

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



“LAST WORDS” COMMENTARY

**PETER’S CHALLENGES
1 AND 2 PETER**

by

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[BOOK 3]

Revised Easter 2022

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States jurists saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (1 John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (1 Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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INTRODUCTION

Esther was challenged by Mordecai regarding her time in history that she was perhaps alive, “for such a time as this”; a time of great pressure, and serious trouble where she must be sure to walk as the Lord’s Word directed and move into her new life only as the Lord opened the door. He was right in this challenge, and this is one of our roles as pastor-teachers in these very last days of the Church Age. Each of us has a place in the Plan of God, and we must identify the things needed for it, and ensure we prayerfully obtain what we need, do what we are asked, walk always in the Spirit, and so achieve the goals that the Lord requires of us. The days are indeed short.

Both Esther and Mordecai had a sense of their place in history, and they were ready to “play their part”, and serve the Lord self sacrificially in their assigned role for the benefit of others. For Esther this meant marriage to an alcoholic with little life satisfaction in the palace, but the opportunity to save her people. She laid herself on the line for her people and her story is told each year to remind the Jewish people of the importance of self sacrifice. Esther is an example for Peter’s day and our own, and in heaven she cheers us on to follow her example. She has lost nothing by her choices; rather she has gained eternally. This is our challenge, and Peter gives it to us in his last letter as he faces his own death.

For the believers of Peter’s day and many since, their time in history as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ has been a time of pressure and persecution, and at such times it is vital for the believer to be sure they are walking as they should, and where they should be. We are not here on the earth for ourselves, for “personal life goals”, as the world argues. We are here to serve the Lord in a uniquely required set of tasks before we join the Lord in heaven. There is an eternal plan and we are “written into it”, and so we are to identify our part and devote our lives to fulfilling the role assigned us by our Heavenly Father. There has never been two times to be certain of looking up to Jesus alone for guidance; Peter’s last days, and our own last days!

Peter’s little letters are written into such a time and into the personal situations of suffering saints who were doubting their strength to carry on. They are addressed to believers who face pressures and they both give the encouragement and warning that is needed to ensure they do not miss their mission and waste their opportunity to serve the Lord as and how he has placed them within the unfolding drama of history. Our place in world history is to be “His-Story” for us, written into the fabric of our daily lives.

Peter’s day was a time of political and religious tension and massive social change. Great events were unfolding in Caesar’s Palace through the middle decades of the First Century and for the Jewish people it was a time of upheaval and carnage. Israel as a people would enter into the Fifth Cycle of Discipline in this time 66-70 AD – dispersal to the four corners of the world. **Deuteronomy 28:36-68, Daniel 9:24-27**. It was only in late 2019 that more Jews live again within the borders of Israel than live dispersed world wide. Peter’s day was a dangerous time to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pay attention believer – it is significant that we have just lived through the reversal of that dispersal, and last September (9-11, 2020) have seen the Abrahamic Accords/Treaty between the Arabs and Jews!

These are letters written into a time of great and growing danger, and for our day they have many practical challenges to live as our spiritual ancestors lived; with focus solely upon Holy Spirit power and love for our brethren. We are in the days when the Fifth Cycle of Discipline has started to be lifted from Israel. We have entered similar momentous times to Peter. He began his ministry with the First Advent in memory, and we open his Letters again with the Second Advent “at the door”. The study of the use of the Greek perfect tenses in his last Letter especially is crucial for us, as it passes his desperate challenge to us, to live in the light of eternity – for the Lord is “at the door”. **James 5:9, Revelation 3:20**.

“For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death, **until He comes**”. **1 Corinthians 11:26**. He is Coming soon, and so let us take Peter’s challenge, and live in the light of our eternal destiny.

PETER’S DAY

“At that time (Peter’s day), treason was interpreted in a wide sense and was very severely punished. Anything that could be construed as disrespect to the Emperor was treason, and to speak of another Emperor or King was an unpardonable crime”. (Ramsey, 1959, p189.) We see in our own Covid-19 Crisis filled world, governments world wide moving against Christian beliefs and the right to preach-teach any absolute standard. The new emperor is “tolerance”, but under its banner biblical Christianity is abused and persecuted increasingly in the West, and martyrdom is now common in the Third World.

In the very dawn of our modern day Bishop Westcott would state in 1883, “we have passed now into a region of religious thought so different from that of polytheism that it is perhaps difficult for us to feel the sincerity of such words. Still undoubtedly they were sincere, and to refuse to listen to them was held to be, as Pliny said, criminal obstinacy”. (Westcott, 1883, p 249.) How things have changed in the West in just under 140 years! What was strange to Bishop Westcott is now common with openly pagan assaults on all the Bible teaches every day by media in the western world.

Roman Law stated clearly, “no-one shall have gods for himself alone at his own pleasure, and men shall not worship in private new of foreign gods unless they are adopted by the state”. (Quoted in Westcott, p 245.) Very specific penalties were set out in Roman Law for any evangelistic activity associated with a new god. To refuse worship to the gods of the state was to refuse to support the state; it was treason! This would become the source of persecution for the next 250 years. The very fabric of ancient Roman society was tied up with idolatry. Every ceremony in house, work places, courts, and city was saturated with sacrifice and idol worship. For most it was just “something you did”; it was a casual thing of no real significance that the pagans didn't bother themselves about. The pagans of Peter's day were very much like the pagans of today, who are happy to say the “Lord's Prayer” at funerals even though they do not believe in Jesus at all. Many Moslems have told me this about their formal prayers in mosques of their home town – it is just something they do too.... Religion has never saved anyone for this reason, only passionate relationship with the real Saviour saves.

