the world, they were sent with what these old brethren had penned centuries before, the Old Testament, the mysterious report of “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.”

Some have made much of the mention of preaching of the gospel with “the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” They treat this as if it were an anomaly. This is probably due to the carnal view of what the Holy Spirit causes when He shows up. Religion's warped view of spirituality and the effects of the Spirit are as far from Biblical truth as darkness is from light. Peter is not setting a standard that preachers are to seek to obtain but rather is declaring the standard of how men are enabled to preach the gospel. When the gospel is preached it is preached because it is attended by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The Spirit is not in heaven waiting to show up on one gospel preacher's message to give him a special anointing. He is on the earth to enable poor men to declare the things of Christ. Where the gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit, who was sent down from heaven at the ascension of Christ, is the power and authority that attends the message. To created beings, which have not been newly created in Christ, the mystery remains (12c). But to you, the elect, the sanctified, the redeemed, the Old Testament has been revealed as the gospel.

# What Manner

## 1 Peter 1:13-17

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

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

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

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

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

These verses are an enclosed admonition concerning what manner of people we ought to seek to be. Being enclosed as it is by the fact that our salvation is accomplished, from start to finish, by the triune Godhead, assures us that Peter is speaking of the proper attitude of those who have been so gifted by grace (w. 1-5; 18-21). Peter is not speaking of a legal obligation for the believer, but rather he is speaking of an ethical obligation born of thanksgiving for what God has done. The believer owes God nothing legally but owes Him everything out of gratitude. What the believer received and receives from the Lord is free and being free, there are no strings attached. What the believer gives to God, does in the service of God, must be likewise free, without any other compulsion than love for Christ. The believer

has all things. He is complete in Christ. God is for him and therefore who can be against him. If he seeks to live in a manner that is pleasing to his Master, it flows not from a desire to gain. If there is gain it is that which is gained from doing something for someone you love. Knowing that this is the case, the words of our text are admonitions to the grateful heart. However, it must be understood that for such admonitions to come, there must be a need and there is. Though it ought never be the case, believers are yet sinners who can and often do take the best gifts for granted. These words remind us, “as we have received Christ, so walk ye in him.”

The beginning words of verse 13 are preparatory language. They set up what is to follow. Girding suggests preparation for conflict and the words make it clear that the conflict is of the mind. Being of the mind, it is an internal conflict, and all internal conflicts are engaged on the battlefield of the heart and the two combatants are the flesh and the spirit. Likewise, being internal, it cannot fall into the realm of visible religion. Nothing that is hereafter described can be seen or gauged by public observation. This brings us back to the premise of faith and the object of it. The entirety of what follows has to do with believing Christ rather than what the flesh tells us. Thus to:

“Be sober” is not about drinking but is about right thinking. To listen to the flesh is like being drunk; the mind is compromised. To be sober is to have the girded mind singularly fixed on Christ and it is the only way to adhere to the remainder of the words of verse 13.

“Obedient children” (v. 14) are those who believe (Romans 16:25-26). The former lusts to which they are not to fashion themselves are the lusts of the flesh, those that are always contrary to the spirit. These lusts flow from ignorance and the

basic tenet of ignorance is to ignore what Christ has accomplished and opt rather to seek a way to merit acceptance before God. Every believer not only knows this about themselves but experiences his own sad willingness to establish his own righteousness rather than submit to the righteousness of God, which is Christ, the end of the law for righteousness (Rom. 10:1-4).

God, who is holy, has called you. His holiness is His essential characteristic. That being the case, He cannot fellowship with anyone who is unholy before Him. The mind then must be girded to address the conflict of just how a man is to, as God is holy, be likewise holy. The conflict arises when we begin to consider that the flesh has anything to do with this. Our carnal religious nature must view this holiness as attainable by works of the flesh. It cannot do other wise. But our Lord has already told us that this has to do with the mind. Being holy has to do with the mind (Romans 7:25; 8:1-8). The mind has to do with believing God. Being holy is believing that you are holy, in spite of any physical evidence or ability to prove it. Holiness for God is a state of being. So it is with the child of God. Holiness is not an action or a work, it is a state of being (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). Under constant pressure of the flesh, we are prone to attribute holiness to behavior, but holiness is “being” and that through faith.

The words “in all manner of conversation” do not depart from the context. We know that “conversation” in God's word has to do with the believer's walk, behavior, and actions. Apart from the context, we would easily apply to the flesh; look at our lives to see if we were rising to the admonition. The root meaning of the word is to individually turn in an opposite direction. The conversation in this contest is individual turning

in the mind. Since the topic is faith in Christ, then the turning is from all that is not of faith. Is it any wonder that we are admonished to gird up the loins of our mind? Our enemy is formidable, and we have but to look in a mirror to see him. It is contrary to all human logic for one to be holy because he believes he is so by grace alone, yet this is the case (V. 16).

Verse 17 presents the greatest of these conflicts of the mind, the greatest struggle of the flesh and the spirit. The word “if is more properly translated “seeing” that you call upon the Father. This is what believers do. They call upon the Father. The Father is described with a caveat. He is the holy God who, without respect of persons (as to status, profession, or character) judgeth according to every man's work.” The wording is important. This does not say that He judges every man according to his work. It is the works that are the subject of judgment (to esteem or not). This says that the Father judges the works according to the man. The works then are judged according to how God to how God sees the man. The word “seeing” establishes that the man in question is a believer (a son) and God views such an one as holy (Heb. 10:14-17; 1 John 3:1-10). There can be no doubt that without faith it is impossible to consider this passage without applying to the flesh. Gird up the loins of your mind. This life is conflict, and only as we mind the things of the spirit can we, as obedient children, heed this admonition and pass the time of this sojourn in reverence toward God and what He as done for us. Gird up the loins of your mind.



# Motive

## 1 Peter 1:18-21

18, Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19, But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Last week we looked at the admonitions given to the children of God and that they are only accomplished through believing. To the world, motive means little. The older I get and the longer I live, it seems to me that motive is sacrificed for the end product. In religion, motive is rarely considered. People do what ever it takes to reach the goal that religion establishes. Religion seeks out many inventions designed to hold out the carrot-on-a-stick notion of blessings being a result of behavior. If a person does what he does to gain in the economy of God, it is actually a denial of the declaration that he has received all spiritual blessings in Christ. Motive, for the child of God, can have nothing to do with the thought of gain. The believer is

motivated, and that motivation is set forth in our text this morning.

The first word of verse T8 declares That The admonitions of the previous verses (w. 13-17) are accomplished upon a singular motivation, namely, knowledge of what God has done for you in Christ Motivation is born of knowledge. The believer knows because he has been given faith to believe. What he knows, he knows for sure (John 6:68-69), and what is known proves to be the only possible motivation for one who never considers gain in his obedience toward God. If one willingly, voluntarily, gladly serves without consideration of gain, the words of this passage can be the only reason to do so. And in these words, we find ample reason, pressed down and over running. To know this is to know joy and peace and to find motivation in the innermost being.

The believer knows that he has been redeemed. He does not consider this a process, or a contingency plan conditioned upon his obedience. He knows he has been redeemed (v. 18). He knows that nothing about him has to do with his redemption. The price paid for his redemption was not anything that was or could be corrupted. That redemption was not of man or by man. No man could supply the means or the price of the redemption of the eternal soul (Ps. 49:6-8; 1 Cor. 7:20). The mention of silver and gold declares both a positive and negative truth. First is an allusion to the atonement coinage of the Old Covenant. The children of Israel could not be numbered unless the atonement money was paid. Negatively this declares that the atonement money was not sufficient to redeem and was therefore only a picture of true redemption yet to come. Redemption is not accomplished under the law. On the positive side, in order for one to be counted among God's children, the

price of redemption must be paid, but once it is paid redemption is complete and that one is numbered with the blessed. The words 'tradition from your fathers" could be a little misleading. We usually think of tradition in concert with practices or rites or ceremonies, but this phrase is actually one word and it refers to the carnal nature we all received from Adam, which is manifest in empty conduct. This is simply another way of saying that nothing about us has part with our redemption. But the believer knows that he has been redeemed.

He knows that he has been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb, the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. This Lamb was perfect. He was without sin, holy and harmless and His blood was precious (of great value, honorable and very dear). This blood was the price that God set for the redemption of the soul. The esteem for this blood comes from God; it is his own blood (Acts 20:28). Blood represents the Lord's death, by which the payment required for sin was met (v. 19; Gal. 3:13).

The believer, moreover, knows that the redemption was not the result of something that occurred in time, that is to say, that the believer did something or failed to do something that caused a temporal reaction from God. This redemption was accomplished because the Redeemer was predestined to accomplish it. Before the world began this redemption was set in order, purposed, and therefore merely waited to be performed at the appointed time {Raw. 13:8}. The word "but" signifies that with the purposed redemption also comes the purposed revelation (v. 20). What was manifest unto the believer? Christ and Him crucified was revealed through the preaching of the gospel and was manifest to the believer, and for the believer.

The believer knows that it is by Christ that he believes. Faith is given by Christ, and is authored and finished by Christ. The believer knows that his faith is the result of Christ's redemptive work and that faith came to him by Christ being manifest for him. Again, this removes man from anything having to do with the spiritual state in which he now abides. The believer believes in God, God who raised Christ from the dead and gave Him glory, by Christ who was raised from the dead. This matter of redemption, salvation, revelation, manifestation, and faith is a sealed transaction, enclosed top and bottom, left and right beginning and end by God. There is no entrance into this accomplishment by the works or will of men. The believer knows this and knowing this motivates him to act out of thanksgiving toward God.

The believer has faith and hope, but since he knows that he had nothing to do with his redemption, that faith and hope rests in God alone (1 Cor. 2:2-5; 2 Cor. 4:5-7). He cannot look to himself, because there is nothing there, but vain conversation received from the tradition of the fathers. The believer has faith born of knowledge that he has been fully redeemed by Christ. This is ample motive to obey the admonitions from God. It is the only motivation (v.21).

## Purified Souls

### 1 Peter 1:22

22, Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Having established that the entirety of our salvation, from conception to faith and hope is the work of the Father, Son and the Spirit, Peter declares the result of that good work performed for us and in us. He states that believers have purified their souls. The soul is used here as that element of the believer that relates to his affection, desires, feelings and even aversions. The words “seeing ye have” assures us that that this is not a “purifying” as if it were an ongoing process, but it is a thing accomplished, as all things for the believer are accomplished, by the work of the Savior. Ye have purified your souls because ye have been purified by Christ (Titus 2:13-14; 1 John 3:3; 2 Cor. 7:1).

This matter of purifying the souls is not strange language to Simon Peter and as in this context, it relates to the matter of believing the gospel as opposed to approaching God on the basis of keeping the law (Acts 15:9; compare James 4:8). Paul also spoke in this manner to Timothy as he prepared him to deal with those who unlawfully used the law (1 Timothy 1:5; J1 Timothy 2:22).

Peter does attribute this completed act of purifying to the believer and this is important. It is important because the manner in which this purification is accomplished is clearly and succinctly stated. You have purified your souls in obeying the truth. There is not a hint of the soul being purified any other way. There is no hint or reference to behavior as to bettering self or putting away unclean things. This is a direct reference to faith (Romans 10:16). Faith obeys (believes) the truth. First this speaks of Christ (John 14:6). Christ is the source and the embodiment of all that is true (John 1:14, 17). Secondly it speaks of the gospel of Christ by which the faith of the elect is informed of the fact that they have been redeemed (w. 20-21; Eph. 1:13). It is the truth that purifies the soul. By obeying (believing, presently, actively believing) we have purified our souls. It always comes back to this simple, singular truth. When we see Christ, when we look to Him alone, we have purified our souls. Looking to Him, there is no room for us, our works, or our deeds. Basking in His glory, the vision of Him is the daystar rising in our hearts. All other lights of our affections, desires and even our aversions are eclipsed by the glory of God shining in His face.

Obeying the truth is also declared to be a work of the Spirit. The believer's obedience is God's work. The indwelling Spirit of Christ, the actor in the new birth brings faith with Him when He comes to reside in the heart of a man or woman. He is the Spirit of truth (John 14:16-17). He leads the believer to the truth in one specific way (John 15:26; 16:13-14). He will lead you, in faith, to Christ and being obedient you will have purified your soul. The soul is purified when there is nothing that can contaminate it, when nothing interferes with its view, when nothing invades the periphery and spiritual tunnel-vision

is fixed on Christ. This is how the believer comes to the place where his has purified his soul in obeying the truth through the Spirit.

There is a particular result in having purified your soul in obedience of the truth through the Spirit. That result is unfeigned love of the brethren. “Unfeigned” means, not simulated, or pretended. Think of it we can truly love the brethren only from a purified soul. We can truly love the brethren by looking to Christ (John 13:34-35; 15:12-14, 17-9).

Having purified our souls in obedience to the truth we have the fact of unfeigned love for the brethren. That being the case, we are then admonished to the act of love (1 John 3:15-18). “See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” This does not say “love from a pure heart” which would intimate that in your heart is a well of love and you are to put it to good use. This says that we are to love with a pure heart. This declares that the pure heart is in place, and it does not differ from the purified soul. Another way to word this might be, “Since you have purified your souls in obedience of the truth, love the brethren from that place, with that heart.” With that heart the love expressed will be fervent and unfeigned (1 John 5:1-5).

It all comes to the same place, the same precise premise. Look to Christ, love Him and you will find that everything required of you has been supplied to you.





## Being Born Again

### 1 Peter 1:23-25

23, Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24, For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25, But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The words of this passage are a continuation of the principle declared in verse 22. The believer has purified his soul through obedience to the truth {faith in Christ) because he has been born again (being, have been born again). Nothing happens without life. Every spiritual act must have a source of action, an ability to act and that source, that ability, is life and that life comes from being born into the spiritual realm (1:3). The expression of that life attained in the new birth is faith. Faith does not come at some later date. Spiritual life is faith in Christ and is the product of the new birth. The believer is a believer because he has been born again or born from above. The instrument employed in the new birth is the preached gospel.

Peter, in the last verses of this chapter, is explaining this truth in a comparative way. His comparison, or rather contrast, is between natural and spiritual life and what each of them

produce. Natural life cannot bring about the new birth. It is incapable and void of capacity and inclination to do so. What we are naturally born with has nothing to do with spiritual things (John 3:1-8; Romans 8:5). This is impossible to understand apart from the new birth so unless and until that great miracle of grace occurs many inventions will arise that men will use to simulate spirituality. The chiefest among these is religion, which in the language of men is synonymous with spirituality. But the fact remains that no matter the invention, if it is born of the flesh, the carnal nature, it is not spiritual. All things spiritual wait of life, spiritual life. Christ is that life. Being born again is receiving Christ. It is the indwelling of His Spirit.

To show that the purifying of the soul is not achieved in the flesh, Simon Peter, uses a natural thing to teach a spiritual truth. He takes us to the beginning of every life, the seed or semen. This is symbolic language and is not designed to undergo the scrutiny of science. Peter is merely taking the reader to the principle of conception to show us that as in natural conception, the life conceived has no part in the production of that life. Even in the natural realm, though the physicality of the process is understood, the strange element of life remains shrouded in mystery. And so, it is in the spiritual realm, but it remains even more so of a mystery because the process is completely invisible. The symbolism is clear and is here designed to distinguish between natural (corruptible) and spiritual (incorruptible) seed and the product of one in opposition to the other.

The believer has been born again and that birth cannot be attributed to anything he acquired in his natural birth. He was not born again by corruptible seed. His conception and

subsequent birth was accomplished by incorruptible (spiritual) seed. That incorruptible seed is clearly defined as to leave no doubt concerning what it is. Paul in another reference to “the seed” declared that the seed was Christ (Gal. 3:16). Peter says here that that seed is “the Word of God.” Paul and Peter are not of differing views. Paul was speaking of the seed of promise given to Abraham, which was given in opposition to the seed that Abraham had produced in the power of the flesh. That seed of Promise was Isaac but was typically Christ. When Abraham believed God concerning this supernatural, incorruptible seed, it was counted to him for righteousness. Paul declares this promise to be the gospel, which Abraham believed (Romans 4:1-5; Gal. 3:8). So, when Peter says that the incorruptible seed is the word of God, he does not differ from Paul. Christ and the gospel that declares Him cannot be separated.

To show another difference between the corruptible and incorruptible seed, Peter states that the incorruptible seed (the word of God) is living, lively and is everlasting (v. 23; John 6:63; Chap. 1:3). The comparison is simple. If it comes from nature, no matter what it is, it will not last. It will fade away. Like the grass of the field or the blooming flower, they remain but for a season and then fall away. Nothing visible or tangible lasts (1; 7; Is. 40:6-8; 1 John 2:15-17). The very best that the flesh can produce, the very best, is soon to pass off the scene and be remembered no more. That corruptible seed has nothing to do with the new birth (v.24). Whatever springs from that corruptible seed is corrupt and will not endure.

The contrast is that the Word of God (the incorruptible seed of eternal spiritual life) endures forever. Whatever springs from this seed also endures forever. He that is born from above

is born of God (John 1:12-t3). Such will never perish (John 10:28-30).

That Word, we know, is the Bible, the Holy Writ, the Scriptures but not in a general sense. We have already seen that the Word is particular to Jesus Christ. There was no doubt that this was the interpretation of "The Word" in the early church (Acts 10:36-37). Men may take the Bible and preach from it and come up with just about any scenario. For example, some take the language that belongs to the church concerning the sharing of goods and wealth (Acts 2. 44-45) and seek to make it government policy, in effect, making a voluntary act a matter of legal requirement; thus removing the grace of it.

In truth there is only one way to preach the Word of God—just one! The only way to preach the Word is to preach the gospel of Christ. Any and every other way of preaching is false, twisted, and dishonest and handles the word deceitfully and will pass away and not endure (Gal. 1:8-9). Verse 25 proclaims that the Word is preached when the gospel is preached, and that gospel brings the new birth and faith (James 1:18; Romans 10:14-17). The preached gospel is the bringer of life and faith that will not pass away.

## **New Ways**

### **1 Peter 2:1**

1, Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile,  
and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

These words of admonition are based upon the truth that believers have been born again (wherefore). We know that we are still creatures of the flesh and that carnality writ, as long as we are here, incite struggle with the spirit. Based on that fact, we are told to lay aside certain things that are not becoming to one who has been born of God. The wording here suggests that the believer has laid aside these things or continues to lay aside these things. The word “laying” goes along with the concept of “seeing” in 1:22 and “being” in 1:23. The believer is about the business of laying these things aside, so he is to continue to lay these things aside. He “purifies himself evert as he is pure.” Since these things, when discovered, when disclosed, are to be discontinued, it must be understood that it is not accomplished by consideration of them—rather they are not accomplished in the flesh. This is not something accomplished “in the flesh,” but rather something done “to the flesh.” The maladies mentioned are found in almost every reference to the works of the flesh in the scriptures, because they are obvious and relevant to every believer. These are things that proceed from the carnal heart, the nature of fallen humanity and are the plague of every believer. The use of “laying” indicates that though we lay these things aside they are never completely done in. The admonition

remains. Don't take them up and give them space; lay them aside.

My first thought in preparing this lesson was to touch on these works of the flesh lightly since every believer is painfully aware of the place they occupy in their hearts. But we live in a new age, and age when men and women, believers, have available to them the means of dispersing the indignations of their hearts at lightning speed and virtually all over the world in the blink of an eye. Anger hardly has the benefit of a cooling-down time anymore. I am tempted to put the word “cyber” before each of these maladies because that is where we are in the world today. I have harbored and until I die, will harbor malice in my-heart. In the past I had the benefit of time to address it. Many times, I have written scathing letters to those with whom I am angry and thanks to the postal service (snail mail in today's vernacular) I had to wait for the letter to go out. Thankfully, after I had vented my venom, I have in every case had the time to consider my ways and have shredded the letters before they were ever sent. In the last few years, I have seen how the availability of cyber space has enabled malice to find its target in seconds, and sadly once it is written and sent it can never be retrieved. Suddenly, “gospel issues” which used to be ironed out between two people, face to face, now take on magnified proportions and become the catalyst for every base emotion and divisive spirit. Because a thing can be said does not mean that it should be.

Malice is the first mentioned perhaps because it is most prevalent in the heart and sadly it is the most enjoyable at its onset. It has been described as taking poison and waiting for the one you hate to die: Malice rarely hurts the target of it but always, always hurts the one who exercises it. Over time it

consumes the mind and taints everything that we think or do. We are to lay it aside because it destroys us. And if you are tempted to turn loose your malice in an email or on a chat room, take a moment and remember that thirty years from now that malice will be still floating around in cyber-space, and even though fences may have been mended, it could still rile the hearts of others. Lay it aside.