For the average citizen world wide, through all of history, religion **has always been a thing you do at times**, and don't get too excited about, but to those who had received the message of Christ, they felt passionate about truth and about the “lost” state of their neighbours. To be “born again”, then as now, placed a person on a collision course with the rest of society, and in Peter's day with Roman Law itself. Christianity is a universal and an absolute religion. Christianity was aggressively evangelical. The pagan god idols were viewed as “nothings”, **1 Corinthians 8:1-8, 10:19-20**, but there were and are demons behind all pagan religion, and the truth was to be proclaimed by Christians before all, unto death!

Power confrontations were the norm rather than the exception in the early church, and in such an environment violence against the individual Christians and the church as a group was not to be long in coming. “Society was inhospitable and the world unjust. It was in such surroundings, full of menace both of their faith and to their fortunes that Christians had to play the man”. (Selwyn, 1952, p55). This remains our challenge, and with the increase in drug taking and paganism opening the door to demonic control, it is increasing in the West, almost now to the level it has been in Africa and Asia!

The “good news” of Christianity was bad news for the old gods! The message of the evangelists was a message that, as far as the state was concerned, blew away everything that the old gods stood for. The early believers faced what modern believers face within Moslem countries today, but controls over faith are increasing in Europe daily. In 2022 Moslem evangelism is being undertaken through the internet and radio-cable TV, and is reaping an incredible harvest. We are about to see Ezekiel 38-39 fulfilled in fire and blood, and the Moslem world is poised to confront the message about the true nature of Jesus (“Isa the Beloved” to them). The whole Moslem world is about to blow up along Sunni – Shiite lines.

The message of Christ as preached by the first century evangelists was absolute, challenging, and uncompromising; God had stepped into history in the person of Christ and there is **only one name** given for mankind to have any fellowship with God. “One way!”, was the message, and it was then, and is still today, an isolating message. Once people have truly heard the message of Christ they will either accept it, or hate the message and the messenger! Our Lord spoke of this in **John 15:18 - 25**.

In Peter's day that hatred had grown significantly and was felt as threatening the very life of the people within the churches. “At such times violence might overwhelm a community like the eruption of a desolating volcano. They were hated of all men for the sake of the name”. (Stibbs, 1959, p58.) All who do their evangelistic work within a pagan society will know the hatred of the pagans who have rejected the message! We have the Lord's Word on this! We see it today in 2022 in the media attitude to all Christian comment. Don't expect a full hearing pastor – but expect error to be heard.

The formal persecution of Nero was yet to be started at the time of 1 Peter. 2 Peter is written as Peter awaits execution, possibly under Nero's persecution, which was centred round Rome and was short, but bloody. 2 Peter has a similar proportion of perfect tenses as Hebrews, 2 Timothy, 1 John, and the Gospel of John. These are the true “last books” of their authors, and reflect their urgent challenge for all who read them, to get their lives focused upon eternity.

There are four references in 1 Peter to the “fiery trial” that the believers are about to undergo, and by the days that Peter writes 2 Peter the “fiery trial” has well and truly begun. **1 Peter 1: 6-7, 3:13 -17, 4:12-19, 5:9**. They were facing the lot of all minority groups within a majority culture, but Peter was prophetically warning them of what was coming within a decade for the Roman church especially under Nero. “They were living in an environment charged with dislike, misrepresentation and positive hostility, probably with explosions of violence”. (Kelly, 1969, p 10.) The violence would abate after Nero’s death, but under the Emperor Titus Flavius Domitianus (Domitian) in the late 80s it would flare again with violence, and become the “norm” after Trajan and Hadrian, then off and on right until AD 312.

They faced a smouldering fire of hostility rather than systematic persecution, that would not start until the last years of the century in the days when John wrote his works, and for the churches that Peter wrote they would face their first real trial during the days of Trajan, with the rule of Pliny the Younger over them in the first years of the second century. (Refer Cranfield, 1958, p10ff, Ramsay, 1904, pp146ff, for discussion of this).

EARLY PERSECUTIONS OF THE CHURCH

The earliest persecutions against the church were from the Jewish Sanhedrin. Early in Acts we find the religious authority of Judaism persecuting the individual believers by beatings, floggings, imprisonment and threats. The believers were spoken of as, “evil doers”, **Acts 2:12**.

They were all urged to be ready to give an answer to every man that asked them the reason for their confidence / hope, Acts 3:15. They were to be ready to suffer for righteousness sake, **Acts 3:14**, or for the name of the Lord, **Acts 4:14**. Once the church was established in the Greek speaking, Roman ruled world the religious persecution gives way to political attacks, each different in each place.

In Acts 16:16-40, the Apostles are charged with “causing disorder”, and by trying to introduce customs that were unlawful for Roman citizens to follow. This remains the logic of persecution in modern India for example today.

In **Acts 17:1-15**, at Thessalonica, “a more formal procedure was now required, and they (the pagans) accused their fellow citizens of welcoming strangers, who were a danger to public order, and of having in concert with them conspired to set up another Emperor, viz Jesus, and thus been guilty of treason against the rightful Emperor and Imperial Law.” (Ramsay, 1959, p 189). Ramsay notes that as the gospel spread around the Roman world the legal machinery of Rome was slow to identify the specific laws to bring against the church, and so the early apostles had about thirty years before there is a concerted persecution with a unified legal approach.

Once the precedence was set by Nero’s assault around AD 65, from that point, there was a standard way of dealing with the church and it was used when-ever a governor or emperor wished. (For discussion of this refer, Mastermann, 1912, pp22ff).

By **Acts 18:1-18**, we are in about AD 52, and the current Roman legal response to arguments against the church on religious grounds, is clearly spelt out by Gallio. He notes that under Roman law the religious practices of people are irrelevant, unless there is a specific crime being committed, or the religion was not “approved” or “legal”.

Earlier, during the riot at Ephesus, **Acts 19:23ff**, the town officials are not threatened by Paul’s teaching and defend his right to preach. Pagans were happy to add another god to their pantheon, and they were so confident of the history of Diana in the area, that they did not see the threat that the Christian message truly posed.

The motivation of Demetrius at Ephesus is also clear; sheer economics was involved, not faith. If you make your money out of pagan idols your livelihood is threatened by the preaching of a religion that has no idols to make, unless the church starts to make idols and statues – which of course it did as “religion” took hold again in the fourth century onwards!

By Acts 24 we are getting close to the Neronian persecution start date. Nero is Emperor but was not actively involved in the State in his early years, leaving much of the governing to others, while he entered poetry and chariot competitions around the Empire. The charge laid against Paul around 60 AD by the Sanhedrin’s lawyer Tertullus states three charges.

Firstly that the apostle has caused disorder and sedition amongst the Jews of the Diaspora, secondly that he is the leader of the illegal sect of the Nazarenes. Thirdly that he profaned the Holy Place in Jerusalem.

The case hinges on Christianity being an illegal religion in the eyes of Roman Law. If that is proved then the door opens for Christians to be persecuted officially as a group causing dissent by disregarding the Law of Rome and not seeking correct permission to worship. The early church, by keeping close to its Jewish roots, had identified itself as a “form” of Judaism, and as Judaism was a recognised/legal religion they were legally able to preach their “variant” of Judaism.

The Sanhedrin’s case was carefully laid. By making the court decide that Christianity was not covered by the permission granted to the Jewish faith, the Sanhedrin separated themselves formally from the church and made the church illegal, and therefore open to attack. All this is being played out in the early years of the 60s. It appears that the decision in this first trial was in Paul’s favour, and he was freed to spend three more years of missionary activity until his final arrest. During these days he may write the first letter to Timothy and Titus (although they may be earlier).

Two events speed the debate and drive the decision against the church in this time period, and make certain Paul and Peter’s later deaths, at exactly the right time in the divine plan. Firstly, James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem is murdered in the Temple precincts around 65AD. This death signals a major change in the attitudes of the Jewish unbelievers towards Jesus, and against the Messianic Jewish church in their midst. It occurs against an increasingly militant spirit within the nation against Roman rule that led to the Jewish Revolt in 66AD. The church will leave Jerusalem in late 66 when the siege is lifted for a time, and the few hundred believers leave over 2 million unbelieving Jews behind. It is indeed a small remnant who cross to Pella and disperse from there.

Secondly, in July 64 AD, the great fire of Rome occurs. Nero seeks a group to blame when the citizens turn on him and point the finger in his direction. The best scapegoat group is one that is hated by most, and with the increasing impact of the gospel message and the division in families it caused, the church proved the best target for Nero to use to take the heat off him self.

Peter, Paul and a number of other church leaders were formally killed by crucifixion or beheading, and many more were imprisoned and used for sport by Nero, killed in the arena for the entertainment of the crowds, or burned alive as torches to light up his evening garden parties.

So many were killed in this manner that the Roman historian Tacitus records, “an immense multitude were convicted, not so much of the crime of arson, as of hatred of the human race. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames. These served to illuminate the night when daylight failed. Nero had opened his garden for the spectacle, . . . while he mingled with the crowds in the dress of a charioteer, or drove about in a chariot. Hence even for criminals who deserve extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not , as it seemed; for the public good, but to glut one man’s cruelty that they were being destroyed.” (Annals XV. 44. 6-8.)

Tacitus has no time for the Christians, (they are non-conformists – and clearly despise other human beings) and while some have argued the text is corrupted by later Christian commentators this argument is rejected by good scholars – it reads as classic Tacitus. Note his comment, that they “hated the human race”. What he means is that they considered themselves to have the truth and everyone else to need their Saviour. This remains our position. Can you see how unbelievers may think that Christians “despise” them? Seutonius, the other Roman historian of the time refers to their faith as, “a new and wicked superstition”. (Life of Nero. XVI. 2).

Later in the second century, the Christian lawyer and later martyr Tertullian, makes a statement about an “Institutum Neronium”, by which Nero declared all Christians to be outlaws, but this is the only reference to such a decree. (Ad Nationes XII) Tertullian was, as a lawyer, certainly in a place to discover such a decree, but even without it the precedent was set, Christians were “fair game” for anyone wanting a target.

By the days of the Flavian Emperor Domitian in the late 80s and early 90s, Christianity was persecuted as a belief system that indicated disloyalty to the Empire. By this date the Roman State had identified that Christ’s claim as Lord and God was absolute, and so a Christian owed allegiance to one above Caesar. This was not tolerated by Rome, but especially not by Domitian, who evidence would indicate was paranoid and became psychotic, actually believing he was a “god”! To prove loyalty to the Empire and Caesar by burning incense

to the genius (god like quality) of Caesar was the proof of loyalty demanded of all in the Empire from this time. This was not possible for a Christian, for to say that Caesar was Lord (kurios) was to deny Christ. As far as the Roman State was concerned to say that Jesus was Lord was to deny Caesar! It was to be disloyal and ungrateful.