Guile is deceitfulness with a design. It is to handle the word deceitfully, not for the glory of God, but for the exaltation of self. It is designed to distinguish you, set you apart, make you the one depended on, rather than God. Often those who exercise guile preface what they do by declaration of piety with phrases such as “I've prayed about this” or “God has led me to do such and such.” It ends in separating yourself and gathering others to follow you. It reveals a diminished view of the gospel and” smacks of inordinate affection, egotism, and self-love. Guile is designed to build up oneself on the ruins of others. The admonition is simple; lay it aside.

Hypocrisies are pretenses, pretending to be one thing while being another. Hypocrisy literally means “two-faced.” There are those who believe that believers aren't hypocrites but since this admonition is to believers, then that point is moot. The fact is that every believer, since he is both flesh and spirit, is plagued with hypocrisy. It does not apply to saying you are a believer when you are not but rather addresser pretense. You may be a true worshipper. You. may be a kind and generous person. But in that moment, in the secret of the heart you wish that someone would recognize you for it, you are hypocritical. Pharisees were ardent workers for God, but they did it to be seen of men. Loving in word but not deed is hypocrisy.

Speaking peaceably when the heart lies in wait to strike is hypocrisy. Lay it aside.

Envy is thinking that a brother should not have the success he has. Inability to rejoice in the good fortune of a brother or sister is envying. Questioning the motives or the reason for a brother's good fortune is envy. Inability, to rejoice in the happiness of your brother or sister is envy. Lay it aside.

Evil speaking covers the spectrum of gossip, backbiting, whispering, and rumormongering. Generally, it is speech designed to cast suspicion or to hurt another's character or call into question, by innuendo, a brother or sister's integrity. Do not accuse or hear an accusation against a brother or sister except in the face of two witnesses, and even then, speak to the brother or sister, not about them. "Be simple (ignorant, stupid for lack of participation) concerning evil." Lay it aside.

Knowing our struggles, the question concerning laying aside these things is "how?" The answer is very simple, as simple as being like a newborn babe, desiring the single things that will keep us alive, having no capacity to desire anything else (v. 2). This will be our next lesson.



# Sincere Milk

## 1 Peter 2:2-3

2, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3, If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Last week we looked at the admonishment of verse 1 and saw that the only way to continue to put down those things that so easily beset us, is to do the one thing that answers and is the solution to every warning concerning our flesh. The answer is always the same though it may be rendered in different language. Here it is referred to in a relative and logical sense. We know that if we grow up in the natural sense that we will be plagued with those maladies of verse one. Relatively, there was but one time in our natural lives that we were not affected by these things—when we were infants (born again by incorruptible seed). The mind and life of an infant is singularly focused. Life is about nourishment, about being fed. In order to keep laying aside those things that prevent growth, we are to become as infants and desire (greatly desire, long for, pursue after) that single thing that will cause us to grow. Growth is the thrust here. We know that an infant that is not fed will die, but life and death is not addressed here. That which is addressed is growth, and that growth is accomplished one way and the manner by which we lay aside those things that plague us. A “newborn babe,” suggests that we are not concerned with the maladies because they have little importance by the fact that we

are elsewhere occupied. This is always the key. As we become as babes, we do not occupy ourselves with anything but milk. The laying aside of those things in verse 1 is not by consideration of the things but by having our mind elsewhere, singularly on that which make us grow. Spiritual growth is paradoxical. Maturity in Christ is a growth in dependence on Christ. Maturity in Christ is downward growth. In a sense, going-forward is going backward. He must increase; I must decrease. Unlike a babe who is unable to truly consider growth because he is operating entirely by instinctual need, the believer is admonished to act, not from survival instinct, but rather in the sense of a concerted desire to grow up in Christ. This is not to say that we do not need Christ. He is all we need. This text addresses a state of mind and heart whereby the believer is to diligently pursue becoming as a newborn babe, so he can grow. It is reasonable to understand, then, that those things that we are to lay aside in this manner are things that inhibit growth and keep the believer in stasis.

The thing to be desired, diligently sought after is described as “the sincere milk of the word.” The thing that makes us grow is the same thing that gives us birth (1:23-25). The word “sincere” here means guileless and suggests purity, being unadulterated and the absence of mixture. “The sincere milk of the word” is the gospel of Christ. As a newborn babe desires, is fixed on being fed with mother's milk, so the believer is to be fixed on the gospel of Christ as the only way by which he can grow. There are many things that present themselves as necessary to the believer such as love, kindness, peacefulness, and generosity, but all of these are products of feeding on the gospel (Fruit of the Spirit). Every believer knows this, even though he is often slow to remember it. Our very best moments

in this life are those precious moments when we are reminded, through the preaching of the gospel that our King is enthroned and all is well. God has made an everlasting covenant with us, ordered in all things and sure and this is all my salvation and all my desire.

This desire for the sincere milk of the word is with purpose. The purpose is that we may grow thereby. The believer desires to grow and he knows that the instrument employed in this growth is the gospel. Experience comes by trials and mistakes and general life. Experience is a teacher of sorts but generally not a great one, proven by the fact that we often keep making the same mistakes. For instance, we have all experienced malice and its deleterious effect on us, but our flesh always keeps malice just below the surface, ready to spring into action. We do not grow by experience; we grow by partaking of the sincere milk of the word. The singular thing that assures growth in Christ is availing ourselves to, and feeding upon, the gospel (Eph. 4:13-t5). This word, by which the gospel is preached unto us, is our life's blood, our sustenance. It is no wonder that such lust for the word is foolishness to the world. Every false religion and cult depends on extra-biblical revelation. The believer desires to eat here and refuses anything else to sustain him in this world. He knows that any mixture is poison.

The concept of feeding on the gospel is continued in verse 3. The word "if is argumentative and would be better rendered "since." Peter takes us back to the Old Testament to the words of the psalmist (Ps. 34:8). This is an important aspect of the knowledge of the truth. Tasting or feeding upon the word, the gospel is to experience the grace of God, to know that He is gracious. The Old Testament is rife with metaphors of feeding on the word (Ps. 19:10; Pr. 16:24; SOS 4:11; 5:1).

Then when we go to the words of Christ, we find the same sort of language (John 6:50-56). It is no wonder, then, that tasting the “sincere milk of the word” and feeding on Christ are joined in these two verses as one. To feast on the gospel is to feast on Christ and to be sustained in this world (Is. 25:6). For the believer, the singular thing that we are to desire and to avail ourselves to is Christ by His gospel. This is the only way that that which inhibits our growth, the lusts of the flesh, are subdued. How simple this is and how utterly impossible it is to accomplish in the flesh.

# To Whom Coming

## 1 Peter 2:4

4, To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

The words of this passage constitute a continuing premise that sets forth the way of the believer or the state of the believer's life in this world. The word “coming” aligns with this pattern that begins in verse 22 chapter 1 “seeing,” v.23 “being,” 2:1 “laying” and in our text “coming.” Each of these terms represent the fact that this is the way of the child of God both in state of being and in a continuing way of life.

In this passage we are brought to the explicit theme of the life of one who has been born of God. Everyone who is saved has come to Christ and has done so because God the Father has taught them (John 6:45). As we spend some time in this book, we find that there is a general principle that describes the life of the child of God. Every representation is synonymous with faith or believing. Whether it is referred to as looking, believing, eating, drinking, or resting; each has a beginning by the power of God and a continuing for the life of the child of God by the power of God (1:1-5). We have come to Christ and this passage declares that this action never stops. Every believer knows that this is his life, a continuous coming to Christ. Many books have been written that suggest that coming to Christ is a onetime thing, a beginning that is finished by the power of the

flesh. This passage makes it clear that the life of the believer is a constant “coming” to Christ (Heb. 12:2). This is, no doubt, born of need, a constant compelling need that can only be met by coming to Christ. Some may think that as the believer has lived to Christ for many years that his dependency upon Christ diminishes, or that his spirituality reaches a higher plane of existence whereby he has transcended the things that once easily beset him. This is the pie dream of legalists, not unlike sequestered monks who have become, in their minds, so separate from sin that they have arrived at near perfection. Putting away certain things that they consider fleshly pursuits and adhering to certain things that they consider evidence of holiness causes them to be blind to the fact that they living in self-righteousness, which is smoke in God's nose (Is. 65:5). Such have discounted the work of Christ and have succeeded in putting a tuxedo on a rotting corpse.

The older a believer gets, the longer he lives by faith, the more he needs Christ and the more he realizes his need. Grace cannot be stored. Mercy cannot be stored. The sufficiency of God's grace is in the present tense. The life of God's child is best described as “to whom coming.” Spurgeon said that the doctrine of “progressive sanctification” best fits the new and inexperienced believer. The old saint knows all too well that his heart grows blacker and darker, his resolve grows weaker and frailer, and his strength diminishes with the passing of moments. He puts no bank in his ability or wherewithal to make any progress but rather views himself as daily dwindling to a mass of desperate need, and that need is only met in Christ. His life is summed up in “to whom coming.” Truth be told, in moments of clarity, the believer is glad for this estate because when he is weak, he is strong because he is utterly reliant upon

Christ. Hawker said “For my own part. I love to feel my wants, and poverty, and leanness, that I may carry all to Christ and make exchange for His fullness, richness, and soul renewing comforts. And very sure I am. that if I did not feel these things, but were puffed up in my own fleshly mind, the throne of grace would not be often visited by me.”

Christ is here metaphorically referred to as a stone, a lively or living stone. In the church, Christ is the corner and head stone placed with shoutings of “grace, grace unto it.” He is the Rock of Ages who has life in Himself. That He is the Rock affords much in the way of security for the believer. He is the fortress, the shelter, the covert in the times of storms. He is living, He is life. Living suggests motility and mobility, which makes the believer to understand that no matter where he is, his Rock is with him securing and protecting him (1 Cor. 10:4). This knowledge and the knowledge of his own weakness make the believer's life to be a continual “to whom coming.”

The One to whom we come is set forth in the way of distinction that comforts the believer in the understanding of his blessed estate. He has been given faith and that faith continually brings him to Christ. It is not so with all men. For some Christ is not an absolute necessity, but He rather is disallowed. Since we know that the believer comes to Christ out of constant need, to disallow Him must conversely come from a lack of need for Him. Preachers spend a lot of time trying to convince men that they need Christ but there is a world both in and out of religion that have no need of Him. If there is no need, if He is disallowed then those who feel this way about Him must be satisfied in themselves and with their own power. When I say “in or out of religion” that is really a misnomer. Whether men are affiliated with a particular religion or not,

they are all religious and their religion is based on their own merit. Generally, when one is affiliated with religion, disallowing Christ is born of self-righteous legalism (Gal 2; 21; 5:1-4). Mark it well, if you have not come and are not coming to Christ it is because you feel no need of Him. And if you feel no need of Him, it is because you feel sufficient within yourself to stand righteous before God.

However, the believer knows that his need for Christ is real, and he likewise knows that he is continually coming to that lively stone that is chosen of God and precious (honorable and of great value). So, the believer keeps coming, in every prayer, in every trial, in good times and bad because he knows that in Christ alone his thirst and hunger are fully assuaged and this is always the case (Hebrews 11:6; Matt. 11:28-29).



## The Plain Difference

### 1 Peter 2:5-8

5, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6, Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7, Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

In this passage, Peter is drawing a clear distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, but not in a general sense. He is specifically dealing with those who have heard the gospel and received it and those who have heard the gospel and disallowed it for religious reasons. The words are set in a “you and them” scenario. The “you” are those who have been described thus far in the first and second chapter. They are the elect for whom Christ died, those kept by the power of God.

They are first described as lively stones. This connects them to the previous description of Christ as the living stone. The

words “living” and “lively” are the same word in the original language and grammatically are the same tense, voice and mood. They are translated differently as a reasonable expression of a basic truth. Christ is said to be living. This fits with His resurrection. He is not living in the sense that there is life, and He derives His life from it He is life; He has life in himself. All living things derive their vitality from Him. He is life and you are the living. So, this distinction between living and lively is that these lively stones have derived their liveliness or life from Him, the life, and the source of it. You are described as stones, as building stones that make up part of a house. The house is a spiritual house; it is the Church of the Living God.

Peter also distinguishes you lively stones as holy priesthood. Here Peter is declaring that the priesthood has changed (Heb. 7:11-17). Peter is asserting that the Old Covenant has been fulfilled and is no longer in force. Believers are priests; they are holy priests, made so by the effectual death of Christ (Rev. 5:9-10). The word “holy” does not address their personal morality but rather that they have been separated unto the gospel for the service of the Lord. As priests you offer up spiritual sacrifices, which are acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ. As these are spiritual sacrifices, they have nothing to do with the Old Covenant sacrifices and ceremonies. They are not blood sacrifices, because the accepted blood has already been offered and has redeemed us (1:18-19). Since that offering has satisfied God, propitiated God there is no need of another such sacrifice (Hebrews 10:12-18). Yet they are called sacrifices because they cost the offerer any possibility of glory (Hebrews 13:15). The only acceptable sacrifices that the church can offer is praise born of thanksgiving. It is a sacrifice because the believer gives all glory to Christ and denies himself. Since Christ is solely

responsible for all of the believer's salvation, there is nothing left to do but thank Him.

The word “wherefore” (v.6) means, “this is why.” This is why it is contained in the scripture... (Is. 28:16) ...“Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone.” This, too, is a distinction. Peter is declaring that believers are blocks in the spiritual house, but Christ is the foundation, the stone upon which the entire house rests (Eph. 2:20; Zech. 4:6-9). The description of Christ (the chief cornerstone) is, elect (Is. 42:1-4) and precious (2:4...honor and great value). You lively stones, you holy priests believe on Christ and the promise of God is that you will never be confused. Because there is but one living stone, one chief corner stone, no other stone can even enter the picture.

The result of that blessed knowledge is that He who is precious to God is likewise precious to you. It is an honor for you to know Him and be found in Him. He is of inestimable value to you who believe. He is the sum and substance of what you can know about God's salvation and knowing Him is knowing all there is to know, therefore to you who believe he is precious. And what follows is the plain difference.

Those who are disobedient are in direct opposition to those that believe. Believing must then equate with obedience. Obedience to what? The gospel (Romans 10:16). Their disobedience was a willful act. They were supposed to be, claimed to be builders but they disallowed the chief cornerstone (Ps. 118:2; Matt. 21:42; Acts 4:11-12). They went about building a house without a foundation (Matt. 7:24-27). That foundation is Christ the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel to everyone that believes (Rom. 1:16-17). The disobedient are those who refuse Christ and yet seek to build another righteousness (Rom 10:1-4). But Christ is precious to

God and to those who believe Him, and they know that He is the head of the corner.

To the disobedient the chief corner stone is a stumbling stone or a stone over which they stumble. This indicates, that in their mind they are headed in the right direction. They are seeking to establish an acceptable righteousness before God. They are not irreligious. They believe that what they do will put them in a right standing before God. They live upright, moral and pious lives. By all human standards they are the cream of the crop in religion. In the scheme of human behavior such would be those held in high esteem (Luke 18:9). But this text finds them flat on their faces having stumbled at the stone of stumbling, being disobedient to the gospel. This is where every person, seeking to merit a standing before God by his own works, falls. The gospel is a trip wire, a snare to those who refuse to rest in Christ (Is. 28:9-13). Religious men perish here. To them, the good news destroys all they have striven for and that they cannot abide. Here they stumble; here they show themselves to be past recovery (rock of offense-Gal. 5:11).

There is no use in trying to explain the last phrase of verse 8, and to explain it away is to be found among those that the phrase describes. Here we bow in humble admiration to the God who is past finding out Those religious men who seek to establish their own righteous are appointed to stumble (Jude 3-4). If such is not your case, you belong to those who are described in verse 9 and ail that is left for you is to offer the sacrifice of praise, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

# The People of God

## 1 Peter 2:9-10

9, But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

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

This passage begins with the word “but,” which means that what follows is directly opposite to what immediately precedes. Verse 8 has described those who were disobedient to the gospel, who stumbled at Christ, the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. The final point of this verse is the declaration that those who fall into this category were and are appointed to do so. So, to those who are described in verses 9-10, none of the things of verse 8 apply. They are not disobedient to the gospel; they did not stumble at Christ and they were not appointed to do so. Conversely, they obeyed the gospel and were appointed to life (1:1-5).

Also, the things spoken about these in verses 9-10 are not a result of their own efforts or merit. Everything described in this passage is an exclusive result of the person and work of Christ and these mentioned here believe it otherwise they would not have been distinguished from those in verse 8.

Our Lord inspires Peter to establish the hearts of the people in grace. As these are inspired words (2 Tim. 3:16-17), this is God's estimation of His people. Those who stumble at the word, being Disobedient would wholly disagree with these accolades being applied to those who “only” believed for salvation. But God cannot lie and what He says of His people is precisely as His people are.

Peter sets, as it were, all things in their proper order. Everything that follows in this passage hangs on the declaration of this first phrase. “Ye are a chosen generation” asserts that believers are elected unto salvation from the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, I Thes. 1:5; 11 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9). It is no small thing that this doctrine is first mentioned. If there is a doctrine that truly distinguishes between those who stumble at the word and those who do not, it is the doctrine of electing grace. Nothing disconcerts the carnal mind more than an attack on its own warped sense of equity. That God would choose some to save while leaving others to their own devices does not add up in the math of carnality, because their entire hope is that God does leave all men to their own devices. They believe that their devices are sufficient to put them in good standing with God. But God declares that those who are saved are chosen to salvation by God Himself. “Ye are a chosen generation.”

Secondly, believers are referred to as “a royal priesthood.” This designation has to do with what Christ has done for His elect (Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10). The glory of this station is overwhelming to the believer because he knows that he has been brought from utter ruin to this glorified estate. Even more, however, is what this title means in relation to Christ identifying with people. The only true king and priest is Christ. By referring to the believer in this manner, Christ identifies

with us as one with Himself. We are bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. Also, there is no small suggestion that the covenant of grace is far superior to the covenant of Sinai. Under that old covenant, there could be no such thing as a king who was also a priest. But consider what God has wrought in the eternal covenant. He has made us to be, what the law could never produce or even sanction (Romans 8:1-4).

Thirdly, believers are “an holy nation.” Peter calls up the words of the Lord concerning His church in the wilderness (Ex. 19; 5-6). His church is a great nation “born in a day.” It is a holy nation, made so by the perfect successful work of Christ. Christ is their holiness and their only holiness (1 Cor. 1:30).

Fourthly, believers are “a peculiar people.” This is not a reference to the general eccentricity of God's people, though experience and the declaration of the word of God assure us that this is fact (1 Cor. 1:26-29). This word “peculiar” means “purchased.” The believer is a child of God by redemptive purchase. The believer is bought with a price and therefore does not belong to himself. He has been purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20; 28; Eph. 1:14).

The reason that God did all this for his people is that they would show forth the praises of Him. None of this was done to draw attention to ourselves or to cause us to look to ourselves for evidence. He did not do this for us that we might look at our lives to see If we are chosen, or we act like royal priests or if our life measures up to some preconceived notion of holiness, but mat we praise Him who ripped us from the realm of midnight and set us m the glory of the Sun of Righteousness. The sinner is saved for the praise of God's grace (Eph. 1:6,12,14).

Verse 10 addresses the fact that though we were chosen, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, sanctified by the Spirit, washed in the blood of Christ, kept by the power of God until salvation was revealed, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, born again of incorruptible seed, even the gospel of God; until God gave us the gift of faith through the preaching of the gospel, we had no idea what God had done for us. We were, as far as our understanding, not a people...we were just a scattered residue among lost humanity. But now, having heard and believed the gospel, we know that these former things are true, and we are glad for it.

Though we lived under divine protection, God working history for our cause and kept by mercy till the appointed day of salvation, we were unaware of mercy, saw no need of mercy, and sought no mercy. But now, after God-given faith, we realize that we have obtained the mercy of God in Christ because He, having finished salvation, obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:11-12).

This is God's estimation of His people, and all glory is due Him.



# **As Strangers and Pilgrims**

## 1 Peter 2:11-20

11, Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

12, Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

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

14, Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

15, For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

16, As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17, Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18, Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19, For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20, For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

The words of Peter are admonitions to those who are trusting in the chief cornerstone. Because they do so, they are not

confounded or confused as to the source and accomplishment of their salvation. The warnings and instructions that are in this passage concern those who are in this world but not of this world. Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious are forever altered, however their flesh, their carnal nature is never changed. By grace, the carnal nature is subdued but is never improved. One of the reasons that this religious world counts the believer foolish is that he does not discount the fact that he is yet as sinful as he was born, while proclaiming confidently that he is perfectly righteous before God. The only person who knows this to be so is the one who is righteous before God because of the person and work of Christ. He knows that his righteousness has nothing to do with his doing and that his sin has everything to do with his doing. Only such a one knows of the continual struggle that wrangles in his bosom. Peter addresses these dearly beloved ones as strangers and pilgrims because to the world, particularly to the religious world (those who have stumbled at Christ), they simply don't belong to the mainstream. What they assert and believe makes no sense to the world. They do what they do, not to be righteous but because they are righteous.

They are admonished to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Without the last phrase of that sentence religion could have a hay day in restricting men from religiously unacceptable behavior. But the last phrase makes it clear that the fleshly lusts have to do with inward battle of the flesh and the Spirit. This is the struggle of the believer as long as he is on the earth (Ro. 7:23; Jas. 4:1; SOS 6:13). These fleshly lusts are the desires of our carnal nature that take our eyes off Christ to look horizontally rather than vertically. Once that is accomplished, the believer finds himself looking to and at

things around him in a carnal light. His view is skewed because he has inserted himself into the world.

Only with eyes on Christ is the world traversed in a right and honorable way. Only with eyes on Christ can the things that are in the world be seen in their proper order. To abstain from fleshly lusts is to have an honest conversation or provide things honest in the sight of men. “Gentiles” refer, in this case, to the world without Christ. They have a particularly hateful view of believers which nothing but the grace of God will alter. So, a believer cannot win the approval of the world. This being the case, the believer is not to provide anything that can be held against him but his testimony. In all other matters civil, he is to live in a manner that is unquestionable, so that the unbelievers will see his good works and glorify God. The “day of visitation” is a qualifying phrase it suggests that mere will not be an immediate praise for your good works, but that there will come a time that the unbelieving world will be forced to admit that God was the author of your good works (Matt. 5:16; John 17:21-23). Since the world (gentiles) views you as an evil doer, they will not glorify God for your good works in this life, but rather when they bow the knee to Christ.

Peter lists several things that are in the arena where the flesh thrives in its pursuit of self-promotion and will worship. The flesh despises authority and since the garden, has striven to deify itself. It is precisely in these areas that the world watches, with judging eyes, every move of the believer. The believer is to do the opposite of the flesh—he is to submit. He is not to put forth himself as a master, but rather as a servant. The order and authority of government is according to God's established economy and the believer is to submit for the Lord's sake...for the Lord's honor (w. 13-17; Romans 13:1-7). Silencing

ignorant men does not mean that their hatred will be quelled. By our submission to the powers that God has ordained, we give no ammunition to those who oppose God.

Another good work in this arena is self-control or temperance. Though nothing is forbidden to the believer (save for that which is clearly denoted in scripture). The believer is not to use his liberty as if it were license. Your liberty, though totally genuine, is to be employed in submission and servitude. You are at liberty to not do what your flesh demands in order that man may not speak evil against you for your behavior.

Another good work in the arena is for the believer to be, as a servant, in subjection to his master with true reverence for his master's position. Today this equates, in some degree, to giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. This will not necessarily be a quid pro quo scenario. Bosses are not always good people, and many take advantage of their employees. Even if the master is cruel and mean, as long as the believer is thusly employed, he is to be a good and faithful servant (v. 18). This is crucially important considering verse 17. The king (the master) under whose rule Peter resided was none other than Nero, the mad Caesar, and a most forward master. To be in subjection to such a king is well pleasing to the Lord and can only be accomplished with eyes on Christ.

Whether it is a government or an individual master, if the believer suffers by being in subjection for the lord's sake, it is thankworthy. The word "thankworthy" is the same word that is translated grace or favor. This reflects the believer's state of mind. He knows that far outside toe evils and ills that accompany the sufficient evil of the day is the fact that he is accepted of God because of the work of Christ. With eyes on

Christ the things of the world grow strangely dim by comparison.

Finally, Peter takes an opposite tack. The believer is admonished to avoid that which would reasonably bring about suffering or hatred of men (v. 20). Faith is not a bludgeon. Faith is not the proverbial blunt instrument. Faith is submission, first to the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3-4), then to those who have rule over you by divine appointment. Faith is not entitlement it is being a stranger and a pilgrim in a Christ hating world. If you suffer, make sure it is because you submit, not because you exert your liberty as if it were an entitlement.



## Hereunto Were Ye Called

### 1 Peter 2:20-25

20, For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21, For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23, Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

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

25, For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Peter has made it clear that if we suffer or are buffeted for our own faults (things we bring upon ourselves), there is no glory in it (v. 20). It is merely a way to draw attention to ourselves that we might garner the pity or acclaim of others. Since we are not to receive glory for anything we do, the glory referred to is the glory of God, to whom all glory is due. If our suffering brings us glory, it is not of God and not for the right reason (Matt. 6:16-



18). Conversely, this is a declaration that being buffeted for the right reason does bring glory to God.

The first phrase of verse 21 instructs us that we are called to suffer for Christ (Acts 14:22; Romans 8:16-17; H Cor. 1:7; Phil. 1:29). With men there is an inherent “thinking” problem with such language. Being buffeted, suffering, tribulations and persecutions are broad terms and subject to various interpretations. Our religiously carnal nature seeks, by the exercise of the flesh, to accomplish what we think is a requirement to be accepted by God. But, since we are called to suffer for Christ's sake, then the sufferings are ordained of God, because God's gifts and callings are without repentance. This then is not something we are to try to do, but we are to realize that suffering is part and parcel with our spiritual life. Suffering for Christ is not a goal; it is a condition of the believer's life, ordered, ordained and sure (Mark 10:29-30). The flesh will always view a particular estate of the believer's life, set forth in scripture, as a thing to be attained to but the believer is to see it as it is, a result of looking to Christ alone. Paul's flesh was buffeted because the many revelations he received might cause him to think he was special (2 Cor. 12:6-10). Suffering for Christ's sake does not make you special; it simply means that you are a child of God. Seeking to suffer is masochism. Bowing to the fact that suffering is a result of believing Christ, is the gift of grace. It is suffering for the right reason.

As to the right reason for suffering, Peter gives our Lord as the example (v. 21). Again, if this suffering is viewed as a goal, men will seek out ways to suffer in their body as Christ did. During the dark ages there was a group of German men who called themselves flagellators. They went throughout the countryside whipping themselves with plaited cords with bits of

metal embedded in the tips. They thought to emulate Christ, often carrying crosses with them. Their goal was to get rid of their sin so the black plague would be lifted. Either the present pope or the last one was a flagellator. Why? In his mind he was following the example of Christ! This is error, plain and simple. The suffering that Peter refers to, does possibly involve the physical, but that which Christ primarily suffered and indeed, the sacrifice He made was suffering in the inward man (v. 11 compare Isaiah 53:10). The true suffering of the child of God is not that which is visible, but what goes on in his bosom. Men see the physical sufferings of Christ and apart from a work of grace that is all they see or even can see. Mel Gibson made a movie about it, and in a few days, you will see some religiously sincere fruitcake, toting a cross, usually equipped with training wheels up and down some highway following — the “example of Christ's suffering.”

Verse 22 makes it clear that when Christ suffered, the cause was not in Himself. He was hated without a cause. As to suffering, this should be likewise said about our selves; that we do not suffer because of sin or guile (v. 20a). Further proof that the cause was not because of sin or guile is found in verse 23. Our natural response to suffering and being reviled is to strike back. The believer is to emulate Christ. The response of the believer cannot be in the flesh. It cannot be a natural response. It must be a supernatural response, a spiritual response. The way such a wondrous thing is accomplished is by commitment. That is a word bandied about in this day and its use is generally a source of manifold efforts toward human merit. Religion takes the word “commitment” and places it in the lap of works for righteousness. The Biblical view of commitment is that of Christ. He, in the matter of suffering, committed His cause to

God (marginal reading; 2 Tim. 1:12). What He was doing that brought about the revilings of men was about the glory of God in the salvation of the elect. His eyes, mind, and heart, which eventuated in His actions, were centered in God. He cared not for the things of the world. His interest was elsewhere, and this ultimately is the cause, which brings about the hatred of men. This is the example that we are to follow. Seeking to glorify God in the salvation of the elect by the person and work of Christ as revealed in the gospel. To do so will result in suffering.

What Christ did was voluntary, and it was ordained. From the first beast slain in the garden to cover the sinful pair; to the day of redemption on the cross; what was accomplished was done by a voluntary victim (sacrifice) (Romans 12; 1). The result of that single-minded approach to the cause of God resulted in the hatred of men. Because His mind was on the mission, he committed the abuse of men toward Him, to God. His work condemned sin in the flesh, put it away by the sacrifice of himself and all who have been brought, by grace, to see the glory of who He is and what He did are made to be of the same mind and same heart. They will suffer for it and they will commit all of that to Him that judgeth righteously (2:3-5). Being dead to sin, the believer lives to Christ, and the world cannot abide this.

Peter is inspired to define that this suffering is not a goal but rather a condition of the believer's life. He, in the last phrase of v. 24 and v. 25, takes us to Isaiah 53 to show us the source or reason that Christ suffered the hatred of men and designates where true suffering abides. This is our example; not to try to emulate what Christ physically endured, but to fix our eyes on the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

# Wives and Husbands (Pt 1)

## 1 Peter 3:1-7

1, Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2, While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3, Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4, But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5, For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6, Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7, Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

I know this about reading these words in the presence of a mixed company. Both men and women have a visceral reaction

to them. Words such as these have been used by men and women in religion and in societal marriage as the proverbial blunt instrument to force women into a state of submission or blame men for lack of love. Because of this, both men and women react, generally in defense of their own gender. It would be beneficial for both men and women, to forget what they' have heard concerning this matter and turn their eyes to their heavenly husband, consider His relationship with them, and realized that in that marriage, they are the wife. Measure every word spoken as representative of that relationship and judge your behavior toward you spouse on the basis of the sweet, kind, loving, sacrificial relation that Christ has with His wife, and the loving, honoring, submissive relationship which the church, his wife, has with Him (Eph. 5:20-33). Several things will help us to understand these words. However, since there is so much more involved here than meets the eye, it may take more than one lesson to cover it. We will look at these verses expositionally in lessons to come. Several things:

The first, as always, is context. Peter is still, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, dealing with the aspect of the right kind of suffering. The believer suffers, not because he or she wants to suffer, but rather suffers because inwardly, his heart and soul is, in faith, fixed on Christ alone. It is no coincidence, that the subject of wives being in submission to their husbands is coupled with the principle of suffering for the cause the gospel. Suffering is not a goal but is rather the result of committing your very life into the hands of Christ for all of salvation. In microcosm, this is seen in the relationship of wife to husband and husband to wife. Since it is about the gospel and the believer's relationship to Christ then it cannot involve either the law or condemnation. To understand this, we must

go back to the beginning and weigh the curse considering the accomplishment of Christ on the cross. Paul spent many words in showing that Christ gained much more for the believer that was lost in Adam (Romans 5:15-21). In fact, what was lost in Adam was assuredly regained plus a great deal more. One of the things lost in Adam, which came as part of the curse, was an obvious equality of standing between a man and his wife (Gen. 3:16). It is reasonable to surmise that since this curse was a result of the fall, that prior to the fall, Adam did not rule over his wife, at least not in any legal manner (Gen. 2:26-28). This curse fell under the auspices of law. Because of sin, the marriage was already in trouble, and it is evident that neither the man nor the woman was willing to take responsibility for his or her own actions (Gen. 3:11-13). This notion of victimization was carried on to the offspring of the fallen pair. When Cain was told of his punishment, he complained that it was too great for the minor infraction of fratricide (Gen. 4:13). Since Christ redeemed His people from the curse of the law, regained what was lost in Adam because of the fall, and removed the law from the believer and the believer from the law, then that curse, as it relates to wives and husbands, has been removed. The admonitions that are given in these first seven verses are not legal in their nature. They must then be voluntary and a result rather than a goal. The goal is a life with eyes and heart on Christ, the result is husbands voluntarily loving their wives and wives voluntarily being in subjection to their husbands. These admonitions are not ends in themselves but a relative reaction to understanding the gospel. Viewed otherwise will result in all manner of evil. So, does the wife suffer as she submits to her husband? To some degree she does, but it is to the same degree that the church suffers because of her submission to Christ. She

suffers the loss of self because Christ cannot be followed without denying oneself. She suffers the loss of equal station because, like the church, she must decrease, and Christ must increase. Her suffering is a result of a voluntary submission to her husband as the church is in submission to Christ (2:13a). Everything in this passage regarding both husband and wife is about Christ and his bride. In this truth we see the power of grace set over against the curse of the law. By grace the wife voluntarily submits to her husband and the curse is replaced with blessing.

Secondly, the references to outward appearance, as means of a wife showing reverence for her husband, is done for the purpose of possibility of the conversion of the husband (v. 1-3). We know that the bride of Christ will not convert Christ. What is the reference then? It is about “who gets the glory.” The bride is to live and adorn herself in a manner that will bring honor to her husband and not call attention to herself (w. 5-6). Subjection to the husband is about honoring Christ. Approach it any other way and problems will ensue.

Thirdly, husbands may read the first six verses and even say Amen to those things described and that is all well and good. However, that is the entire extent of the husband's involvement. The husband has absolutely no involvement in the execution of these things. This admonition is to the wives and the fulfillment is not in the parameters of the husband's rule. If there is any influence brought into the equation by the husband, it rests wholly in his expression of love for his wife. Thus it is with the bride of Christ. His love for us influences our behaviors, but our love for Him compels us to seek His honor by voluntarily submitting to Him. Likewise, the admonition to the husband may be found agreeable to the wife, but she cannot compel him

to act in love. His responsibility toward her is not for her to insure or call into account.

Finally, the admonition to the husbands is based on what Christ does for His church. It primarily has to do with provision for her needs. The word “honor” is used here in the same manner as I Tim. 5:3, 17. It has to do with taking care of the wife's needs, providing for her. The church has need of nothing (Phil. 4:19; Coll. 2:9-10). We'll address these verses further in the next lesson.





## **Wives And Husbands (Pt. 2)**

### **1 Peter 3:1-7**

1, Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2, While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3, Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4, But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5, For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6, Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7, Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Last time we looked at this passage in an overview with emphasis on the misuse of these words in religion as it relates to the relationship of husbands and wives. The misuse of these words rises from a wrong view, a distorted view, a horizontal rather than a vertical view. These things are neither accomplished nor endeavored aright if they are not seen as only relative to Christ and His bride, the church. This passage is about opportunity, opportunity to live in this world in a manner that would declare how Christ and His bride relate to one another. Being human and plagued with a carnal nature, the efforts we make will be fraught with manifold shortcomings, but the endeavor is honorable and worth pursuing.

Wives are first addressed and upon the principle that their proper behavior in living with an unbelieving husband might eventuate in his conversion. Such behavior not only glorifies God but also might be instrumental “winning” that individual. The wording of the passage is interesting. The word “word” in both instances is “logos” in the original, which has several applications but is most generally interpreted as doctrine. If this is the use then we find the husband not obeying doctrine and the wife, without the use of doctrine, might win the husband through her behavior, specifically by being in subjection to him. This makes for a difficult interpretation if winning means conversion or salvation because it puts experience and sight as a possible means of conversion without the teaching of the word. The Syriac version reads “without labor” which would mean that the wife does what she does because it is right and not with the winning of the husband as a goal. Her only agenda would be to honor God, and this might be the means that God uses to begin to affect the mind and heart of the believing husband. The phrase “be won” does suggest gaining of mind and heart

toward God (as to influence). “Without the word” may also suggest that the wife is not to try to convince the husband with doctrine, though she is a believer, and her words will be salted with grace, but she is to simply be as God has admonished her, and by this, she might be an instrument of prevenient grace. This kind of language is found in (J Cor. 7:13-14).

What follows in verses 2-6 sets forth the manner of subjection. Remember that this is not law and does not involve condemnation. This is either a free expression compelled by love for Christ, or it is nothing at all. Wake this legal and the entire premise crumbles. The first thing mentioned is attire or physical appearance. Verse 3 simply suggests modesty. Much that has to do with appearance is a product of culture and society, but it is important to remember that the church, in obeying the admonitions of God, does not do so because of customs. The church has no customs (1 Cor. 11; 16). Modesty in dress and demeanor is “subjection” in the same sense that the bride of Christ seeks to have men look to Christ and not to her. Modesty and demeanor expressed to garner the praise of religion is simply another avenue to self-righteousness. Pretended modesty is immodesty.

This is clearly seen in the next verse. The source of true modesty comes from “the hidden man of the heart.” Outward modesty is to reflect the heart and mind possessed of Christ (Eph. 4:22-24). True modesty is born of the mind and heart set on Christ. Thus, outward modesty will probably mean little to the world and may even be disdained. Outward modesty may not even be regarded by the unbelieving husband; therefore, this modesty's value is primarily in relationship with Christ. That modesty, in the hidden man of the heart, has to do with contentment in Christ and thus is not a goal but a result of

Christ being the righteousness of the believing wife. It is said to be a meek and quite spirit, which is of great value to God (Is. 32; 17).

In verses 5-6 Peter calls to remembrance an example of a woman who, because she trusted the Lord, adorned herself. Her adornment was not outward but in the inward principle of being in subjection to her husband. Do not expect the world to see this as an adornment. The world is interested in and highly esteems the visible, and has no use for the hidden, but God values faith and things of the inward man (1 Sam. 2:30; Lk. 16:15). Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord (kurios), reverencing him as the bride reveres Christ.

In verse 7, the husband is admonished. Though it is not declared, the same principle of motivation that applies to the wife “likewise” applies to the husband but in a sense, more so, because his admonition is to emulate Christ's relationship to the church. In the business of “tall orders” this is truly a tall one. First the husband is to dwell with his wife, to live with her in all the attendant privileges and duties of that conjugal relationship. This applies to every aspect of the marriage relationship (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Heb. 13:4; Eph. 5:25). He is to dwell with her according to (based on the fact of) knowledge (gnosis) intellectual understanding of who she is and who he is. He is to honor his wife, uphold her in high esteem and publicly as well as privately speak well of her. The word honor also has to do with supplying her needs, all of them, as Christ does for His bride (1 Tim. 5:3, 17). He is to treat her as if she is the “weaker vessel.” This is one of those phrases that is very often misunderstood and abused. What is here meant? Part of the husband's knowledge is that the wife has willingly given herself into his care. Her submission is a voluntary action for the glory of Christ. It is in

this sense that she is the “weaker vessel”, the sense of voluntary dependence. Though physical strength may apply secondarily, it is not the primary meaning. The husband is to honor this Christ exalting voluntary “weakness” because believing husbands and wives are both equally objects of the grace of God (Gal. 3:26-28). Failing to follow these principles will hinder the prayers of the couple because, they are one in Christ (heirs together...see v. 8).



## **In Summation**

### **1 Peter 3:8-15**

8, Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9, Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

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

11, Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12, For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

13, And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14, But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

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



Peter begins verse 8 with the word “finally.” He is, at this point summing up what he has been dealing with in the chapter, namely the believer's life principle of voluntary submission to powers and positions that God has ordained for the order of His economy (2:13). The believer must voluntarily submit to magistrates, servant to master, wives to husbands and husbands and wives to Christ. The admonitions that follow are the sum of these things in the sense that the principles declared are the motivation by which these things are accomplished since they are the result of God's salvation. Like every admonition that the Lord gives, these cannot be accomplished in efforts of the flesh but rather in looking to Christ. With eyes on Christ the flesh is subdued and though a constant distraction, it is not a governing one. Generally, our immediate response to such warnings and encouragements is to set up scenarios in our minds whereby we are faced with situations in which we overcome by our wits. That is doomed to failure because the flesh cannot accomplish anything in the spirit. The bookends of this passage are “one mind” and “the hope that is in you.” Divorce this passage from the gospel and you have nothing more than religious duty. If these principles are the practice of your life, the rest will fall into place as the occasion arises. The second word of verse 8 settles the matter even though it is possibly the most difficult thing to grasp for one who is plagued with the presence of carnality in every aspect of his existence (Romans 7:21-23). The life of the believer is not about trying, it is about being (Eph 1:12). “Finally, be ye all of one mind.” This is that singular view, that tunnel vision toward Christ that embraces all that is taught in the gospel concerning Him and His work.