By this date to be a Christian is to be seen by officials as a threat to the stability of the State/Empire. Christians have become viewed in the same category as a bandit and revolutionary, especially due to the Jewish origins of the faith. No specific crime needs to be proved, if they are Christians and persist in this position, after being given time to repent, they were to be killed. Pliny, Governor of one of the areas that Peter writes to, is a good man and is baffled as to why he is having to kill these otherwise good citizens, but is relaxed about killing them if they refuse to worship the Emperor! It is this situation that Peter is preparing the church for.

In many places on earth today this is the case still and may become the norm again sooner than we think with globalisation and the demand for a "one world religion" that tolerates all faiths except the absolute ones! The Romans would have accepted Christianity if it had not been for its exclusive claims! Rome would have accepted liberalism!

Acts 4:12 remains the death warrant for all believers facing totalitarianism, and we must be ready to die for this as our ancestors in faith were. This remains our challenge and will increasingly be the challenge for believers in Anti-Christ's homeland area - Europe! Remember, the Roman Empire didn't disappear; it just morphed into modern NATO, with the "two legs" of the present "Roman" power group on both sides of the Atlantic. **Daniel 2:31-45.**

DATE OF THE LETTERS

Of this letter it is written, "there is no book of the New Testament which has earlier, better or stronger attestation. . . it was regarded as canonical from the time when canonical first began to have a meaning." (Bigg, 1956, p 7, 15.) Having noted this the date that the scholars select as the probable dates for the letters of Peter depend more on their theology than on the facts of history!

Liberal scholars set a late date, as it enables them to remove the Apostle Peter from the equation, while conservative scholars chose an earlier date for both letters, on both historical and textual grounds.

Most scholars of the period date the letters to the decade of the 60s; the first letter being written before the Neronian persecution begins, and the second written at the height of the persecution (or liberals - just after it). Sidebottom, 1982, p99, dates the first letter at 90AD, the second at 130AD. Reike, 1964, p145, dates the second letter to around 90AD. Mastermann believed the first letter may even have been written after the Jewish temple had been destroyed citing 1:4, 2:4, 4:7, 17. (Mastermann, 1912, p 23) Even Sir William Ramsay believed the first letter may not have been written by Peter and dates it to around 80AD, seeing in it many parallels to Revelation (1956 , p282).

Yet even he contradicts this later in the same book, noting, "Christians suffered by being condemned as criminals, and not as Christians, their defence lay in a life above suspicion, 1 Peter 4 : 25". (Ramsey, p 348) This would be true only in the decade of the 60s, for by the 90s it was a crime to be a Christian.

The majority of good commentators date the first letter to around 64AD (same date as Hebrews), with the second written from jail a few years after, before 67AD. Refer, Mounce, 1982, p5, Ironside, 1984, p 64, Reike, 1964, p 71, Kelly, 1969, p 30, Selwyn, 1952, p 60, Stibbs, 1957, p57.

There are some things we do not, and cannot at this distance, know about these letters. We do not know exactly when they were written and so we must be humble as we speculate about these things! Peter may have out lived Paul, and written his last letter after Paul's death, but we will only know in heaven.

The great Anglican writer, Dean Farrar, noted that Peter writes to some churches founded by Paul and would not have done so had Paul been alive. (Farrar, 1882, p 146.) Stibbs points out that Mark and Silvanus, Paul's constant companions, would only be with Peter, if Paul was already dead. (Stibbs, 1959, p65-67)

Church history records that Peter was crucified under Nero and that would put the dates for the two letters, if they are Peter's (as I believe they are) at before 67AD. The content of the letters gives us another clue as there are many parallels between Paul's letters and Peter's. Compare 2 Peter 2:3 with 1 Timothy 6: 5, and Titus 1:11. Compare 2 Peter 2:19, with 1 Corinthians 10:29, and Galatians 5:13, and 2 Peter 2:1 with

Galatians 2:4. The problems he faces in the church even in the second letter are early ones, much closer to 1 Corinthians 6:12-13, than even to John's writing 25 years later.

THEMES

The first letter is clearly facing the issues of faith under pressure and its key word is hope. The believers are encouraged to focus on the eternal life perspective on their present troubles. The Christian's perspective must always be eternal, if we are to be strong and stable, for our journey to towards heaven not focused on earth.

We have a task here, God's assigned task in His Plan, but no continuing city here! We are called to do the work of the Lord to fulfill our part in the divine plan, at our time and place in history, but our hope and destiny is in heaven not upon the earth. The believers are called to reclaim the resources of their faith and see that in suffering they have the opportunity to share the experience of their Lord. Under pressures of persecution we become partakers of Christ's suffering (**1 Peter 2:19-21, 4:12-15, Philippians 3:10, and Colossians 1:24-26**), and in this there is learning that would not otherwise come in time, and a joy that will last throughout eternity!

"Saint Peter is bidding his readers look at their troubles in the light of their glorious destiny, and so to chart their lives, that is to say, on a large map". (Selwyn, 1952, p 79) The church was not to seek out persecution and not to set out to cause offence, but when the inevitable attacks came they were to stand firm and focus on the eternal issues at stake rather than their temporal lives. This remains our challenge!

In the midst of talk of suffering Peter emphasises the sovereignty of God. In **1 Peter 1:2 and 2:9**, he reminds us that God has his hand on history and that all that comes to us comes under the principle of **1 Corinthians 10:13**. "It is the epistle for afflicted believers, a wilderness Epistle. It pictures the believers as journeying on from the place of the blood sprinkling to the inheritance in heaven, or from the cross to the glory. It pictures a pilgrim people, strangers passing through an unfriendly world, moving on to the land of promise." (Ironsides, 1984, p 10)

Peter's great theme is the base of the hope of believers; the cross and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His letter is a challenge to imitate Christ, to have a dynamic personal and living faith that stands under pressure, like a light house in the storm. "It was under the stress of persecution that the church entered into the fullness of her corporate life. The body of Christ learnt it's unity in the school of suffering." (Mastermann, 1912, p 28)

It is a strong call to hold the apostolic faith. With Jude Peter calls us all to hold the faith once delivered to the apostles and demonstrated in the church in Acts. The many parallels to Acts indicate Peter may have had an early copy of the book before him, and that would make sense, as Luke finishes this book while in Rome and the Roman Church would have copies of it.

Note these key points:

Evidence of human sinfulness, Acts 2:23, 3:14, 4:10, 5:30, cf 1 Peter 3:16.

The fore-ordained purpose of God, Acts 2:23, 4:28, cf 1 Peter 2:21, 3:17.

Fulfillment of prophecy, Acts 3:18, 24, 10:43, 1 Peter 1:10 12.

Resurrection and exultation, Acts 2:24, 31-36, 3:13,15, 4:10, 5:31, 10:40, cf 1 Peter 4:13, 14, 5:6, 10.

The means of redemption, Acts 2:38, 3:19, 26, 4:12, 5:31, cf 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

The stone rejected by the builders, Acts 4:11, cf 1 Peter 2:7.

No man is common or unclean, Acts 10:28, cf 1 Peter 2:17.

The Cross = tree, Acts 5:31, 10:39, cf 1 Peter 2:24.

Soul of the Lord was not left in Hades, Acts 2:24-32, cf 1 Peter 3 : 19.

Christ raised by the Father, Acts 2:32, 3:15, 4:10, cf 1 Peter 1:21.

God is no respecter of persons, Acts 10:35, cf 1 Peter 1:17.

This first letter of Peter also provides the definitive advice to all believers of all time as to how we conduct ourselves when the state turns on us and starts to persecute us. 1 Peter 2:13-17, with Romans 13:1-6, have become the "locus classicus for Christian citizenship". (Elderen in ZPEB, 1980, p725).

These passages remain our standard. We are to follow them not the views of political activists. This remains our challenge and will be a more powerful one as believers enter times of increasing persecution world wide!

The second letter, "like all second letters is corrective. In the first letter we hear the voice of the teacher. As a rule in second letters it is rather the voice of the prophet or exhorter who speaks." (Ironsides, 1984, p 64.) This is much more due to the fact that Peter is facing death, and is passing his "last words" to the churches. There are twice as many perfect tenses used in the second letter to the first – eternal consequences are far more in view in this last word from Peter. "The purpose of second Peter is to warn, encourage and instruct the churches to meet the new challenges that a latter age would thrust upon them". (White in ZPEB, 1980, p 728). Peter knows there is limited time for him and he gives maximum emphasis upon each believer getting clear the "eternal life perspective" on all matters they face.

PETER THE MAN

Peter was, even in the early days, the spokesman of the twelve. Matthew 15:15, 16:16, 18:21, 19:27, Mark 8:29, 10:28, Luke 9:20, 12:41, 18:28. Others considered him the leader, for example, it was to him that the enquiry about the temple tax was made. Matthew 17:24. Even though James would take the lead later it is Peter who establishes the church in Jerusalem and is it's key preacher throughout the early chapters of Acts. He retains his strongly Jewish perspective and practices the faith of his fathers, observing the times of prayer in the Temple, Acts 2:46, 3:1, and uses the Stoa of Solomon for his preaching as did other Rabbis. While some see this as a "limited view" (Van Elderen, ZPEB, p734), it is better seen as his correct observance of his traditions, and a necessary and appropriate thing, given he was called to preach to his fellow Jews.

Peter's early life as a believer is recorded in Acts and other New Testament letters. He is in Jerusalem first, but sees Cornelius and later is a delegate from the first church to Antioch (**Galatians 2:9-14**). In Acts 16 Paul is forbidden by the Holy Spirit from entering the areas that Peter records as the recipient of his first letter.

Could it be that Paul was not allowed to go there because the Lord had Peter as the evangelist in mind to visit the area? We cannot know for sure but it certainly seems logical. In **1 Corinthians 1:12**, there is a Petrine party in the city, indicating that the Apostle Peter may have visited Corinth or at least locals had visited him somewhere. It is a church tradition that Peter reached Rome around the mid - 50s of the first century, and that he worked with the predominantly Jewish churches there until his death in the city.

Moffatt believes he was a survivor of the first persecution of Nero. He notes, "there seems no crucial objection, so far as internal evidence goes, to the acceptance of the homily as it stands, viz, as a pastoral letter sent by Peter from Rome during the seventh decade of the first century." (Moffatt, 1963, p 87). I disagree, as tradition is very strong on this point and his grave/body's discovery recently leads serious weight to his death and burial as a result of Nero's persecution.

Ironsides also believes Peter may have outlived Paul from the internal evidence of the second letter, which he notes, "has been accepted by the church since the second century at least, and by many reliable witnesses from the first." (Ironsides, 1984, p 64). "Paul was in all probability already with the Lord when Peter wrote, or else he was enduring his last imprisonment just prior to his martyrdom; for Peter mentions 'all his epistles' as being in circulation already." (Ironsides, 1984, p 63).