With our minds there and there alone, the things that follow are not a matter of effort but living. It is practically

impossible not to live this way if we are looking to and at Christ through the gospel. Each of these admonitions should be prefaced with, “Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ.”

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, we will have compassion (feeling other's pain in our hearts), love (active interest in the welfare of the household of faith, giving), pity (understanding and acceptance born of the knowledge of our own frailty), being courteous (consideration of the feelings of the brethren, giving and receiving from a heart of thanksgiving; v.8).

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, we will not exercise self-defense when we are spitefully used, but rather will return evil with good because we are called to do so, as those whose inheritance is not bound to the circumstances of time and tide (v. 9; Matt. 5:9-12). The abuses of those who despise the gospel are what Paul referred to as our “light affliction” and are to be lightly esteemed.

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, we will guard our words and speak genuinely and honestly, our yea being yea and our nay being nay. Our study in James showed us the evil power of words, ill-used. The believer will love life and see good days, if his words are used to edify rather than tear down or cause suspicion (v. 10).

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer will eschew (avoid; be separate from) evil (2 Cor. 6:11 -7:1). “Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer will do good. The believer does not need a list...with eyes on Christ, he is looking at good (English derivation...God) and evil will be obvious. The believer knows what is good and seeks to do that. The believer will seek peace, choosing mercy rather than wrath and will ensue (run after, v.11) it.

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer will see things in their proper place. He knows that the eyes of the Lord are upon him and that his prayers will be heard and that the face of the Lord (revealed in the gospel) is against them that do evil. The evil that is referred to here is not societal taboos but is that which Peter has already declared as evil (v. 12; 2:7-8).

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer knows that no eternal harm will come to him. There may be harm from below but never from above. The believer's soul and his eternal future is safe and if weapons formed against him seem to prosper here, those who seek to do harm will be judged by those whom they seek to harm (v. 13; Is. 54:17).

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer is steadfast in the truth and if he suffers because of that, it will be honorable suffering (2:14, 16). It is not self-induced; it is brought about because our eyes are not fixed on the things of the world, and this is happiness for the child of God. “Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer's heart is not troubled nor is it afraid because He to whom he looks is governor of all that is (v. 14).

“Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, the believer sanctifies the Lord God in his heart. Truth be told, this is the only way that the Lord God can be sanctified in the heart. It can have nothing to do with what can be seen. Sanctify here means to, in the heart, look only to Him, set him apart and above all others, worshipping him in thanksgiving and praise. It means to remove yourself, who you are what you do from the equation of your salvation and righteous standing before God. That being the case, then the believer will be ready “Looking to Christ or as we look to Christ”, to give an answer to every man

that asks us a reason for our hope. How simple and plain this is! It is not an invitation to display your theological prowess. If you are asked the reason for your hope, you merely describe who you are looking at. Likewise, the only way that this can be done in meekness (he must increase, I must decrease) and fear (love, worship, reverence and adoration) is looking to Him. Meekness and fear are not posture or demeanor, it is heart worship. The believer's hope is Christ, Christ alone and only Christ. That's your answer...don't muck it up with yourself (v. 15).



## The Right Reason

### 1 Peter 3:16-22

16, Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17, For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

18, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19, By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20, Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

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

22, Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

This passage is a kind of capstone for the principle that Peter has set forth, namely that the believer will suffer for the cause of

Christ. The believer does not seek to suffer but the consequence of the singularity of his hope flies in the face of all who put salvation anywhere other than Christ and Him crucified. Also, Peter has made it clear that if the believer suffers for any other reason or brings suffering upon himself because he seeks to suffer (for religious recognition) that such suffering is not right or good (v. 17; 2:19-20).

Verse 18 is one of those verses that can stand alone as a beautiful declaration of the gospel of substitution. I have preached using this verse as the text of messages. However, in the context, our Lord is set forth as the example of suffering for the right reason (2:21). The word “for” or “because” gives the suffering of Christ, the just for the unjust, as an example of One who suffered in “well doing.” The reason that he suffered was just and the intent of His suffering was to bring the elect to God. The intent of Christ is likewise the intent of the believer, to see the elect brought to God through the preaching of the gospel. The last phrase of verse 18 is a simple declaration of the success of Christ's work. He died to satisfy the law, being delivered for our transgression, and rose for our justification. The singular power displayed and ministered was that of Christ Himself, who died and rose by His own will and purpose (John 10:15-18). We know that Christ suffered much in his sojourn here, but the suffering here is tied to the cross. This is the suffering that saved his people. Though His physical suffering was enormous, His physical suffering saved no one. It was His soul that was made an offering for sin. That suffering was one singular occurrence and resulted in the redemption of His people. That suffering was for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners by His perfect substitutionary sacrifice. All the admonitions up to this point in the epistle rest on the singular

thing...to suffer for the cause of the gospel is to do well, and it is only the suffering that results for the cause of Christ that is acceptable. Because the gospel is offensive to men, the believer needs to do nothing more than declare it to raise the ire of those who stumble at Christ. The success of Christ's suffering is without question. Verse 22 shows Him exalted for what he accomplished (Phil. 2:8-10).

Though the following verses are the subject of a great deal of conjecture by many writers and the ideas that flow concerning them are numerous, as always, the text is determined by the context. According to whom you read, verse 19 refer may to the Old Testament saints in Sheol, the Catholics residing in limbo or purgatory, or even the people already in hell, who for the life of me, I find no reason to peach to them. It is the phrase "the spirits in prison" that gives rise to flights of fancy. The subject, however, is still "suffering for the right reason." The reason is found, not in defining the imprisoned spirits but rather that Christ preached to them. It is the preaching of the gospel that made men hate Christ and eventuated in them nailing Him to the cross. Men did not seek His death because of the good works He did (John 10:31-33). They wanted Him dead because He, being a man, made Himself to be God, who would alone save His people by the sacrifice of Himself. As far as the incentive of man was concerned, it was the words of Christ that made His presence among humanity intolerable. This then, is the singular reason that rightly results in suffering rightly. It is the only answer that can be given for you reason for the hope that is in you (v. 15).

As far as defining whom the "spirits in prison" are, verse 20 does just that. The word, "which" refers to the "spirits in prison", that lived in the days of Noah. They were sometimes



disobedient. This does not mean that they were also sometimes obedient. "Sometimes" refers to all the different instances and ways that were preached to them of the coming deluge and the singular safety of the Ark. That Christ preached to them could speak of a Christophany, a preincarnate manifestation of Christ, but more likely it refers to the preaching of Noah and the longsuffering of God (120 years; 2 Peter 2:5). The words of Peter are speaking of both past and present. Christ through Noah preached the gospel to disobedient men of Noah's day, who at the time of this epistle are "spirits" residing in the prison of perdition. The gospel is preached to all men, as Noah did to all who were in earshot for 120 years. In the end, eight souls were saved in the Ark, and the remainder of the world became spirits in prison. Noah suffered for preaching the gospel for 120 years. He suffered the disdain, the mockery and hatred of the disobedient masses but He kept on building that singular thing that would eventuate in the salvation of eight souls. The gospel did its mighty work (Isaiah 45:22-25; 55:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-16). As you declare the gospel, the world will consider you as crazy as they did Noah...but the elect will be saved, and the remainder of disobedient ones will end up as spirits in prison (2:6-8).

Finally, Peter uses this bit of history in its truest light, as a figure. He says that it prefigures baptism, which now saves (delivers) us. Baptism does not deliver us from the filth of the flesh, just as the flood did not deliver Noah from the filth of the flesh. We find him in a drunken stupor after he landed on dry ground and his descendants were the same after deliverance as they were before (compare Gen 6:5; 8:21). Just as Noah was safe in the Ark from the wrath of God, he was of good conscience because he had preached the truth for 120 years. Baptism is the confession that we are safe in Christ from the

wrath of God anoj our conscience is good (quite) because we have not only believed the gospel, we have told out nothing but the gospel, that Christ is that stone, that sure foundation, elect and precious and none shall be confounded who on Him their hope is built. An evil conscience says do and live. A good conscience says it is done, and having declared only the gospel, no charge can be laid against me (Acts 20:26-27). Declaring this singular, precise message will garner the hate of the world and if ail but eight in the world perish, our conscience will be yet clear.



## The Same Mind

### 1 Peter 4:1-2

1, Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2, That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

This introductory passage in Chapter 4 is tied to the principle of baptism in chapter 3 and verse 21. Baptism is the primary confession of faith. It is the believer confessing by the waters of baptism that when Christ died, the believer died with Him (Romans 6:1-11). This being the case, the believer has the answer for the conscience (the intrinsic accuser), that having died in Christ, there is no ground upon which your conscience can accuse. The subject that Peter addresses is the same as before, namely that the believer will suffer in the flesh as our Lord did because of his singular mind and heart that is set for the defense of the gospel. From the moment our Lord left eternity His mind was set like “a flint toward Jerusalem” (his death on the cross). He turned neither to the left nor the right and when he began to speak of things of the gospel, men sought to kill Him and put Him out of their minds. His physical sufferings were the result of the words He spoke, especially those concerning His death and what it would accomplish. Those who have the same mind and the same message face a

world which cannot understand the message and cannot understand the messenger because they mind (pay attention to) natural rather than spiritual things (Rom 8:5-7; See: 1 Cor. 2:10-16). Tribulation and persecution attend the child of God because of what he says and the singularity of his mindset.

So, Peter continues in verse 1 to use Christ as an example of one suffering for the cause of the Glory of God. The word “forasmuch” is relative to the believer identifying with Christ and being ready to likewise suffer for the same cause. The believer is admonished to arm himself with the same mind (minding the things of the Spirit...Phil. 2:5-11). This is simply another way of saying to the believer that he is to look to Christ and only to Christ as his singular hope before God and as his only answer to men as the reason of the hope that is in him. Religion gives men many things to look at; God gives but one thing, His Son (Heb. 12:2; John 14:6).

Peter says that the believer is to arm himself with this same mind. This suggests that this mind is armor and that a war will ensue. The church is at war. Individually, the believer struggles with his own flesh (carnal nature) and that war is a continuous battle to disregard self as having anything to do with the salvation of the soul (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Paul, writing to the Church at Ephesus, declared that Christ was the armor by which the believer is to withstand the fiery darts of the wicked [one] (Eph. 6:11-19...emphasis on the gospel). The wiles of Satan are not designed to make men outwardly evil. They are designed to make men believe that they can, buy their will and wit, merit a righteous standing before God. Our Lord asserting that the words of Simon Peter was the Rock upon which He would build his church speaks in militant language (Matthew 16:16-18, Eph. and Matt. Frontal assault). The gates of Hell

would not prevail against the onslaught of the gospel, the Word of God. We are to arm ourselves with this mind because it is right and is the only way to persevere under the suffering that attends the declaration of the truth. Interestingly, the thing that brings about the suffering is the same thing that arms us against it. The only way to avoid this suffering is never speak of Christ but as old Barnard said, “if Christ is in you, He'll leak out on you.”

Peter goes on to say that “he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.” Again, we must remind ourselves that words such as these are not an incentive to do something to bring about suffering. Just as Peter has already stated, suffering is a result of preaching the truth, it is not a goal of preaching the truth. These words do not mean that a believer has no problem with sin. The believer is a sinner saved by grace, and is, while he lives on this earth, in a constant struggle with his old carnal nature. This phrase addresses three things.

First, it is reference to Christ himself. He, as a human being, suffered in the flesh and as God, satisfied justice. He was made to be sin for his people, and by his sacrifice put away the sin of His people. When he voluntarily gave up the ghost and by his own power died, the issue of sin was forever settled (1 John 3:5). Sin was imputed to Him, expiated by Him, and propitiated by Him. He made one sacrifice for sin forever and where remission is made that is no more sacrifice.

Secondly, the believer, the saved sinner who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin in the same manner. He died with Christ and before God he has no sin and has ceased from sin (Heb. 10:14-17). Sin no longer reigns in his mortal body.

Thirdly, as to dominion, the believer, the one who suffers because of his declaration of truth, is one who is no longer

under the dominion of sin (Romans 4:7-8; 5:21; 6:14). He who has suffered in the flesh because of his mind being fixed on Christ, has ceased from sin.

The result of having ceased from sin is that the believer no longer applies to the flesh to remedy the trials and struggles of this life. We, who believe, know that the first inclination when trouble comes, is to figure a way out of the suffering. Rather than looking to Christ, we begin to assess our lives and look for ways to improve our estate. This normally manifests itself in stopping activities or behaviors that we think will make things better. Then we usually try to improve our estate religiously by reading the Bible more, and praying more or attending church more, foolishly imagining that this will enhance our spirituality. These all end in further sorrow, brought about our efforts in the flesh. The flesh is always contrary to the Spirit and there will never be a positive spiritual effect that comes because of applying to or even observing the flesh. The lusts of the flesh are overcome by looking to, fixing the heart of Christ. They are not annihilated; they are subdued when our minds are on Christ, because our minds are incapable of pursuing two opposing thoughts at the same time to achieve a single end (Lk. 16:13; Col. 3:1-4).

## The Dead

### 1 Peter 4:3-6

3, For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4, Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

5, Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6, For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Verses 3-6 of this passage contain some unusual language. Taken outside the context they can be a source of confusion, but it is important to remember that the subject has not changed. Peter is still teaching that they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. He has particularly emphasized the aspect of disowning all efforts of the flesh and possessing the singular mind of Christ whose interest and intent were exercised for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners by Christ alone. Further, Peter has narrowed the cause of suffering to the preaching of the gospel. It is here where natural religion vents most of its venom. By refusing to account anything in the flesh and offering no evidence of salvation but



faith, the believer sets himself up to bear the brunt of religious ire. Paul made it clear that if he would but preach circumcision (the law, giving men something to do to engender hope) that he would cease to suffer persecution because the offense of the gospel would be removed (Gal. 5:11). The offense of the gospel is that it is the declaration of salvation accomplished from beginning to end without any contribution from man. Faith is evidence only to the one to whom it is given. It cannot be reproduced or religiously faked as other aspects that attend salvation (prayer, commitment, love, emotion, preaching). Faith is invisible. There is nothing about it that the flesh can duplicate because there is nothing about it that can be seen. However, faith is manifested in the singular look to Christ and for that the believer will suffer.

Peter, in these verses, is making further explanation of this truth. There are three things to consider as we look at these verses. First, the suffering of the believer for the gospel's sake is the main subject. Secondly the implementers of that suffering are, by nature, the same as the believer, but not so in the spirit. Thirdly Christ will judge those who cause the suffering.

Verse 3 relates to verse 2. The second verse makes a distinction between the former and present life of the believer, that distinction finding its existence in having the mind of Christ (believing). The believer no longer lives to or is under the dominion of the flesh, though that clearly was his former estate (v. 3; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). The word "Gentiles" is use in the general sense relative to behavior and activity. Peter, being a Jew and having his apostleship designed for the Jewish believer used the word "gentile" in the same sense that the Gentile would use the word "world" (comp. Matt. 6:32 & Lk. 12:30). Every believer, whether Jew or Gentile had his soul firmly planted in the

rudiments of the world prior to conversion. It was his life and he lived it with gusto (Eph. 2:1-3; 11-13). But, according to verse 2, that is not the situation for the believer's present life. This does not mean that the believer does not apply to the flesh. The abundance of trials in his life is proof that he does. Peter is addressing the tenor of the believer's life as well as that of the unbeliever.

Verse 4 teaches us that part of the suffering that attends the gospel is that our former life is often employed by those with whom we practiced that life, as a source of suffering. Since the believer's only evidence of salvation is invisible faith, our former partners in crime think it strange that we no longer frequent our former haunts. The believer admits what he is and boasts only in Christ as meritorious in salvation. Because of this, they speak evil of the believer. The word "evil" here means blaspheme. Those who speak evil of the brethren in this way blaspheme God and scandalize those who believe, because they won't return to their riotous ways, even though they declare that (to nature illogical) grace is for sinners (Romans 3:8).

Such are held accountable to God for their attitude against believers and will stand before the ready Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 5). Their evil speaking is against the Lord whom these believer's singularly trust. The Lord will avenge His elect.

Verse 6 is the source of many opinions. The commentators have a field day with this verse because it seems, at the least, on several levels, odd employment of language. It begins with a double "for." The first "for" is a simple conjunction connecting what is said before to what is about to be said. It is akin to the word "therefore." The second "for" is a primary preposition but is used to denote a past action as the basis for the present action. This word is used in the same manner in Acts 2:38.

Those who seek to use baptism as a sacrament or a means of grace interpret the word “for” to suggest that when a person is baptized, that action results in the forgiveness of sin. But the word “for” relates to a past action, namely the forgiveness of sins which is the basis for the present action of baptism (Jesse James is wanted for bank robbery). The wording might run thus “therefore, on the basis that believer has the mind of Christ, no longer lives to the flesh, is spoken evil of for it, and Christ will judge the evil speakers; the gospel was preached also to the dead.” Who are the dead in this verse? They are not the spiritually dead, those dead in trespasses and sin. Nor are they the physically dead and buried. They are believers who are dead in Christ, having died with Christ, but are also alive with Christ (compare 3:18 to 4:1; Coll. 3:12). The gospel is preached to them who are dead, in Christ, and the result of that preaching to believers who died to the flesh but live unto God, is that believers will be judged (passive voice, subjunctive mood) according to (based on the opinion of) men of the flesh, but live according to (based on the opinion or estimation) of God (Heb. 10:17) in the spirit (as men dominated by the spirit not the flesh).

This suffering occurs because the believer's mind and his heart and his faith is fixed on Christ and because he trusts Christ to, by His Spirit, work out what He has worked inwardly (Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Heb. 13:20-21). The flesh can accomplish no spiritual thing. That is why the gospel is preached to those who are dead in Christ.

## As Oracles

### 1 Peter 4:7-11

7, But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8, And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9, Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10, As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11, If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

These verses tie in with the words spoken in verse 8. They have to do with preaching the gospel to believers who have been described as those who are dead (died with Christ) and are at the same time alive with Christ, spiritually alive to God. Because they live godly in Christ, they suffer the persecution of religion and humanity in general and their “godliness” is that they are narrow and singular as to the reason they give for the hope that is in them. The suffering they endure is because they speak the gospel clearly, precisely, and concisely. They do not suffer for doing good unto others and to the household of faith...it is their words that bring down the wrath of the world.

This is clearly set forth in the words of verses 8-9 and makes no bones about the fact that the words we speak ought to match up with the life we live. You may be a theological genius and be able to set things in their right order, but if your words are spoken in hatred, arrogance and anger, the suffering you endure will be self-afflicted. Speaking the truth in love will not forestall the anger of men, but it makes sure that if they speak evil against you, they will have no grounds for it (2:12; 3:15-16).

He begins, in verse 7 with words of comfort for the suffering, but more they are a measure of the suffering of the saint. The end of all things is at hand. Peter looked to the imminent return of the Lord and admonished the believer to live in this world in light of that fact. Priorities change, goals change, what a person has affection for changes when they know the end of all things for them is near. I have watched many people die and that knowledge changes everything. What truly matters takes precedence. Peter is saying, “live as if you will not see tomorrow” (2 Pet. 3; 10-14). Through the preaching of the gospel the believer looks *to* Christ and *for* Him. This singular tunnel-vision, when exercised, makes men and women sober. This does not say it makes them somber. “Sober” means clear-headed, the ability to see things according to value, eternal value. “Watch unto prayer,” has to do with opportunity and importunity. Scripture declares that the believer is to pray without ceasing. Forget posture or any religious repetition for affect. When opportunity avails itself; with importunity call on the Lord.

Verse 8 begins with some mighty powerful words, “and above all things.” The effect of the gospel on the heart of the believer puts what follows in the highest place in the order of admonitions. Charity or love is no small thing in the economy

of God as it concerns His people. We have but to read the words of John in the gospels and in his epistles to know that love (charity) is to be the life of the child of God. Our Lord said that the world would, though it hated believers, know that they were the disciples of Christ because they had love, one for another. But charity in this instance is set forth in a singular way. Above all things have fervent charity. The word “fervent” has its roots in the concept of stretching out, reaching far, and is also translated as “unceasing.” This fervent charity, held above all things, is toward the brethren for the purpose of “covering a multitude of sin.” This involves forgiveness, but it truly has to do with hiding something, or to hinder the knowledge of something. This thrusts an arrow in the heat of gossip. When we know that our brother or sister has sinned, we are to seek to hinder what we know from becoming common knowledge. Believers are to protect each other. We are not to become accusers but rather concealers. The world will call this dishonest, but the world's concept of honesty is full of holes. Generally, it is little more than self-aggrandizement. Charity (love) demands that we protect our brothers and sisters as genuine lovers of their souls. Above all things, charity seeks to hinder the knowledge of our brethren's sins. We are never to bring up what Christ has put away.