Dean Farrar follows the church tradition, and it tells a different story, although we must observe again that we do not know finally which is true. Farrar tells the story (he refers to it as a "legend") as the church records it of Peter's death. "On seeing his wife led to execution he rejoiced at her journey homewards and addressing her by name called to her in a voice full of cheerful encouragement, 'Oh remember the Lord!' He was executed on the same day as St Paul. They parted on the Ostian Way, and then Peter was led to the top of the Janiculum, where he was crucified,at his own request head downwards because he held himself unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord." (Farrar, 1884, p114, also refer to Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, II, 25, 5 - 8 for the earliest surviving account of this tradition).

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE FIRST (AND POSSIBLY THE SECOND) LETTER

This first letter was an Epistle that was, “the child of many tears and much sorrow” (Meyer, 1953, p9). It was written most likely from Rome, as we have seen above, although some speculate that Egypt was its place of origin! (noted in Kelly, 1969, p 237). Rome was commonly referred to as Babylon by the early church. (Mastermann, 1912, p 32 who records comments by Clement, and Lightfoot).

Jewish converts, possibly from the day of Pentecost, carried the gospel into the regions mentioned by Peter well before any specific missions were launched. Peter’s visit to the region may be dated by comparing **Romans 15:19, 20**, with **Acts 16: 6, 7**. “Because the Christian mission was already going forward in Bithynia and parts of Asia prosperously and peaceably, and it was undesirable that St Paul should build upon another man’s foundations. No great boldness would be involved in the surmise that this work was under the direction of St Peter himself or of St Peter and St John.” (Selwyn, 1952, p 45).

“Pilgrims, chapmen, and traders of all kinds, soldiers, subordinate officials, all played a part in the dissemination of the gospel, and there was probably no corner of the empire where Christianity had not been heard within a very few years.” (Bigg, 1956, p 72-73). When the order of the churches is looked at in terms of the Roman roads we may even have the route that the messenger took with the letter. “An excellent road ran from the Cilician Gates northwards through Cappadocia and Galatia to Amisus on the Euxine, probably the first city on that coast to receive the gospel”. (Selwyn, 1952, p 46).

Mastermann notes, “the order in which they are enumerated probably represents the itinerary of the bearer of the epistle who may be supposed to have landed in Sinope, missionaries from the churches of Syria and Cilicia probably found their way into the Province at an early date.” (1912, p 15, 16).

The impact of the gospel on the provinces mentioned was significant for within fifty years when Pliny writes of the problems with the Christians in the area he reports to the Emperor Trajan that the temples are empty due to the spread of the gospel message. (Refer Ramsay, 1904, pp146ff) After Pliny’s short burst of executions, he is pleased to report that the temples are again full of probably very scared pagans, desperate to prove they are not Christians!

“Some synagogues probably went over to Christianity in a body, in other cases a part would secede and this part would exhibit a vertical section of the parent group from top to bottom”. (Bigg, 1956, p 71). The recipients were a mixed group, as it must be remembered that every synagogue had it’s Greek and local dialect speaking “god fearers”, as well as proselytes. (Refer to Selwyn , 1952, p 44).

“We have here distinct evidence of a bold and extensive mission larger in scale than any of the journeys of St Paul. . . . Silvanus is to visit them all, in person, or by deputy, and to send copies of the epistle everywhere. The object was to establish and confirm the churches, to bring them into touch, comfort them, and so pave the way for a further advance.” (Bigg, 1956, p 69).

THE LANGUAGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF FIRST PETER

Like all doctrinally powerful letters of the New Testament this book is attacked by the liberal critics (who always call themselves “the scholars”) but the evidence is not for them, it is against them. Tradition considered this first letter the letter of Peter from the beginning. As Guthrie notes, “the traditional view which accepts the claims of the epistle to be apostolic is more reasonable than any alternative hypothesis”. (Guthrie, 1962, p 114).

Eusebius records the doubts of some about the two letters, but both letters were accepted by the church fathers who were a lot closer to events than the nineteenth century German critics who reject these letters. “The actual arguments against the traditional authorship are not nearly as strong as has been made out”. (Cranfield, 1958, p 7). “The onus probandi rests with those who assail or suspect these books, rather than with those who accept them”. (Plummer, 1896, p 15).

The major attack centres on the Greek of this letter compared against the Greek of the second. Even Guthrie asks, “the question must be posed, whether the author of first Peter could have written second Peter and the verdict given by the majority is in the negative.” (Guthrie, 1962, p 148). If this is still so today 60 years later, what is the solution?

The Greek certainly is clearly different. "First Peter is beautiful Greek, second Peter is Greek as though the writer was looking up everything in a lexicon. First Peter is magnificent in the way it flows. Second Peter moves along awkwardly. How could they possibly be written by the same man? 1 Peter was almost certainly written through an amanuensis, 2 Peter was doubtless written by the apostle himself, who was unfamiliar with the language." (Criswell, 1975, p 11).

Pause for a second here. Was Peter unfamiliar with the Greek language? A great deal is made of the statement in Acts 4:13, that Peter was an "unlettered fisherman". "Such a letter could not have been written by him, the illiterate fisherman, if he had lived to be a hundred". (Beare, 1947, p24). Even Guthrie expresses doubts about Peter's Facility in the Greek language" (Guthrie, 1962, p 99). Reike is more blunt, "the unlettered Galilean fisherman Peter would hardly have been the master of this Greek style". (Reike, 1964, p 70).