Verse 9 admonishes the believer to “use hospitality one to another.” To be hospitable is at the heart of life for the child of God. This, though primarily, does not apply only to hospitality toward the household of faith. In the Old Testament age, to be inhospitable was unforgivable in society. In the New Testament age hospitality is a mark of the believer (Ro. 12:13; Heb. 13:2). The word as it was used in the East, meant “lovers of strangers” (see 1:1). The general application of “without grudging” means

not withhold sustenance, or shelter or other needs of strangers. The word specifically means murmuring or discontentment. This little word speaks volumes in that it removes this admonition from any legal premise. The commandments of the Lord are not grievous for the believer to bear because they are not done under the threat or constraint of the law but under the influence of charity and love. Hospitality is not law keeping, it is love keeping (Jude:21-25).

Verse 10 speaks of every believer (every man) having received the gift. The gift referred to is the manifold grace of God (2:3; 2 Pet. 1:1). Having received the manifold grace of God, we are to be stewards of that grace. Since we are stewards, we cannot convey this grace but are to seek to minister in a manner that is gracious. We are not to use grace as a cloak if maliciousness, but in grace, we are to minister to our brethren for their edification and comfort. Much is involved here but primarily we are to minister the gospel, preaching and teaching the word to help and comfort those who suffer for the gospel's sake. This is made clear in the next verse (v.11). This ministering is primarily speaking and that as the oracles of God. Oracles were those who spoke the words of God. Implied in the word "oracle, is that the speech was short, and to the point (singular- Matt. 5:37). The oracles of the Old Testament were Moses and the Prophets, and they all gave witness to Christ (Acts 10:43; 24:14). Their intent in speaking is the intent of every believer... that God would receive all Glory through Jesus Christ because all dominion and praise belongs to Him (Ps. 29:2, 9...margin).

## No Strange Thing

### 1 Peter 4:12-19

12, Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13, But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14, If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

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

16, Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17, For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18, And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19, Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.



Peter, in this final part of the chapter still carries on with the theme that the end is near and that the suffering of the child of God is like that of Christ in that the singularity of His message is the cause of the world's hatred. Since this is the heart and soul of the believer, there is reasonable, indeed assured, promise that the future holds no reprieve because neither the believer nor the world will change. In this passage, Peter assures the beloved brethren that they can expect the same treatment from the world and that their suffering, their trial is to be seen as the trial of every believer, needed chastisement, to keep their eyes and hearts on Him who is worthy (1:6^9). The trials of the believer are not strange things (v. 12). Indeed, the believer is to rejoice, not in the suffering, but in the knowledge that his Lord suffered for the same cause and that he will be a partaker of the glory that is yet to come (v. 13).

In verses 14-18, Peter encourages the believer to take heart in the obvious contrast of results born of doing what is right and good and the hatred of the world, which is its consequence. If you are reproached for the gospel's sake, "happy are ye" (v. 14; Matt. 5:12). This does not mean that suffering is the source of happiness but rather that the cause for which you suffer is the source of happiness. The word "happy" could well be rendered "blessed." To be reproached for Christ's sake is to be blessed. The reason you are blessed and happy is not due to circumstance but because the spirit of glory (the intent of the gospel is to glorify God) and the Spirit of God rests upon you. Thus, the happiness is not the glassy eyes and smiley face of religion but the joy of the heart that the world cannot see, the happiness that gives the believer peace and confidence in the worst of trials. Where the Spirit is there is liberty, and that liberty is born of understanding that you belong to God having

been purchased by His blood. To the world, the believer's peace amid suffering is utter nonsense because the believer is upheld and strengthened by someone they can neither see nor know (John 14:16-17; 1 John 3:1). The world, for their part, speaks evil of Christ, but the believer glorifies Him through declaring the gospel.

Verse 15 is a caveat, an often-repeated admonition to the believer (2:18-19; 3:16-17). He is to make sure that if he suffers it is to be only for the gospel's sake and not because of his own evil doing. One would think that a believer does not, so much, worry about the first three things mentioned here (though they are obviously a possibility because they are mentioned), but the last thing more readily applies to the believer. The use of these other things; murder, thievery and evil doing may be a tool of language to place emphasis on being a busybody by putting it in the same category with things that would naturally see more heinous. When it comes to speaking the truth, being a busybody would have the same effect on the message that murder, or thievery would have. Basically, this verse states that any imposition of your flesh—your doing—in the declaration of the truth will result in an unacceptable kind of suffering, one brought on because of your own personality or attitude. Our attitude about preaching the gospel must be about the gospel as it glorifies God, and not about getting into folks' business so we can see some kind of result due to our actions. It is enough and it is the extent of our warrant that the gospel is declared. Anything more than that, any aid we might think we give in the result is evil. If we suffer let it only be for the gospel's sake (v. 16; Matt. 5:37)).

Verse 17 and 18 contrast the suffering of the child of God and that which awaits those who oppose the gospel and are in a

great part employed in the administration of those fiery trials. Verse 17 must be viewed in the concept of “now and then.” The words “begin” and “begun” refer to “now” and embrace the gospel Age which began at the incarnation and will end at the second coming of Christ. The word judgment refers to chastisement the necessary fiery trials and suffering that attends the child of God in this world (1 Cor. 11:32). The enemies of the gospel are guilty of causing much of this suffering and because their focus is this life and because they are not able to perceive the things of the Spirit, they are at ease in their sin. They are oblivious to what awaits them. They are at this time, when the body of Christ is suffering; unaware that everything happening to the believer is good and mercifully meted out at the hand of their gracious sovereign. They, themselves, are in the hand of the mediator until the appointed time that their judgment begins and will never end. The time of the believer's chastisement is the beginning of the unbeliever's terrifying end (Is 63:4 year, the acceptable year of the Lord...the gospel Age). Vengeance, seething, roiling, pent up wrath belongs to God and has only been administered once in the history of humanity. That was on Calvary, when God removed the sword of justice and plunged it in the heart of His fellow (Zech. 13:7). That was done for the salvation of the elect and when that was finished the sword was returned to its scabbard. When it is once again removed from its place, it will do eternal damage to all those who oppose the gospel. No man, not even believers know anything of this except as God gives them faith to believe it. But those who despise the truth will know it when the day of vengeance is come (Hebrews 10:26-31).

V.18 is a simple declaration that if the righteous were saved with such difficulty (scarcely), at great cost (Christ's

substitution) and mighty expenditure of power (wrath poured out), how terrible will it be for those who appear at the judgment without Christ. The end of such who have despised the day of grace and spurned the space for repentance will be to suffer the horrors of never-ending punishment with emphasis placed on how they criminally persecuted the children of God (Matt. 25:41-46).

If you suffer in well doing, it is according to God's will. So trust Him, cast your cares upon Him, because He careth for you (v. 19).



## For Pastors

### 1 Peter 5:1-4

1, The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

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

3, Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4, And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Peter ends this letter with final exhortations to the pastors and members of the body of Christ. This morning we will look at the word for preachers or pastors. We don't really know the dynamics of the church at that time as to its physical makeup. In the days of the early church, believers assembled in small groups in houses and there was of necessity a plurality of elders (preachers, pastors, elders). But as the days passed the assemblies became more centralized and by the time the Revelation was written, the words suggest that there was one pastor per church (Rev. 1:20). The word "pastor" or "elder" designates someone as an under-shepherd and the word has its origin in the word that means "shepherds crook." In the Revelation we see that these under-shepherds and the churches are in the hand of the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The true church is not an independent organism; it is the body of Christ and concerning its government, is in the hand of Christ. This is the dynamic of the church (John 10:27-29; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). These first 4 verses address pastors. The admonitions are succinct and to the point. I know that in this day, in religion, a pastor's duties are manifold. He is everything from psychologist, counselor, funds facilitator, administrator, community organizer and someone who gives little talks. Several years ago, I was talking with some folks who attended a Baptist Church of the Southern Convention. At the time they were without a pastor, and they spoke of having a huge list of pastoral duties and even a list of duties for his wife. In all their drivel, they never mentioned anything that is remotely akin to what is declared here by Simon Peter.

In the first verse Peter gives his qualifications and authority upon which he is able to exhort elders of pastors. He speaks as an eyewitness of the sufferings and the glory of Christ (1 John 1:1-3). He speaks of the glory that shall be revealed. This takes our thoughts away from the glory revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration. Though Peter was there and a thoroughly involved participant, he makes it clear that his presence at that glorious event does not compare to the glory that we have in our hands and presently is open upon our laps (2 Peter 1:16-21). He speaks of a time, yet to come when the Chief Shepherd will reward his preachers with a crown of glory. This means that they, having shed this mortal coil, will be endued with final glory. This crown will not be a reward for duty but as all rewards, awe simply a further manifestation of grace (Lk. 17:7-10) In all probability, considering the words that follow, Peter is declaring that he is not a novice but has been in the trenches for some time. This certainly aligns with the concept of an elder as

one who has experienced what it is to live in the work-a-day world and minister to those who must live there.

One cannot help but think that the first exhortation given is specific to Peter's personal experience with the Savior and is inextricably tied to love for Christ (John 21:15-17). How plain this is! There is no room to muck this up with religious prattle. "Feed the flock of God." The pastor's fundamental and primary function in — the Lord's Church is to feed the flock. Pastors are mimickers, emulators of their Master (Is. 40:11). This truly is the reason for the existence of the pastor. He is to feed the sheep, to, with purposed redundancy declare the gospel (2 Tim. 4:1-5). The preacher is to set the table with the feast of fat things, with wine on the lees and well refined and cry aloud, "If you are hungry, come and dine." This singular thing, this precise thing, to many, seems insufficient to the demands of life, but to hungry sheep it is all that matters and is sufficient to give the flock peace and rest (Zeph. 3:13).

The next exhortation is for the pastors to take oversight of the flock. This word oversight has to do with looking, rather than management. It really means to pay attention to in the sense of caring for. First, it means for the pastor to make sure that he primarily cares for the flock by feeding them. Secondly, it means that the pastor is to know the flock and to be aware of their needs and watch for their souls. There is no stretch of definition that can make this oversight to even suggest an exercise of control over the flock.

Peter qualifies this matter of oversight with several exhortations that define what oversight does not mean. First, the pastor is not to oversee the flock with constraint (force). Whether by position or personality, the pastor is not to use his gifts or calling as a goad to drive the sheep. Goats must be



driven, but sheep must be lead, fed, and cared for (Ezek. 34:1-4). Rather he is to perform his duty willingly. This word willingly is translated in other versions as “according to God's will” or “according to God's word.” The pastor is to govern his ministry according to the manner that Christ has prescribed.

This oversight is not to be executed for “filthy lucre.” Though this term is often attributed to money, it is clear in scripture that pastors, if possible, are to be supported by the church (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:17). The words “filthy” have more to do with motive than money. It means “with a greedy eye on material gain.” This warning is against tempering doctrine to keep a job or to ensure a raise. Oversight is to be exercised with a “ready mind.” In the Ethiopic Version it reads “in the fullness of your heart with joy.” Oversight is to be exercised from the heart, from love for Christ, not as lords, but examples (Rom. 1:15). The pastor is not to lord over the flock as a controller, but by example and lead as a shepherd. The fundamental aspect of that leadership is the declaration of the gospel. The flock is to follow their leader as he follows Christ (1 Thes. 1:6; 2:13).

When the Chief Shepherd comes, the crown He will give will be the gift of grace, not recognition of works. “I am what I am by the grace of God.” The crown of glory is revelation that all that the pastor has done is solely by the unmerited favor of God. Glory goes where glory is due in the economy of God and this crown — is cast at His feet because he puts pastors in the ministry and gives them a report to utter and the results of the declaration of that report belongs only to God.



# Reverence, Honor, Love

## 1 Peter 5:5-14

5, Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7, Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8, Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9, Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

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

11, To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12, By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

13, The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

14, Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

In the last lesson, Peter gave instruction and admonition to the elders (pastors) of the churches. Their rule of the house of God was to be accomplished not as lords over the flock but as shepherds who feed the flock with the gospel of Christ. This week, the words of admonition are directed toward the flock of God, and they are given because they are needed. The suffering of the child of God, though necessary, can have debilitating effects on the heart and mind of the believer. He must be diligent to seek Christ that he might live in peace and harmony with the brethren and be fit for the battle with the foes of God and the evil one who is the accuser of the brethren. These words of-Peter are about living in the grace wherein ye stand.

The elders he refers to in the first part of the passage (v. 5) are not the pastors he addresses in the first four verses. The dynamic is that of young people showing reverence to those that are of advanced years. A mark of things going awry in society is the lack of respect that young people have for the elderly (Is. 3:5). Peter returns to the theme of subjection as the way of the child of God (2:13). In truth, the elect begin in submission, and this is the mode of their lives from faith's first look to Christ. To refuse this basic kindness to the elders can only be a result of pride. Pride is considering self instead of others and tops the list of those things that God hates (Prov. 6:16-17). That being the case, then respect for your elders must be a result of humility and the instruction to humble yourself is showing respect to whom it is due (v. 6). Humility cannot be worked up, it is a result of looking to Christ. Humility is one of those illusive results of faith that disappears when it is sought.

Cares, the cares of the believer, are also things that when handled by the believer never turn out well (v. 7). Cares are said to be that which chokes out the Word of God (Matt. 13:22).

Since we cannot handle these cares then we are encouraged to roll them over on the Lord. He cares for you. This means two basic things. First it means that He loves you. Secondly it means that even when you are out-of-pocket...you are in His care. He will and does take care of you.

Verse 8 gives two words that instruct us on defending against the wiles of the devil. He has designs on you and his designs are to devour, as a roaring lion that slaughters his prey. He will make use of your pride and the cares of the world to turn your eyes from Christ. First you are admonished to be sober. This does not address the abuse of alcohol; believers know what that is. This addresses the mind. Sober mindedness is minding the things of the Spirit and not the things of the flesh. It is to think with the mind of Christ. To be vigilant is to watch warily for those things that easily beset us. It doesn't take much to overwhelm the believer. His own flesh, his carnal nature is his constant foe. We are to resist the devil and do so by only one means, the faith, believing the truth (v.9) and knowing that what befalls you also befalls every believer.

Verse 10 reminds us that none of these things that befall the believer is outside the realm of sovereign purpose. He has called us to eternal glory; nothing can change that. The sufferings are part of the plan, and after you have suffered a while (the appointed time, the prescribed dose), you will be brought to maturity, established, strengthened, and settled (grounded). Your journey, from beginning to end is a work of grace.

The glory and the dominion belong to Him—forever (v. 11). Peter here, as with many writers in the word of God, is caught up in the wonder of his previous statement and is made to stop and praise God from whom all blessings flow. No

unplanned thing comes to the believer so nothing but good will ever come your way. Our flesh rebels against this truth but even that rebellion will be turned to praise when we are reminded of the fact that our salvation is by grace and only grace. He dominates the universe for your good.

This letter was delivered by Silvanus (known as Silas, the companion of Paul). Peter calls him a faithful brother. The words "I suppose" do not indicate that Peter doubts the faithfulness of Silvanus. The word "suppose" is a weak interpretation. The word means, "impute or reckon." Peter is asserting strongly that Silvanus is a faithful brother.

Peter tells the brethren that he has written this brief epistle, to exhort the brethren and to testify to the brethren that all they have gone through and are going through is a testimony that they stand in the true grace of God (Heb. 12:6-7).

As an indication that they are not alone in the struggle that attends faith, Peter sends them salutation from the church at Babylon as well as greeting for Marcus. The church at Babylon probably consisted of converted Jews, descendants of those that remained after the captivity who did not follow Ezra home. Some writers say that these Jews, that formed this church, were of the purest blood and still retained their tribal identity. They were the elect of God. Since Peter was a minister to the circumcision, he probably had ministered to them. Marcus was Mark, or John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas. He traveled with Paul and Peter and wrote the gospel according to Mark.

The final words of the Apostle are words that encourage love for one another. The kiss of charity, called the Holy kiss, was a symbol of true affection and charity (love). Simon Peter's prayer was for peace to be upon all who were in Christ Jesus.

# Second Peter





## Introduction To 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter

### 2 Peter 1:1-3

1, Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2, Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

3, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

This second epistle of Simon Peter is rich in the doctrine of the knowledge of Christ and what that knowledge produces in the heart and life of the believer. This epistle is book-ended with this theme. In verse 2, Peter's desire for the believer is that God's grace and peace would be multiplied through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (margin: "of God our Savior, Jesus Christ"). In the last verse of the epistle, Peter admonishes the believer to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." Knowledge of Christ is singular. It is the gospel that concerns Him alone (Romans 1:1-3). It is the nail in a sure place that, alone, produces assurance in the heart of the believer (Heb. 6:11). It is "knowing" Him (John 17:3; Phil. 3:10). It is "acknowledging" Him (Eph. 1:17). This knowledge is revelatory in nature (Deut. 29:29). This

knowledge is utterly unique in that it is not based on empirical evidence but is founded upon believing (John 6:69; Heb, 11:1-3; 2 Peter 1:1). That which is believed is the gospel, the word of God, and Peter approaches the subject both positively and negatively as to its effects on the believer as well as the unbeliever (1:19-21; 2:20-22).

It is evident that Peter, as in his first epistle, has his eyes on another world, another home, whose builder and maker is God. Whether by special revelation or based upon what the Lord had said to him 30 years prior, Peter feels that his days of instructing the church are drawing to a close (John 21:18-19; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 1:14-15). For this reason, there seems to be an urgency to the words of the Apostle as if he would not have much longer to admonish the believers in this world. The things he says in this letter are not new things but rather are a rehearsal of those things that he has taught for many years.

The letter begins with Peter identifying himself as to station and office. As to station, He is a servant of Jesus Christ. This is the way those who are children of God willingly describe themselves. Though, unto God, they are not servants but sons (Gal. 4:6-7), as to the personal view of self they are glad to take the place of servant. The knowledge of what God has done for them and that it is all by grace humbles them, strips them of self and causes them to fall on Christ. Paul said of himself, "I am less than the least of saints" and "I am the chief of sinners" and "I am what I am by the grace of God." When we see an apostle describing himself as a servant of God, it is always in the sense of a bond-slave, or bondservant. This describes him as one, who though legally free, has voluntarily bound himself to his master because he loves his master and his master's family and only desires to be in the master's service all his days.

Secondly, Peter identifies himself as to his office. He is an apostle. This means that he was personally chosen of the Lord for the preaching of the gospel for a specific time in the history of the church. This office was not given him because of personal qualification—he was a fisherman. Nor was this office given to him because the Lord saw in him some attribute of allegiance or rectitude. He denied the Lord thrice, openly rebuked the Lord and joined the Judaizers at Antioch. He was given this office because the Lord chose him for it and would equip him for it (1 Cor. 1:26-29). A look at Peter's character gives us a true revelation of the fact that God has chosen sinners, saved by grace alone, to be his family and preach His gospel. Thus, grace glaringly shines as the only possible explanation for Peter being an Apostle. It is his appointed office and by that appointment he is equipped to lead the church of God in things spiritual.

The letter is written to those of like precious faith.” This is a distinctive phrase. It is exclusive to the saints (Phil 1:27). It excludes all other faiths whether natural or religious that do not fall under the stringent description here given. First it is “obtained.” It is not natural or derived by study or personal merit. It cannot be worked up. All men do not have this faith (2 Thess. 3:2). It is the gift of God, bestowed by sovereign grace in salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). It is “like”, which means it is the same faith given to every one of the elect (Eph. 4:4-6). It is precious because its singular object is precious (1 Peter 2:6-7). It is obtained only one way, through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This has two applications. This “like precious faith” is obtained through the righteousness of God in the salvation of His people. He declared that righteousness in Romans 3:24-26. Faith is obtained only because God righteously redeemed those to whom this faith is given.

Secondly this faith is obtained through Christ, who is our righteousness (Jer. 23:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Romans 11:36). With that righteousness, which is revealed in the gospel (the power of God unto salvation) comes faith to the chosen. For the believer, salvation is not a process; it is an upheaval of revelation that converts him from being an unbeliever one second and the next second to full assurance of faith. Everything that attends salvation arrives in the inner man in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

This is precisely what verse 3 is saying! This matter of obtaining faith is according (in this manner) as His divine power (Romans 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 1:23-24) hath given (bestowed, granted, installed and always received) unto us (those who have obtained like precious faith) all things (Romans 8:28, 32; 2 Cor. 5:17-18; Eph 1:3) that pertain to godliness (reverence and respect for God) and life (the equipment of eternal life) given to complete your predestinated course (Eph 2:10).

As we look at these various admonitions and warnings, we must remember that none of them are foreign to the new man, to the man who has obtained like precious faith. They are the law (the word of God) written in the heart of those who are recipients of the manifold benefits of the covenant of grace ratified by the sacrifice, the blood, the death of Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:14-16). This epistle is a reminder of that which we have in Christ, not of things yet to be obtained.

# Spiritual Life

## 2 Peter 1:3-4

3, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

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

Last week we looked at the introductory words of Peter and touched lightly on verse 3 to show that the source of all that follows in admonition and warning flow entirely from the gift of grace obtained singularly through the knowledge of God our Savior, Jesus Christ. In this lesson we will look more at verses 3 and 4 because they bring understanding to those things addressed in verses 5-7 and the promise and warning in verses 8-9. This epistle, as it is with all of scripture, is written for believers because only they are able to understand it and use it in the proper manner. It is a spiritual book written to those who have been born from above (1 Cor. 2:14-15). To those elect are given, by divine power, all things that pertain to godliness and life. Even those who lack the things in verses 5-7 and are called blind and unable to see afar off are yet described as those whose sins have been purged (v. 9) though they have forgotten that fact as evidenced by their lack of diligence. The last phrase of

verse 4 declares that those being addressed are people who have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Since these have been given all things necessary by divine power, then none of the things are lacking. So, the admonitions have to do with want of attention and affection on our part and the reason for that is well known by every believer...our eyes are not where they ought to be.

The divine power referred to in verse 3 is revealed in the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). The power that is revealed is the power of God our Savior in the salvation of His elect (Ps. 110:3; Matt. 28:18; John 17:2). It is not power in us but power behind us, backing up the declaration of truth. Speaking the truth as it is in Christ is certainly one of the things that pertain to godliness (respect and reverence for God) and life (spiritual life and that which attends it...that equips the believer). The word "pertain," (actually the words "that pertain") has been added by the translators. This was probably added because of the things mentioned in vv. 5-7, as they are things that, though possessed, can appear lacking due to lack of attention. This part of the verse is stronger without the translator's addition. Divine power has given us all things unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Christ. With the knowledge of Christ is the understanding that the believer is complete in Him (Col. 2:9-10). It is Christ who has given us these things and has likewise called us to glory and virtue. Since God has given us these things according to His divine power then the glory and virtue to which we are called is part and parcel with the gift itself (Rom. 11:29). Calling us to glory and virtue does not mean that God has left us to our own devices to accomplish these things in the power of our will but rather is the source by which glory

and virtue are realized, employed, and enjoyed. How? Through the knowledge of Him.

Without the translator's addition, it is easier to understand the next verse.

Verse 4 says some very interesting and powerful things. The word, "Whereby" refers not to the glory and virtue to which we are called but rather to the "knowledge of Him." Through the gospel that teaches us of the finished work of Christ, the believer is given exceeding great and precious promises. Those who have obtained like precious faith are heirs of these exceeding great and precious promises (Gal 3:26,29; Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 1:20).

This next phrase is a very interesting one. I admit that over the years I have looked at it with a very quizzical eye. Separated from the context it could be addressing what is called the old and new nature of man i.e., the old man and the new man, the flesh and the spirit, the carnal nature, and the spiritual nature. However, within the context (vv. 1-11) the meaning of "partakers of the divine nature" has to do with the knowledge of Christ and the fact that the partaker has escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Clearly, what the believer has been given, will not produce that lust that corrupts the world (Gal. 5:16). What he has been given subdues that lust and causes him to gravitate to glory and virtue.

The word nature here does not have to do with God's essential character, but rather with that which flows naturally from spiritual life. Remember, the believer has been given all things unto life and godliness. The word "natural" here has its roots in being begotten (regeneration, new birth). Nature here has to do with what flows or springs forth from that which is intrinsic or essential to character (fish gotta' swim...birds gotta'

fly). The believer has received the Holy Spirit. He is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. This is his spiritual life, and that life lives and acts according to the dictates of the Spirit. That life lives naturally according to its nature. Doctrinally, and received by faith, we know that we are spiritual, but because of the principle of sin that is ever present in all that we do, we cannot experimentally or experientially point to any activity as purely spiritual. In the matter of spirituality, we must simply take God's word for it.

The word “partakers” in the original gives us some help here. The word means “to have in common with or to have fellowship with.” What do we have in common with God? Are we divine? No, we are *spiritual*. We have been given spiritual life. God is Spirit and our fellowship with Him, that which we have in common with Him is the spiritual life that He has given us in regeneration through the knowledge of Christ, the gospel (Rom. 8:16) That spiritual life that fellowships with God is described here as being “partakers of the divine nature.”

We have that fellowship with Him because He has given us all things unto life and godliness and because (through the work of Christ and the knowledge of Christ) we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. This spiritual life uses the world, approaches the world, views the world differently than when the believer was in bondage through its rudiments. His lust formerly governed his use of the world and corrupted what he touched. Now he has been called to glory and virtue and is admonished to seek to employ those things in w. 5-7. These things will not corrupt the world (Gal. 5:22-26, compare 2 Peter 1:8; Phil. 4:8-9).



## **Beside All This**

### **2 Peter 1:5-7**

5, And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6, And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7, And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

This is both an instructive and helpful passage of scripture for the believer as well as a tool of legalist works religion and the frame of mind that seeks to find evidence of salvation based on visible, certifiable works.

Just a cursory look at these things to be added to faith reveal that not one of them is visible but things that can only be personally realized and that through faith. Along with faith, these admonitions fall under the category of “all things that pertain to life and godliness” given to the believer, the possessor of “like precious faith.”

So, at the outset of describing these things, it is important to realize that “adding” them has nothing to do with obtaining or gaining them because they are things that attend faith. They are gifts of grace or fruit of the Spirit (v. 12; Gal. 5:22-23). Since they are fruit of the Spirit, they belong to the relationship between Christ and His sheep, between the vine and the branches and are guaranteed by Christ (John 15:8, 16): Fruit is not an originator or a creator; it is a product. It is produced

when branches are vitally connected to the vine. Since it is faith to which these things are to be added and faith's singular object is Christ, then whatever is meant here is accomplished only with eyes firmly fixed on Christ. Faith is the branch connected to Christ, the vine, and the fruit that is produced is what is referred to in vv. 5-7.

The words "beside all this" seem to suggest that these things are separate from faith or are things that they are worked up. In most of the other versions of scripture the words are translated "And for this very reason." This relates all that follows to the basis of the believer being given all things that pertain to life and godliness through grace. These things are of grace and therefore are things to be diligently employed since they are all fully provided in Christ alone (Phil. 4:4-9).

There is something very interesting about this word "beside." Generally, it is interpreted in scripture (in the English) as a preposition. In the original language however, in this singular instance, it is not the word that is interpreted "beside." It is the Greek word "auto" and is everywhere else interpreted as a pronoun—him, himself, he, she, or it. Further the root word is "aer", which has to do with breath, wind, or unconscious breathing. The word "this" means therefore. Taking these things into consideration "beside all this" really has to do with something as common to life as breath and this might well read "and as if breathing therefore," giving (contribute to) all diligence (haste as a sense of immediacy) add to your faith. The word "add" means minister and is translated that way in verse 11 (ministered—same word as "add" in the original—to minister nourishment or supply that which nourishes).

The concept of ministry gives greater sense to that which follows because the things ministered are toward the household

of faith, to them that have obtained like precious faith; to them who, by divine power, have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness, to them who have been given precious promises, to them who have been called to virtue and glory, to them who are partakers of the divine nature (have fellowship with and something in common with God), to them have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, to them who are brothers in Christ (v.7).

Some of the things that follow come in the form of examples and others as acts—such as love and charity. These come with the promise of fruitfulness to those who follow the admonition and a warning for those who are forgetful of the gifts they have been given. Salvation is not at issue here but rather reminders of the obligations we have toward one another. As we consider these things, remember that they are not accomplished by looking at the things themselves but realized and exercised as we look to and consider Christ. This view reminds of the debt of gratitude we owe, and that works almost exclusively have to do with what we do toward the brethren

“Virtue” is moral goodness. Though the word moral is not in the Bible the believer knows that he is to seek to do that which is pleasing to His Lord looking to Christ, the believer is viewing Him who is good and weighs his life in reference to how it will affect his relationship with Christ.

“Knowledge” is intrinsic to the one who has been made alive by the Spirit through the gospel (Heb. 10:16). This refers to the ministry of knowledge and not just any knowledge, but that excellent knowledge revealed in the gospel—the righteousness revealed from faith to faith—speaking to one another in psalms and sing hymns and spiritual songs.

“Temperance” is self-control and involves everything from moderation to guarding our tongue. It is the fruit of the Spirit. Again this cannot be accomplished in the flesh.

“Patience” only comes through enduring tribulation. Since tribulation is the believer's lot in life, by design, then the Lord will have His people rest in Him. Patience will have its perfect work.

“Godliness” is *not* God likeness. It has to do with worship, praise, and thanksgiving. It is gathering with saints to adore God together.

“Brotherly kindness” is a way of life. It is showing mercy on every available occasion. It is to choose mercy and kindness when the flesh desires otherwise. It is to answer evil with good: Looking to Christ is the only way this is possible.

“Charity” is love and love is giving. Charity is never about taking, receiving or thoughts of reciprocation. Charity is always, always outward toward the loved one. We have but to look to Christ to see that this is His action toward us—complete unbridled charity: Love one another as Christ has loved you (Rom. 5:8, Gal. 2:20; Rev. 1:5). Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness; brotherly kindness and charity are the ministry of faith.

# Remembrance

## 2 Peter 1:7-15

7, And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8, For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9, But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10, Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11, For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12, Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13, Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

14, Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

15, Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

Those who have neither understanding nor appreciation of the omnipotent grace of God in salvation jump on verses 8-9 and try to prove that a man whom God has saved by grace can then,

by his own laziness, lose his salvation and undo the mighty work of God. God has betrothed Christ to His bride and what God has joined together cannot be put asunder by man. As we have seen in our studies in James and 1 Peter the admonition given to the people of God are given because they are needed. We are told to be thankful because we want for thankfulness. We are told to be careful because we can be careless. The believer is a saint, but he is like Rahab, described as long as she lived on the earth as Rahab, the harlot. She is set forth as an example of faith yet while on this earth never was voided of the title “harlot” and this serves to remind us that while we are in this flesh, we will not be able to point to one thing in our life and our doing that we can assert as proof of salvation. We are saved by -grace or we are not saved at all.

The attributes declared in vv. 5-7 are things that as children of God we are to seek to minister to the household of faith. Vv 8-8 are respectively a promise and a warning. What is being addressed is the joy of our salvation which we can lose because of our sin, our disregard of that which is right and good and our applying to the flesh for that which can only be accomplished the Spirit (Ps. 51:12). Those to whom this letter is written are described in vv. 1-4. They are believers and have been given eternal life by God and will never be lost, but they are yet living with a carnal nature that is always contrary to the Spirit that lives with them (Gal 5:17). This their lot in life (Rom. 7:25). So these words of vv. 8-9 have to do with recalling what has been done for them in grace because they can be forgetful.

Verse 8 is a simple statement of fact concerning the employment or the ministry of those things referred to in vv. 5-7. We saw in Galatians 5; 22-23 that there is no limit to which the fruit of the Spirit might be employed. There is no law

against them therefore there is no restriction in the ministry of them. If they are ministered (employed), then the believer will reap the joy of his salvation described here as being fruitful in the knowledge of Christ, namely he will not be barren. The knowledge of Christ is the gospel of His grace. It is the record of what God has wrought by the substitutionary work of Christ, namely the salvation of His people. That knowledge is too wonderful for words and the fact that we must be reminded to keep it ever in our mind is an indictment against our frail and sinful human character. This fruit of the Spirit is ordained and will remain (John 15:16). It is fruit (food and nourishment) and therefore aligns with the principle of ministering nourishment (“add”; v. 5). These things are to be employed for the edification and growth of our brothers and sisters in Christ. This fruitfulness is grounded and anchored in the “knowledge of Christ” and is ministered through no other means.

Verse 9 declares the fact that where a believer fails to minister in the fruit of the Spirit, a certain thing is revealed about him. He is said to be blind. This is not spiritual blindness but refers to his view or perspective. He is not looking to Christ. He is not seeking those things above but has clouded his view with things below, things of the earth. He can see but not very far. His view is limited to the horizontal. What is revealed about him is that he has forgotten that he was “purged from his old sins.” The word “old” speaks to the truth that his sins have *already* been purged (Heb. 1:3). This forgetfulness seems, considering the greatness and wonder of sins purged, an impossible thing. How could anyone forget *that!* But this warning is not given to those who are seeking to be righteous but to those who are righteous before God by imputation. They are not personally righteous they are sinners saved by grace, and



they *can* forget and since they are admonished here, it is obvious they *do*. That is why we must avail ourselves continually to the gospel (the knowledge of Christ) because hearing and rehearsing the gospel is the only way we can be continuously and repetitively reminded of what God had done for us and be fruitful in that knowledge. It is not the fruit that we look to or for. It is the vine, and the fruit will be the reasonable and natural product of that union.

Being forgetful of what Christ has accomplished for us is what is being addressed here. This is proven in no uncertain terms by the words of Peter in the remaining verses of this passage. First he admonishes us to make our “calling and election sure.” Calling and election are inseparable (2 Thess. 2:13-14). The word “sure” speaks of assurance, and assurance is exclusive to the Gospel. In the Scripture, “full assurance” is said to be a product of three things; understanding (Col. 2:2), hope (Heb. 6:11), and faith (Heb. 10:22). Each of these things is a product of hearing the gospel (1Thes. 1:4-5; I John 5:20). If you employ (minister) these things in vv. 5-7, while you are doing so, you shall not fall (forget).

So Peter gets downright redundant (vv 12-15). In verse 12, he says, “remember what you already know.” In verse 13, he stirs them up to remembrance. In verse 15, he desires them to have these things in remembrance. You cannot remember something that you do not already know and have not experienced. Believers have experienced these things (vv3-5) and are called to remember them because they can be and, sadly, often are forgotten. These admonitions are for a reason and the reason is that we forget that we have been “purged from our sins.” We forget because we often mind the things of the flesh and not the things of the Spirit. In the Old Testament,

the Lord often said the same thing to Israel as they were about to enter the Promise Land (Ex. 13:3; Deut. 5:15; 15:15; 16:12, 24:18). Thank God, we *know* them, they are *in* us, and may we pray God to keep us from forgetfulness. We remember that we have been purged from our sin, only by a constant rehearsal of the gospel—the knowledge of Christ.



## Not Sight

### 2 Peter 1:16-21

16, For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

17, For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

18, And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

19, We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20, Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21, For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Though Peter has set forth many things that pertain to godliness and life in the first part of this chapter, he has repeated one word or phrase that centers us on the source of these things. That word or phrase is “knowledge” or “through the knowledge of Christ.” Those admonitions given, flow from

the gospel alone and the remembrance to which he directs the believer is the remembrance and rehearsal of the gospel. In the passage we will address this morning Peter presents, as it were, his conclusion to the things that he has asserted thus far. He makes a clear distinction between faith and sight, between experience and revelation, between God's Word and man's work. The reason why Peter is so adamant in making these distinctions is because there is a strong tendency in the believer to resort to the flesh when he is admonished to do anything. The old man is ever ready to insert himself into spiritual things. The believer needs a constant reminder that he does not produce fruit but that his fruit comes from his connection to the vine. The only way, the *only* way this is accomplished is through the repetitive message that our standing before God has been eternally settled by the substitutionary successful sacrifice of Christ. All works flow from love for Christ and gratitude for what He has done, or they have no value whatsoever.

So, beginning in verse 6, Peter obviates the possibility of the error of resorting to the flesh. The “cunningly devises fables” which are not to be followed refers to the motivation for what is to be ministered through faith. The word “fable” in the original has its roots in narrative fiction or legend but, with the evolution of language, by the time it arrived at King James English it had come to mean a tale with a moral imperative or a morality tale. This is an interesting usage because the fables that Peter refers are various ways invented by religion (in this case, Jewish religion) to accomplish a moral righteousness. Paul spoke of such fables when he wrote to both Timothy and Titus (1 Tim. 1:4; Titus 1:14). We know that the Jews still operated under a conditional covenant (Sinai). To accomplish merit before God they devised a system of traditions and duties that

they believed would eventuate in a positive moral outcome. The problem was that they invented these traditions and set them forth as if they were the doctrine of God (Matt. 15:8-9; note false doctrine is always in the plural, Coll. 2:22; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 13:9). Peter is simply saying that spiritual things are not accomplished or motivated by legal means. The admonitions to believers are not given to bring about a moral end or a righteous standing.

To further prove this point, he alludes to his own experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. As far as experiences go, this would rank among the annals of the paramount! It is not this grand experience that Peter looks to, though this experience could be turned into a cunningly devised fable of gigantic proportions to lure folk into some sort of false belief system whereby they could pursue

10 righteousness before God. But Peter put the kibosh on that by declaring that the experience was not important when set alongside the rebuke he received from God Himself (vv. 16-18). Men are impressed with visual and tactile experiences. Imagine where religion would be today if visions and healing and faces of Mary and Jesus were not seen on water towers or McMuffins. Who would dare to question a church with 12,000 members—"seeing is believing"—except it isn't. God is only impressed with his Son. Christ, and only Christ impress God. He pleases God, satisfies God, and has satisfied all the requirements of God. He has propitiated God for the sins of His people. It is a word from heaven that Peter and every believer looks to for therein lies the manner and motive and means for seeking to do what is right and good. It is what your hear that moves you, not what you see or have seen (Romans 10:17; Gal. 5:5-6).

But Peter doesn't stop there. The experience and the voice he heard happened during that time of transition between the Old and New Testament. During the time of the ministry of Christ and the apostolic age that followed, the word preached was accompanied with visible signs and wonders to give credentials to the men as apostles so that they would be given a hearing. Peter is saying that the experience, what we saw, what we heard and the credentials we were given is what we had, but now we have a more sure word of prophecy. That prophecy is not a single prophetic utterance but rather encompasses the entire word of God. This is further illuminated in the words of vv. 20-21. He again makes a distinction between the flesh and the spirit. The words "private interpretation" can and has been misused. This does not speak of private study whereby the believer grows in grace through comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. 2:13). The words "no private interpretation" would better be rendered "no prophecy of scripture is of a man's own impulse" or "of one's own interpretation." One does not approach scripture to put his own personal spin on it or to provide himself with "proof texts" to support his own invented doctrine. Scripture does not come by man, but from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Holy men (those separated by God for the task of recording His word) were moved; inspired, breathed upon by God and the only interpretation of scripture is a spiritual and scriptural interpretation (1 Cor. 2:14-15) 2 Tim. 3:16 compare with vv. 5-8 of 2 Peter 1).

This more sure word of prophecy is what we must attend to (1 Tim. 4:13). The dark place is our hearts. We look through a glass darkly. Only by hearing this word does the light of Christ dispel that darkness. The metaphors of daystar and dawn suggest progression or growth. The daystar in eastern literature

was the sun but was referred to as the bringer of light. The idea is that attendance to the gospel is like the first hint of light that is the promise of the dawn and eventuates in the fuller and more excellent revelation of the brightness of the day. The bringer of Light culminates in the fullness of Light, through hearing the gospel (v. 19).





## Then And Now

### 2 Peter 2:1

1, But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

This chapter contrasts false teachers and the “holy” men referred to in the last verse of chapter 1. Several distinctions are made with the employment of the distinguishing conjunction “but.” This little word denotes opposites. Just from the use of this word we immediately know that those false teachers are not holy men. This does not refer to character but rather standing before God. In short, these false teachers do not know Christ, are not in Christ and have not been redeemed by Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). Also, these false teachers “privately interpret” the scriptures or teach them according to their own impulse or agenda. They do not teach according to inspiration (comparing spiritual things with spiritual) but rather teach according to their personal inclination and affinity, the two words that define the false doctrine of free will.

By way of comparison rather than contrast, Peter declares that the false teachers that are presently among the people are like those that were among the Jewish nation in the time of Moses. This sets forth two things that are very important. First, this is not an uncommon problem but is rather to be expected.