Galilee was however a bilingual area, and so Peter would have had to have elementary Koine Greek to trade in fish! It is now thirty years since he has been a fisherman and he has certainly been moving in a Greek speaking world where he would have had lots of opportunity to learn the language to a basic conversational level. The word "unlettered" in Acts 4:13, does not mean stupid or simple, it means not a university graduate! The liberals in their desperation to down grade Scripture down play Peter's intelligence and linguistic ability, and they have no warrant or real evidence to do so!

But where does the beautiful style of 1 Peter come from? Perhaps from his companion at the time, Silvanus, the scribe used by Paul also as an amanuensis (or writer who helps form the thoughts in the right words for the occasion). Beare refers to the amanuensis theory as, "a device of desperation" (Beare, 1947, p 183), but is it simply logical? **Yes** it is logical, and was normal for the day, and it fits the facts better than the liberal's assaults on the truth without any warrant at all, except their "desperation" to avoid truth! They are the desperate ones. The use of the amanuensis was common at this time, and even Paul, a university graduate, uses Silas and thanks him publically.

Jerome, the early church father, felt there may have been two literary helpers that worked with Peter to write the first letter. This was a common practice in the ancient world, and would make sense for a man who was fluent in conversational Greek, and preaching, but getting the written form right would benefit from the assistance of a trained writer like the scribe Silvanus. Even today PhD graduates utilize several professional script editors for their books!

This man had worked with Paul on at least two of his letters and is likely the humble co-worker behind this first letter of Peter's. "It is reasonable to attribute to him the refinement of Greek grammar and style and the literary vocab while, at the same time recognising in the letter the message, personality and apostolic authority of Peter". (Cranfield, 1958, p 8).

The similarity of Peter's language to his preaching in Acts has been noted by several commentators. Farrar notes, "the style of St Peter in this epistle resembles in many particulars the style of his recorded speeches. It is characterised by the fire and energy which we should expect to find in his form of expression." (Farrar, 1882, p 123).

Peter knows the works of Paul well and quotes or alludes to a number of Paul's letters. There are eleven references to Romans, ten to Ephesians, and 8 to James letter. Peter is not a simple quoter of others as Farrar notes, "the originality of St Peter is not only demonstrated by the sixty hapax legomena (only use of a word in the Greek New Testament) of his short letter, but also by his modification of many of St Paul's thoughts in accordance with his own immediate spiritual gift." (Farrar, 1882, p 132).

The form the letter takes gives rise to speculation as to it's original purpose. It has an immediacy and power that indicates its source was likely a powerful sermon that has been recorded for the benefit of all the churches. Most believe it was written out as a baptismal sermon and circulated for use at baptisms, as it is appropriate to mark the start of a believers walk with the warnings about the trials that may await them.

Whatever the source of Peter's material, an immediacy is apparent as we read his words in both letters, although the second will double the perfect tense usage over the first. Baptism is certainly in view in the First Letter and chapter 1:3 - chapter 4:11 may be the text of a message Peter gave for a baptismal service or at Easter time, but there are many commands and exhortations in this letter that indicate it has the wider church membership as it's intended audience not just new believers at baptism.

Whatever formed the original message the letter takes this and strongly urges the young believer to take seriously the grace they have received and urges all to loving steadfastness in the midst of trial. Mastermann identifies a three point sermon here; holding the hope of the inheritance, following the example of Christ, and the certainty of God's justice. (Mastermann, 1912, p26). If this is indeed a baptismal sermon for distribution, Peter would want professional polishing to be done and that explains the amanuensis.

One of the interesting features is Peter's humility throughout the letter. He "keeps himself well in the background and makes no parade of the apostolic status he assumes". (Stibbs, 1959, p 31). Peter is always aware of his place to be obedient to every command he gives to us. Many who are leaders speak only of what others must do, they use the word "you" often, but for Peter it is the word "we/us" that is the important one. Look up the verses around the following. 1 Peter 1:3, 2:24, 3:18, 4:17. "Behind the 'us' of 1 Peter lies the authoritative witness of the original disciples". (Selwyn, 1952, p 28). This remains our challenge – Christ like leadership! **Matthew 20:25-28**.

THE LANGUAGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF SECOND PETER

"No New Testament document had a longer or tougher struggle to win acceptance than second Peter". Kelly, 1969, p 224). "It is the most problematic of all the New Testament Epistles because of the doubts regarding its authenticity and because internal evidence is considered by many to substantiate these doubts." (Guthrie, 1962, p 137).

These two quotes are indicative of many comments about the second letter. How can we be sure about this letter? Is it genuine or is it a second century fake that should have never got into the Bible? For this latter question is raised by the liberal critics! We believe it is by Peter, and that it is Holy Scripture, but do we have a good case?

The style of the letter is certainly that of Peter. It is vivid and powerful, full of spiritual insights and practical throughout. Farrar notes, "it is so marked by unity and coherence, this remarkable little letter which the church could ill afford to lose, and which is full of impassioned warning and eloquent exhortation." (Farrar, 1882, p 183).

There was a clear difference between the two letters that was recognised by the early fathers of the church. Jerome placed it in the Vulgate translation but noted the difference in style, character and content. Differences were noted but they were not considered to be "fatal differences" (Green, 1968, p 22). Some early fathers found it hard to accept but "none felt it to be spurious, in spite of the hesitancy which existed over its reception." (Guthrie, 1962, p 142, also refer, Green, 1968, p 15).