Secondly, this problem is not outside the church but is “among them.” These facts teach us that the arena in which these false teachers operate is preaching of the gospel. These false teachers are not atheists. They speak in scriptural terms, use Bible language, live lives that men conclude to be holy and the damnable heresies they bring in are heretical in terms and application of the gospel. They do not deny God, they diminish His deity by integrating men into the accomplishments of God. Their end is sure and settled. We will see their character and the modus operandi in the remainder of chapter 2 as well as the following chapter.

I want us to consider this verse in consideration of its misuse. It is an important passage in the supposed arsenal of those who Peter is discounting. False teachers use this verse, *which disallows false teachers*, to prove that their errors are actually truth. They use two phrases in particular to assert their heretical doctrine of universalism. The phrases they employ are, “the Lord that bought them” and “bring upon them swift destruction.” First, they declare that this verse proves that Christ died for everyone because it clearly states that Christ bought those, in the sense of redemption, some of whom will ultimately perish. Secondly, they use this to “prove” that those who have been saved can yet end up as apostates. The fact is that these false teachers “wrest the scriptures to their own destruction.” The text itself, this verse, is sufficient to destroy their false doctrines.

First, this verse does not, in any way, have to do with the salvation wrought by Christ. It is not about redemption, Christ, as redeemer. His lordship, here referred, to is that of absolute deity, or as Father or as creator. We know this because the word “Lord” here is not the word “kurios” which refers to His

relationship with the elect, but it is the word “despots” (our word despot) which refers to rightful ownership as God the Father (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Jude:4; Rev. 6:10). The title “despotes” denotes the power or authority of the master over the slave, while the title “kurios” denotes the authority of a prince or king over his subjects and that, for the welfare of the subjects. The word “bought”, as it is used here does not refer to the redemption accomplished by Christ as savior, but rather that of ownership authority of God as master over all His domain (John 17:2). Further proof that this verse is not speaking of redemption is that when the redemption accomplished by Christ on Calvary is the subject in scripture the price of that redemption is included in the context (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20, Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9). No mention of price or even suggestion of price is found in this verse. These false teachers are not denying redemption, they are denying ownership. They deny the Master that owns them (Psa. 24:1; Dan. 4:34-35). They are the fool in Psalm 14 who says “no God for me” or the religious practitioner described in 2 Timothy as “having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. To use this verse to teach the lie of universal redemption is heretical error. That is a damnable heresy, but it is not the damnable heresy being addressed in this text. These cannot countenance the idea that they are the property of a despot, the Despot...they deny the Lord that bought them (2:10).

Also, Peter employs the concept of then and now. He, as it were, in disclosing these false teachers, compares what he is doing to what Moses did in days gone by. He states that he is acting in the church in the same kind of capacity that Moses did when he challenged the Jewish false prophets of his day

(compare v. 1 with Deut. 13:1; Jer. 23:28; Zech. 10:2). The false teachers that Peter refers to are of the same ilk as Paul refers to in Galatians and Colossians (vv. 11-12). Being Jews, even though they were false teachers, they considered themselves to be “purchased of God” (Deut. 32:6). The word “bought” in this passage refers to their deliverance from Egypt, a temporal deliverance that proved that the Egyptians as well as the nation Israel were owned by God (Rom. 9:15-23). Verse 5 of the same chapter makes it clear that Moses was disclosing false prophets as was Peter disclosing false teachers in our text (v.1; comp. Deut. 32:5; with 2 Peter 2:13). Peter is saying that these false teachers are the same as those false prophets of old, who, by their heresies, deny the very God who delivered their fathers out of Egypt. This reveals the snare of scripture for the false teacher. False teachers use this text, which is about them, to set forth their false teachings. The bullet in the gun pointed at their head has their name on it and they pull the trigger themselves. They actually use this scripture to prove themselves false.

This passage does not speak of Christ in the capacity of redeemer but rather in the capacity of master of the universe, owner and sole proprietor of all He has created and especially the owner and master of these false teachers.

# The Lord Knows How

## 2 Peter 2:1-3

1, But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2, And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3, And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not

Though! Peter deals with false teachers in the greater part of this epistle and it is a sad report revealed in the description of these false teachers, this epistle is a word of hope for the believer. In the end this epistle a declaration of the fact that God knows how to handle these heretics and at the same time he knows how to take care of His people (1c, v. 11). Though the descriptions of these false teachers are designed to make the believer aware of their tactics and motives, the Lord has made a reservation for them in the fires of perdition and likewise made a reservation for the godly in eternal glory (Jer. 50:20). We are constantly reminded that though things in this world are seemingly going haywire, the Lord is in control and will set things right and put all things in their proper places.

As we saw last week, when the gospel is preached there will arise false teachers, denying that God owns them, denying His power and denying that He does as He pleases. They are the same as those in Romans 3 who call the gospel and its preachers scandalizers.

These false teachers are described according to their ways and their motives. Primary to all their action is a base hatred for the way God operates. Being owner and operator of the world and all that is therein does not sit well with those who believe that they can, by their doings, obligate God to act favorably toward them. The Lord does what He will with His own and those who detest this fact seek to draw men and women away by painting God as a cruel taskmaster.

The first thing that is stated is that they will gain many followers. Their message is tasty to the rebel's palate because it makes the rebel to be on equal footing with God, and even of greater power than God in the matter of salvation. Their ways, by which they gain followers, are called pernicious or lascivious (margin, v.2). These two words, when placed together mean a destructive or destroying lust. What they do is sin, and it operates in the sinful, lustful, and depraved desires of the natural carnal heart (1:4; James 1:13-15; Heb. 2:1-3). Their ways are sensual, and the language suggests that what they do is a form of seduction (2 Tim. 3:1-8).

Their seductive tactic is to speak evil of or cast doubt on the truth of the gospel. The didactic method that they employ is the same as their professor emeritus, the serpent, the shining one in the Garden of Eden. The old adage "those who can't do, teach" applies here. Lucifer seduced Eve with the promise of deity by insure her that God was not fully truthful, and that He was withholding from her was she was entitled to. Seduction always

operates in the “grass is greener” scenario. Doctrines such as election and predestination are labeled as unfair practices and rather than assuring the salvation of some is presented as prohibiting the salvation of some. The love of God, which is particular and effectual, is presented as general and wishful and available to all. God's love is presented as a common and universal offer, a commodity that is available to all who exercise their will to partake in it. Sovereign love, grace, mercy and the teaching of election, predestination and sovereign effectual love accomplished and realized by the effectual work of salvation wrought by Christ, remove man's participation in the salvation of his soul. These truths are evil spoken of by seducing men to feel that they are not getting their fair chance. It is a powerful seduction and according to this passage it makes for a sizable following.

The motive of these false teachers is covetousness. They desire to have what is not theirs to possess. They want to possess and control the mind of men. They desire to have men obligated to them rather than to God (Gal. 6:12-13). The heart of covetousness is idolatry, the manufacturing of a false God. These false teachers intend not only to diminish God; they intend to replace Him. In any religious scenario there must be deity, there must be a God. The covetous desire of these heretics is to remove the power of God in salvation and replace it with the power of men. It is that simple and it is that evil. Nothing is more seductive to carnal men that to be told that they have the power to thwart God's purpose. It is cocaine to the carnal nature. It is addictive and anesthetizing to the natural man. Though the false teacher would not overtly proclaim this heresy, by speaking evil of the way of truth and majoring on the lie of free will, the rational and logical conclusion is that in the



matter of salvation the power to perform is found firmly in the hands of man. Men do not claim to be God, but subconsciously they are convinced that the sovereign power and prerogative belongs to themselves. This is covetousness, which is idolatry.

They gain their following with feigned words. The word “feigned” means molded. This suggests that these false teachers are not acting in a willy-nilly fashion. Like a potter on a wheel, they are with calculation, intent, and malice aforethought summoning all their artistry, designing language, and tasks that will enamor men and women by playing on their vanity. Included in the meaning of that word “feigned” is the employment of “flattering words and fair speeches, great swelling words of vanity, having men's persons in admiration because of worldly advantage; and in this way they gain their point” (John Gill).

What these false teachers are doing is bringing men into abject slavery. They make the souls of men and women to be products that are sold on the market of religious commerce. “They make merchandise of you.” The souls of men and women are bartered and sold and traded on the meat market of slavery (Zech. 11:5; Rev. 18:13).

But the Lord knows how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished (v. 3c; Jude v. 4). That day does not linger, and their ordained damnation does not slumber. At the appointed time, their careers will end in destruction, because the Lord knows how to do that.

## Three Examples

### 2 Peter 2:4-9

4, For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5, And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6, And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7, And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8, (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

9, The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

This passage declares the truth that the Lord knows how to deliver the righteous out of temptations and reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment. Peter is inspired to give us three examples of this truth. These verses state that God knows how to do this because He has already done it. These words are spoken to the righteous to give them comfort concerning the

false teachers that shall arise in their midst in days to come. The Lord will dispense with them in due time while delivering His own.

The first example given is that of the angels that rebelled against God. Some put this episode to have occurred prior to creation, often using Isaiah 14 as an example. There are some problems with that premise. First it describes Lucifer as he who “weakened the nations” (Isaiah 14:12). As far as scripture reveals there were no nations prior to the creation of the earth. Another difficulty is found in Job. The “sons of God” came (at appointed times) and Satan was among them. This shows that at the time of Job, Lucifer had access to heaven. If you compare Luke 10:18 with Revelation 12:9, you find that what took place in our text was in the time of our Lord's earthly ministry. Satan's rebellion along with those who followed him resulted in them being cast down to earth. This must mean then that they no longer were allowed access to God. They already had access to earth but after this incident they were bound to earth. Words like the “abyss” or phrases like “the bottomless pit” speak of the distance they fell in reference to their former estate. They became the lowest creatures in the earthly realm, so far from God that their existence was void of all light. The “chains of darkness” is their exile to earth, where they await, bound to the atmosphere of darkness until the day of final judgment. The fact is that they were angels and they fell or as the text says, “they sinned” and this sin resulted in them being cast to the earth, gives us some sense of their sin. Many have said their sin was pride and there is ample scripture to support that view (Prov. 16; 18; 1 Tim. 3:6; John 8:44). But I think their sin was more specific. Those angels who did not sin spent their time desiring to look into the wonder of the salvation of sinners by the

sacrifice of Christ (1 Pet. 1:10-12). The sin of the angels that fell was that they, like the false teachers that would follow them, had no interest in Christ's redemptive work. This was pride indeed, but pride revealed in seeing no need of Christ and His great work and therefore having no love for their Creator (1 Cor. 16:22). If one sees no need of Christ, then he must hold that personal merit will put him in good standing with God. God delivered the righteous and reserved the unjust for the Day of Judgment.

The second example that is given is that of God destroying the world by flood and delivering Noah. Noah is described as a preacher of righteousness. Some might assume that that he was preaching "holy living" but since he was who he was only by God viewing him in grace, the righteousness he preached was the righteousness of God. That righteousness is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith. The righteousness he preached was *not* to "be good till you are choked to death by the water;" it was that ark. God was going to destroy the world by flood and the only hope of humanity, and every living creature, is that ark he was building at the command of the God, who had shown him grace. The righteousness he preached was the God who had been gracious to him though he did not differ from those other members of his fallen race. The first thing Noah did after he left the ark was get blind drunk. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and reserve the unjust for the Day of Judgment.

The third example that is given is that of Lot and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. First mentioned are the wicked cities and their end. They were reduced to ashes because of their wickedness, fully realized in their hatred for the angels (messengers) sent to rescue Lot. They stand as an example of

the end of all who live ungodly in this world. However, by no religious or moral standard could Lot be called righteous.

God called Lot righteous (v.8), But God first called him just (Romans 1:16-17). He was justified by grace and his righteousness was Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). He had chosen the little city, Zoar, which led him to the booming city life of the great cities of the plain. He was snatched from the jaws of death by the angels of the Lord. His wife was turned to salt looking back at what God was about to destroy. She loved this present world and not the world to come. It is said of Lot that despite all his bad choices that he was a spiritual man. He was vexed with the filthy lives of those who surrounded him. He was a man who knew he lived in a place that dishonored God. His life and commerce there was probably profitable, yet he lived in a constant state of trouble. The trouble was inward. The word “vex” (v. 7) means oppressed. His story suggests that he had some kind of testimony, but it was immediately questioned by the inhabitants of those cities because what he said he believed did not wash with him living in that place. The word “vexed” (v. 8) comes from a word meaning “touchstone.” That stone was used to test the authenticity or purity of precious metals as silver and gold. The gold or silver was rubbed on the stone and its purity was measured by the mark it made. His righteous soul was purer than fine gold, but to his own mind it was obvious that he made no mark on the black touchstone of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot was not an example of moral integrity; he was an example of the grace of God for ruined sinners.

Primarily he is an example of the just, men made righteous by imputation, men who though undeserving have been, through the ages, delivered by God out of temptations. He knows how, in the presence of seemingly impossible situations,

to rescue His people. And, at the same time, He has reserved those who oppose Him for the Day of Judgment and the fires of eternal damnation. Be reminded that the only difference between the inhabitants of Sodom and Lot was the grace of God and so it is with every saved sinner. If you are His, you will be delivered.



## False Teachers Described

### 2 Peter 2:10-16

10, But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

11, Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12, But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13, And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14, Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15, Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16, But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.



We live in a day that pushes the ideas of tolerance and acceptance. I have no difficulty with tolerance except that ultimately it lowers the bar on the pursuit of truth and diminishes the concept of absolutes. But tolerance is built into the psyche of what it is to be an American and that is reasonable if those things being tolerated do not infringe upon the freedom and welfare of others. Acceptance, however, is entirely dependent upon the acceptor and his willingness to accept. Tolerance can be legislated, acceptance cannot. In the matter of false teachers, it is clear they are in and among the visible church and are tolerated as such. Heretics are, nowhere in scripture, to be excommunicated, so tolerance certainly enters the picture.

However, in the matter of false teachers, they are never to be accepted. Their attitudes and activities, their “modus operandi” are pointed out, described, and condemned throughout the word of God. The serpent, the father of lies and the dean of the college of blasphemy, is the chief instructor in the seminary of religious prevarications. The world calls dogmatism intolerance but it is not. Dogmatism is refusal to accept that which is false and openly pointing it out without compromise. Our Lord did not call for the abolition of the Pharisees but openly and boldly pointed out their errors and their motives, condemning them with every breath. The Apostles, in their letters, repeatedly warned against false teachers and the effect of their teaching as well as the targets of their lies and their goals and intents. What is important to remember as we read this description, as well as others, is that they must be considered in the context of religion and that the works of the flesh, spoken of, take place in the realm of what is called Christianity. It is easy to look at the works of the flesh

and attribute them to folks who are irreligious, folks who frequent bars and bordellos. Religion has convinced its adherents that this is the case and has succeeded in creating moral icons who self-righteously judge all who do such things while taking pride that they do not. They have actually fallen into the trap of the successful false teachers.

Apostasy and reprobation both have their origins in a false view of the truth and an unwillingness to acknowledge God as He is and all within the arena of true religion (13c, 15a). These operate in the true church, else the concept of a counterfeit gospel, one that if it were possible would deceive the very elect, carries no weight. These false teachers do not deny the gospel, they use it for their own ends but add to it many things that are compelling to the flesh. They seek advantage over men and women and that advantage is employed to ultimately control them.

The description given of the false teacher is detailed but is not mysterious. This is always the case because God would not have us study the false but rather see them in light of the truth.

They are first described as licentious. This description is generally and rightfully applied to lusts and desires that end in perversion, but they are not restricted to carnality but involve pulling men away from the truth with promises of untoward pleasures...turning liberty into license (v. 10-11). Chiefly, what they are guilty of is revealed in the first verse of this chapter. They refuse to acknowledge God as He who has dominion over all that he has made. They have no fear of God and therefore have no problem with speaking evil of God and all that He has set up as authority over them. This begins with parents, goes on to governments and ends with God Himself. Though they are

not necessarily open with what they do, their guile is employed to make men question all authority except for their own.

They are called “natural brute beasts” because they appear to act on some base instinct rather than on any rational or moral thought (vv. 12-13). The things that they don't understand are the things of God and his gospel, yet they feel free to expound on them as if they did...wresting scripture to their own destruction (3:16).

They were “made to be taken and destroyed.” Two things stand out in this statement. First, they were made. Their presence in the church is no accident (1 Cor. 11:19; 2 Pet 2:1). Secondly, they were made to be destroyed...they serve a specific, albeit temporary purpose (Prov. 16:4; Isaiah 45:6-7; Roman 9:22-23; 1 Peter 2:6-7; Jude:4). They are reserved in the chains of the darkness they love. “Rioting in the daytime” is a metaphor for the audaciousness of their activities. Such things would be more reasonably done under the cover of darkness, but these false teachers do their deeds overtly, unashamedly.

The word “sporting” intimates that, with them, it is about winning in a deadly game. They are spots and blemishes on the gathering of the saints. Because they are made for this they cannot cease from it. Their sin and deception are what drives and motivates them. They make men to be merchandise, sold bartered and traded for their own profit. They are covetous and therefore are idolaters. They are apostates, having forsaken the right way, which declares that they, at the least, have once embraced the truth (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tm. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:20).

They are said to follow the way of Balaam. He is called a prophet because he refused to do anything against those who God had blessed. He spoke the truth about God's care for His people but in the end the enticement of filthy lucre proved him

a false prophet (like the false teachers in the church). His tactic was to have the pagans intermix with the people of God and over time the result would be devastating. Part of the false teacher's tactic is to bring about a mixture of truth and error, of grace and works and of mercy and entitlement. God strictly prohibits any mixture (Deut. 22:9-11; 2 Cor. 6:14-16). It was a dumb beast that the Lord gave a voice to rebuke the false prophet. Note well the description of the false prophet and the false teacher's actions. They are called madness. Their efforts are insane (Ps. 2:1-5...context v. 9).



## **False Teachers Described (2)**

### **2 Peter 2:17-22**

17, These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18, For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

19, While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

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

21, For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22, But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Last week we looked as Peter began to describe the mind and attitude of those false teachers revealed in verse 1 of this chapter. The concluding verses of chapter 2, deal with the ultimate effectiveness of these teachers and those who they target with their damnable heresies. We have already seen that these do not operate outside religion and Peter is very specific in placing them in the church, the true church where the gospel of Grace in Christ is preached. It is and always has been that the gospel of grace is a magnet for miscreants.

Grace is only understood by those who have been recipients of it and even they are warned against using grace as a cloak for maliciousness. But the lost religious man walking according to the dictates of his carnal nature is drawn to the word “grace” as an excuse for all sorts of mischief. Legalists declare that the preaching of grace leads to “opening the floodgates of sin.” They tell men and men that those who preach grace are scandalous because they direct men to sin that grace may abound (Rom. 3:8). Nothing is further from the truth, but willful ignorance knows no bounds. Those described in the remainder of this chapter are false teachers who actually use grace as an excuse to do all manner of evil. They interpret grace as license and teach it as if it were liberty. They promise freedom and happiness and deliver woe.

First, Peter describes them in their emptiness and their vanity (v. 17). They are “wells without water.” A well without water is just a big hole. Their message and means and methods are void of substance. But they hold out what appears to be refreshment and it only leads to greater thirst.

Secondly, Peter describes their instability. They are said to be “clouds that are carried with a tempest.” First, they are clouds and the chief reason that they are this described as such

is because they block out light and create shadows. They hang around the gospel, even speak well of it, but they, as clouds hide the sun. There is no light in them (Is. 8:20). Another aspect of them being referred to as clouds is that they are easily moved from one thing to another. They are not grounded in the truth, and they are without foundation. Jude says they are carried about by the wind, alluding to the truth that they readily embrace every new doctrine that comes down the pike. Paul told Timothy that such are ever learning but are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They are carried away, unable to cease their activities, because they are cursed (v. 14). They are reserved in chains of darkness, and they were made to fulfill this purpose...made to be taken and destroyed. The mist of eternal darkness, the cloud of everlasting condemnation is reserved for them.

In verses 18-19, Peter teaches us about the tactics and the targets of the false teachers. Their tactics are to appeal to the vanity of the flesh. They make use of oratory, great swelling words. This language suggests a progression of allurement. They capture men's hearts in small measures but must keep up the vain words that play on their esteem of self. Allurement is not overt; it is covert done under the guise of promise. Since these false teachers operate in the arena of religion, words like wantonness and lust of the flesh have to do with their target's religion. Those who are allured have had a religious conversion. They are described as those who have "clean escaped from them who lived in error." The exact error is not mentioned. Since Peter made much of his ministry to the Jews, the error these escaped from may refer to Judaism and the Old Covenant. If this refers to Gentiles, the error would be about idolatry and paganism. These who are drawn away by false teachers no



longer practice their former error, but it is evident that they are not satisfied in their conversion. They are unhappy...they are looking for more and since they have professed belief in the gospel, it is certain that they have not been saved by grace. They changed religions but they have not changed gods. They changed doctrines but they have not changed gods. I have seen it many times in the years I've been pasturing.

Many have seemed overjoyed with the truth, joined in with the church but underlying it all was a deep dissatisfaction and soon they are gone. They are drawn away the lust for something other than the singularity of the gospel. The constant repetition, line upon line, precept upon precept becomes unsatisfactory and they are ripe for the picking. They will never deny grace, but they will begin to salt their language with the notion that those who preach otherwise also have something worthwhile to offer. The allurements are geared to their wantonness and the lust of their flesh for something more than Christ. Sadly, if you want something more than Christ, there are a world of false teachers who are more than ready to oblige you. Soon you will be in bondage, chains of darkness from which there is no escape (v. 20; Luke 11:23-26).

The end of these who are drawn away is revealed in such graphic terms that there can be no question that there can be no recovery from this horrible estate. These allured ones have escaped the pollution of their former life because they heard of Christ and for a time were enamored with Him and with those who trusted Him. However, because they would not rest in Him alone, they were soon entangled again in bondage greater than that in which they had bound before. Christianity without Christ is a hard and sorrowful business, and its end is atrocious. It would have been better had they never heard the gospel than

to hear it, change and reform their lives, and then leave what they have heard for something else (v. 21).

Peter describes their end in the most repulsive terms possible (v. 22). He quotes Solomon describing a fool (Prov. 26:11). For a Jew, a dog and a pig are the foulest of the foul and their behavior is repugnant. They respectively return to their vileness having temporarily left it. This is the appropriate description of those reformed but not regenerated, who are allured by false prophets to their vile end.

Pray God to fix our minds and hearts unwaveringly upon Christ.



## Scoffers

### 2 Peter 3:1-8

1, This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

2, That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3, Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5, For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6, Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7, But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8, But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

In this last chapter of the epistle, Peter leaves the discussion of the false prophets that bring in damnable heresies, that bring into bondage those who have left their former religion and embraced Christianity without having any true interest in Christ. He now begins to comfort the saints against the general onslaught of what he calls scoffers (v. 3). These are folks who press what they call logic upon the scriptures. Their design is to call into question the faithfulness and veracity of God and His Word. Being creatures of time, they believe that their interpretation of events is the “be all and end all” of understanding the days of our lives. It is only the Lord's people who have their fingers on the pulse of the times in which they live because they understand the Word of God. These scoffers deny the coming judgment in a logical manner, at least to them, saying that since it has not yet happened then it will not happen, therefore, the God who promised it is not true. Peter answered this skewed thinking with proof that their logic is in reality ignorance of the truth—the fundamental truth that God not only will judge the world but that He already has.

Peter begins this chapter by drawing his first letter and the second together to repeat the theme that runs through both. He writes these things to stir up the believer's mind to remember all the things that pertain to the truth they know and the ease with which a believer may fall prey to the wiles of false teachers. In verse 2 the only sure and true way of discovering what is false is to know and remember and rehearse what is true. The continuous declaration of the gospel is the only light that discloses the darkness. Specifically, Peter refers to the prophets of old as they prophesied of the coming of the Lord to judge the earth (Mal. 4:1; Dan. 7:9-10; Jude v. 14).

It is by the gospel that we know there shall arise scoffers (men who trifle with God's Word) in the last days (v.3). This phrase "the last days" is often used to set forth some eschatological premise. This phrase addresses the same time frame that Peter referred to in the first verse of Chapter 2. The last days began with the incarnation of Christ and will conclude upon His imminent return (Is. 2:2; Acts 2:17; 1 John 2:18). This speaks of the gospel Age. This is now as it was "now" when it was written. These scoffers, though their approach is somewhat different than the false teachers referred to in the previous chapter, nonetheless operate in the same realm and for the same reason. They walk after their own lusts. The desire for self-aggrandizement, the desire to displace God and have advantage over men is what drives them to do what they do.

They exact their heresy by appealing to the natural bent of carnal humanity to explain things that lie outside their capability. The promises of God are in Christ including the promise of the coming judgment, but the knowledge and the understanding of these things are spiritually discerned by God given faith. Natural logic appeals only to the carnal mind but cannot enter into any spiritual truth. But what they say does intrigue the natural mind and is designed to cause men to question God's Word (v. 4). Every error that has ever come down the pike starts by questioning God's Word. The deception of Eve started that way (Gen. 3:1). These in our text speak the language of their father the Devil, "Didn't God promise to come (quickly); well, it's been a long time. Where is the promise of His coming. Look around you nothing has changed since the beginning of time. God will not judge the world, and the proof is that He has not done so as He promised so many years ago."

Their willful ignorance is obvious. This is Peter's reply. In their ignorance, by speaking of God's promise, they have used the Word to disprove the Word by their logic. Once the Word is employed it is the very thing that proves their ignorance to be willful. The Word they use to discount that God will judge the world, proves that God has already judged the world by the flood (v.5). Men are fools to question the Word of God because once this written lion is loosed, nothing and no one can prevent it. Many people have told me that when they heard of election and predestination, they went to the Bible to disprove these truths, only to be utterly convinced and delivered from their foolishness and their error by the Spirit of God, through the Word (By the word of God... v. 5-6).

By the very same Word, the heavens and earth as they now exist, exist in keeping. They are in storage, reserved unto fire against (until) the Day of Judgment. Peter returns to the theme of chapter 2 (2:9). These scoffers fall into the category of those who are, "made to be taken and destroyed" (2:12).

Verse 8 instructs the brethren to not be ignorant. This is certainly a reference to the previously mentioned willful ignorance of the scoffers. The words that follow show without a doubt that the passage of time as men count it and the employment of human logic by natural men has no bearing with the accomplishment of the purpose of God. God is not bound by time...He invented time for man that we might know when to sleep and when to awake. Has it been a century since God has promised to quickly judge the earth? Has it been a millennium? Have eras and ages come and gone? With God it is but sunrise to sunrise. Did He say He would come soon? Did He say that a generation would not pass until He came again?

Did He say yesterday that it would be today? With Him, it is the same as a thousand years (Ecc. 3:14-15; Luke 17:20).

What Peter is basically saying to these scoffers is that counting time means nothing. The Lord is coming to judge the earth and for God, the arrival of His Son is imminent. All things are ready...even so, come Lord Jesus.





## His Promise

### 2 Peter 3:8-9

8, But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9, The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Verse 9 is one of the verses that those who oppose the truth of electing grace use to prove that it is God's will to save all humanity and that ultimately salvation is dependent upon the human will. Of course, while employing this verse they conveniently leave out 21 words that compose the real meaning of the verse. They say, "God is not willing that any should perish" and treat the words as if they were theological edict. Those who quote their "verse", as it were, not only avoid the context of the passage but wrest their notion from the context of the text itself. Verse 9 is not primarily about salvation, though as to result, the sure salvation of the elect is declared. This verse has to do with the coming of the Lord to judge the earth. It is spoken to debunk the scoffers who deny His coming saying "Since he has not come yet and it has been millenniums, He will not come." Peter's answer is simple, "He has promised, therefore He will come." The problem with the scoffer's logic is that it does not incorporate the fact that there is a reason why

the Lord has not returned. The scoffer's reasoning is simple math. The Lord, however, is acting in divine, immutable purpose, which natural man is not privy to. God is the God of order, and He does nothing that is not according to purpose. Peter is declaring to the scoffers that there is a purpose in the time span between the Lord's promise and its fruition and that it has nothing to do with the ticking of time. When He returns, in fact, time will cease. We may say that He will come at the appointed time, but when He does come it will not be according to time, but rather according to timeless purpose.

This truth is Peter's first argument against the error of the scoffers (v. 8). The human concept of time does not enter this equation. The judgment is imminent in the purpose of God and though men think it is a long way off it is now to God. If men logically conclude a specific date and think they have arrived at an imminent hour, it is a thousand years in the purpose of God. If men, as these scoffers have, declared that He will not come, then He is on his way. With God the "now" of creation is the same as the "now" of His coming judgment (Ecc. 3:14-15 and all according to purpose). In the purpose and will of God, the end of all things is history. Peter is declaring that naturally, our poor finite minds cannot even begin to comprehend the magnitude of this. We, ourselves are temporal beings in the flesh, and to try to exercise our logic, no matter how advanced we think our intellect has become, is to seek to enwrap the infinite with the finite...it is to endeavor to empty the Atlantic Ocean with a teaspoon...it is a fool's errand. What natural man, in his efforts to define deity, does not know is that as far as his mind is concerned, the fix is in. Just as our brains are made to inhibit the knowledge of that which we cannot bear, God has prohibited and inhibited the natural mind to discern anything

that is of a spiritual nature. He has, in His wise counsel, made humanity thus naturally (1 Cor. 1:20-21). The scoffers account that since our Lord has not come, He is slack concerning His promise according to what they interpret as slackness.

In verse 9, Peter answers their error by telling them what they will utterly refuse to believe. He tells them that what they account as slackness is God keeping time on its run until He brings every one of His elect to the knowledge of their salvation. Thus, the believer understands the reason for this thing called time and why it continues.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men [the scoffers] count slackness” (v. 9). Natural men do not get that the Lord is slack only according as men count slackness, according to *their* logic. Their logic does not consider His promise as having to do with anything more than the judgment. He is not slack concerning His promise as men count slackness but the way this is worded does suggest the He is slack according to His own definition of the word. The word “slackness” to the natural man suggests unfaithfulness, perhaps even suggesting a flaw in character. To God the word “slackness” means “slow” according to how men measure time. Slackness to God (according to context) is longsuffering and that longsuffering is on purpose.

He is longsuffering to us-ward (1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:1). As He is longsuffering to the elect, His longsuffering with the non-elect is referred to as “enduring” or putting up with (Rom. 9:22-24). His longsuffering with the vessels He has created for destruction, is according to His purpose in grace toward those vessels He has created for His saving glory. The elect are so glad for this fact, knowing that He would not draw the curtains closed on time before they were brought into the fold. For the

believer this means much more than the duration of time because they know what they are in nature. How long, indeed, He suffered with our sinfulness and rebellion, our frailty and impotency until that blessed moment when He revealed His Son to us and taught us that all along our wayward path we had already been healed with His stripes.

Thus, because of the investment that He had made in us, freely delivering up His Son for us; He is not willing that any one of us should perish (Rom. 8:31-32; Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 11:28). Since He is not willing and because He is longsuffering, none of His sheep shall ever perish (John 10:27-29).

Since He is not willing that any of them should perish then every one of them shall come to repentance. He will suffer long with every one of them until, by grace, He radically changes their mind so they will know that the only thing that recommends them to God is Jesus Christ. Scoffers view His longsuffering as slackness. Believers view His longsuffering as salvation (v. 15).

# Seeing, Looking. Accounting

## 2 Peter 3:10-16

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

11, Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13, Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14, Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15, And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16, As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

These verses have to do with the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are not primarily about eschatology. They

are rather a point of contrast held over against the scoffers who deny his coming (Vv. 3-4) and they also serve to guard against a wrong understanding of the fact that time is different in God's economy than in ours (v. 8). The salvation of the elect is sure, although some men view the fact that Christ has not yet returned to be evidence of His slackness (v. 9). The presumed "delay" is in reality the longsuffering of our Lord on behalf of His elect, until every one of the sheep is brought into the fold (John 10:15-16; Romans 11:25-26).

Verse 10 begins with the word, "But" which is a conjunction of opposition. This verse makes it clear that the words of verses 9 and 10 do not even vaguely suggest that the Lord's return is not imminent. That day will "come as a thief in the night" or will suddenly appear according to God's schedule. It will not be a surprise to the believer because he is looking for His savior as if His return is momentary (1 Thess. 5:1-5; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13-14). That momentous day is described in language of finality (vv.10, 12). There is no suggestion of some period of elapsed time but rather a sudden conflagrating and termination of all the material world and its inhabitants. That day will mark, the day of the final resurrection, Christ's return with His saints, the Day of Judgment, the day of destruction and the day of renewal of the heavens and the earth (v. 13). These things will be in immediate succession and will be final. It will happen by the word of His mouth.

The believer knows this. The words "seeing and looking" and "accounting" declare that the believer understands the facts of Christ's return and is gladly anticipating (hasting, v. 12) the arrival of his Lord.

Peter, by inspiration, because of the immediacy of these things asks a rhetorical question in v. 11. A rhetorical question



is one that contains the obvious answer in the question itself. Seeing that this will take place (in light of these facts), and that it could be in the next moment, how should the believer live in this world? Peter is saying that men who believe that something earthshaking is imminent, something that will be the destruction of all that is visible, behave differently than those who are without a clue or those who are willingly and willfully ignorant of it. In the 50's we were continually told of the imminent threat of nuclear warfare. We had preparedness drills and were told to "duck and cover." People built bomb shelters and filled them with supplies. They acted in a manner according to what they believed. They did not stop living and working but they lived in a state of readiness. After a while, when the bomb had not arrived, some began to say that it would not and scoffed at those who still acted in a manner that it would. This created a distinctly contrasting manner of life between the scoffers and the believers. This is the "manner" that Peter is addressing here.

The first thing then that "the manner of persons we ought to be" suggests is a contrast between the believer and the scoffer. One holds that the Lord, because a great amount of time has passed since the Lord promised to come, that He is not coming. This gives them a world view. They view the world as eternal and become men of ideology that ultimately eventuates in an inordinate affection for what is seen. They plant their feet firmly in this doomed dust and make it their business to exploit it or embrace the pipe dream of protecting and preserving it. While some scoffers couldn't care less, others envision a world without sin and greed and believe that men are essentially good and with a little urging can be their best selves and thus will usher in a new age of Utopian order. The believer's life is to starkly contrast this. He knows that the Lord is

coming. This does not make him a hermit or make him adopt some monastic life, but rather he uses the world (as the gift of God) and seeks not to abuse his privilege of being in it, though he is not of it. He does not invest his life here, plant his roots deep here because he sees and knows and accounts that all he sees is temporal and will soon disappear. He is looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. He lives on the sure promise of God. His station in life whether rich or poor or somewhere in between is not the measure of who he is He is a child of the King and no matter his circumstance, he views it as soon changed to a world of joy and peace...not due to the efforts of men but according to the purpose of God.

The words “holy” and “godliness” assert this contrast between the believer and the scoffer. The best interpretation of the word “holy” in this context has to do with being separate (2 Cor. 6:14 - 7:1). However, there is surely the element of moral rectitude, choosing good over evil born of the fruit of the Spirit. Liberty is not to be employed as license. Love for God and neighbor is the believer's way of life. The word “ought” lets us know that at times we can forget these things and so diligence is to be employed to be found of Christ. Some might jump on this and declare that there must be evidence of salvation. But being found in Christ, in peace and blameless and without spot can never be equated with moral behavior or evidence before men. This has to do with faith (God Given) that causes you to look for the One who has made you thus by the blood of His cross. It is diligently believing that these things are “of Him” (v. 14; Col. 1:20-22). “Godliness” is reverence for God and the things that are eternal as opposed to that which is temporal, to the things of God as opposed to the things of the earth (Col. 3:1-4).

Finally, account (reckon, believe, base on the Word of God) that this period in which we live, this day, this age, this longsuffering of God is the day or year of redemption, of salvation, the acceptable year of the Lord (Is. 61:1-4; 63:4; text v. 15) and that it has an expiration date.



## CONCLUSION

### 2 Peter 3:15-18

15, And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16, As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17, Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

18, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

As Peter concludes this epistle, he continues to describe those whom he refers to as scoffers and admonishes and warns the brethren to be careful concerning the seductiveness of the scoffer's arguments. As we have considered before in the epistles of Peter, the warnings and admonitions are not addressed to a vacuum, but rather address the weakness and frailty of the believer to succumb to dangerous influences. The strength of the believer is not derived from self but from Christ and the only armor that he has, is a continuous view of his Savior.

Though our eternal estate is sure and unchangeable (v.9), we are yet susceptible to that which appeals to our flesh. So, we are to account (reckon) that the passing of time between the Lord's ascension and His imminent return (His longsuffering) is our salvation (v. 15).

In the remainder of verse 15 and the first part of verse 16, Peter reminds the brethren that what he speaks of is not exclusive to him but is also a subject addressed by Paul in his epistles. Peter speaks of Paul in very loving and familial terms. They each shared a unique place in the economy of God's gospel. Peter was the apostle primarily to the Jews and Paul to the Gentiles. Peter had defended the ministry of Paul in the conversion of the Gentiles, without the Law, in that great Bible conference in Acts 15, even to the point of saying that the Jews were saved by grace (without the law) just as the Gentiles were (Acts 15:4-11). Paul was Peter's brother, born of the same Father, redeemed by the same Savior, and taught of the same Spirit.

Peter also refers to Paul as beloved. He truly loved Paul, not only in the sense of brotherhood but the description of Paul suggests that Peter saw him also as a beloved friend and teacher, "according to the wisdom given unto him." These words have a particular strength to them, a strength born of appreciation for what God had taught Paul and what Paul had taught Peter respectively. These words likely refer to Paul's rebuke of Peter at Antioch as related in Paul's epistle to the Galatian churches (Gal. 2:1, 21). Peter's love for Paul was that of a brother who had been greatly helped by a timely rebuke (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 27:5-6). After the initial sting and the natural bent of self-defense, the opportune rebuke of a brother proves precious and necessary.

Peter assures the brethren that Paul dealt with the same things concerning the last days, even being inspired to employ some of the same terminology as he does in this epistle (Rom. 2:24; 9; 22; Heb. 10:36-37; 1 Thes. 5:2; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:1; Titus 2:13). Some of these things spoken of, concerning the last days, are hard to understand. The believer understands that they are hard to understand but rests in the fact that his Savior is coming and will settle it all. Also, the scriptures are a trap for the scoffer. What is hard to understand is the scoffer's religious play-pretty. They pretend understanding and draw men away using great swelling words and present themselves as authorities on things that even those who know the truth find hard to explain. (2:12; Jude 10). In truth, they wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (Is. 28:13). They are unlearned...God has not taught them (John 6:45). They are unstable, without foundation, without Christ. They wrest (twist, distort, pervert) the scriptures. They make the preaching of grace an avenue of sin (Rom. 3:8) They scoff at the anticipation of believers looking for Christ. They use the scriptures to do their evil and it is the scriptures that will grind them to dust.

The admonition is simple, be careful and beware (v. 17). You know these things; you have been informed about these scoffers; you know how they operate, so be careful that you are not led away and fall from your steadfastness. That steadfastness is Christ and His gospel. It is He that keeps you, and it is He that holds it all together (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3).

The following admonition is the key to it all (v. 18). The word "but" relates to the previous warning suggesting that the remedy for falling from steadfastness is found in what follows. It is the simple, remarkable, profound admonition that is the safeguard of every believer. Look to Christ.

“Growth in grace” is set forth by many commentators as being synonymous with what men call “progressive sanctification” because the word “growth” suggests a progression. However, since holiness (sanctification) is a state of being, the idea of progress is not possible. To assume that progress is possible in holiness, one must first put holiness on a visible and measurable plane. That plane must then be the flesh or visible deeds of the flesh or foregoing certain visible socially unacceptable behaviors. Progressive sanctification is a myth. Growth in grace is a fact. Growth is a progressive process. The Lord employs words that we understand, words that we can relate to, even words that apply to natural things, to teach us spiritual truths (birth, death, pruning, engrafting, hunger, thirst). Growth is unique because it can only be seen after it has taken place. We can see that there has been progress but are not able to see the process. Growth is accomplished by the provision of those things necessary to insure it (nutrition fluid, etc.). That nutrition is the feast of fat things and wine on the lees, well refined. The nutrition of spiritual growth that eventuates in maturity is “the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:2). It is that constant, redundant rehearsal of the gospel that casts our eyes upon Christ, which nourishes and strengthens our spirit and renews our mind and encourages our heart...that makes us grow. And as the gospel reminds us of our sin and our great need of the Savior, this growth is in an ever-increasing knowledge that our happy estate is ours by God's unmerited favor. This is growth in grace. And the glory of it belongs to Christ alone, To Him be glory both now and forever.” He is the insurance against falling into the trap of the unlearned and unstable scoffers (Jude 17-25).