The style was certainly different. Note the following comments by Greek scholars. "The Greek of Second Peter is grandiose, it is rather like baroque art, almost vulgar in its pretensionism and effusiveness. Pedantic words such as rhoizedon, and cumbersome phrases, such as hyperonka mataiotes phthengomenoi, abound." (Green, 1968, p 16).

"It is highly coloured, effusive, and pompous. It slips readily into iambic rhythms, its choice of words is bookish and artificial and its constructions laboured." (Kelly, 1969, p 236).

"There is a rugged tautology in the Greek of the second epistle very different from the smoothness of the first." (Farrar, 1882, p 186). Even though Farrar was unsure as to who its author was he noted that "no-one can read it without recognition of its power. (IBID, p 218, 219). Like Farrar, Michael Green believes in the power of the letter and sees that the verbose style may be a form of Asiatic Greek that preferred that style. (Green, 1969, p 18).

These comments may be all correct but it makes more sense to see Peter "reaching for his lexicon", or asking advice about words from those around him in the jail; this is, I believe, a letter that he wrote without the help of the Silvanus! It makes sense if it was written as his last words from jail before his execution.

It is attacked by the liberal critics, as one would expect, given the content! Remember this issue when you see a passage of Scripture attacked. What is it speaking of? Liberals do not like being nailed in their sin of unbelief, they hate prophetic words, and they despise any eternal references, and so they will attack the most powerful texts! This letter is so different from the spurious letters of the second century that it is clearly a work of the first century and we believe from Peter in jail as he awaits his execution! Note the words of the attackers of Peter's authorship of this letter, for their words betray them.

“Here we find the words of a second century author who writes under the name of Peter, modestly employing the apostles name in order to discredit views which he felt certain were unapostolic, The discrepancies of language and thought are too well marked to allow of both homilies coming from the same author”. (Moffatt, 1963, p 173-174).

“Undeniably the Epistle presents the apostle Peter as it’s author yet it is reasonable to suppose that a follower of Peter composed the writing in the name of this great man”. (Reike, 1964, p 143).

“The author certainly represents himself as the apostle, recalling his presence at the transfiguration and his receipt of a private communication from the Lord about his immanent death 1 : 14.” (Kelly , 1969, p 235).

Bigg, 1956, p 79, calls him a “forger”. At least he is honest with his views!!! He goes on, Peter “ was a married, uneducated labourer. Such a man always bears the stamp of his class. The Gospels paint him as a man of slow understanding but strong convictions.” (IBID, p 54).

“Finally when the strongly Hellenistic language and imagery of second Peter are considered it becomes extremely difficult to ascribe this epistle to Peter, the Galilean fisherman”. (Reike, 1964, p 143, 144).

What arrogance these men have! They have pigeon-holed Peter as a fisherman, and in their limited experience all fishermen are stupid, therefore Peter is unable to be bilingual or learn Greek over the thirty years that have passed since the Gospel days, even though he is clearly moving in a Greek speaking world 24x7! Their local travelling sales person could be fairly fully bilingual in six months by staying in a country, and yet these arrogant men believe Peter couldn't be after 30 years!!!! The critics are the stupid ones!

What was the churches view of a work written by another man claiming it was by someone else? Even though there was some acceptance of a work written, as if it came from a great person, such works were always considered second class.

As Guthrie notes, “no advocate of a pseudonymous origin for 2 Peter has been able to give a wholly satisfactory account of the motive behind it.” (Guthrie, 1962, p 169. Also Green, 1968, p 30). “The early church was not unconcerned whether the letters were genuine or not, as is proved by the controversy over admittance into the canon. Nevertheless, the fact remains that our conventions about copyright were not those of the first century.” (Sidebottom, 1982, p 100). Pseudapigraphy (pretending to write in another's name) was frowned upon, even though “different standards of literary proprietorship prevailed in those days”. (Green, 1968, p 32).

The so called, “Acts of Paul and Thekla”, was dismissed as spurious by the church, and, “it was into a church exercising this sort of discrimination that we are asked to believe 2 Peter was surreptitiously inserted. I find it very hard to believe!” (Green, 1968, p 33).

The Old Testament quotations in 2 Peter are all from Isaiah, Psalms, and Proverbs, all of which are quoted in 1 Peter. This is a letter that appears very different from the second century fakes, it has power and purpose, and any differences can be explained by the difference of purpose to the first letter, and the situation from which it came.

These are, we believe, the last words of the apostle as he awaited death. It’s power is the Holy Spirit’s as he moved upon Peter. As a Jewish writer he draws upon Jude’s work, who as his fellow Jewish apostle was both well known to him and who thought the same way. There is nothing sinister about the use of Jude. (Refer to Sidebottom, 1982, pp67-69, and Guthrie, 1962, pp147ff).

Peter was bilingual, as all Galileans had to be to work. He had a Jewish name Cephas, but was known by his Greek one, as was his brother Andrew, a telling fact that indicates he could converse freely in Greek. For a discussion of this refer to the following. Bulloch, 1981, p 7, p105, also Stibbs, 1959, p 24, 25, 67, and, Kelly, 1969, p 31.

A fragment of a scroll from cave seven at Qumran appears to quote 2 Peter 1:15. If this is proved it indicates that the letter was known in Jewish circles well before 135AD. White sums up the case for the letter to be Peters. “The early church showed more care and suspicion in regard to the authorship of 2 Peter than almost any other epistle. Although most of the doubts had ceased by the end of the fourth century, the evidence supports the Petrine authorship.” (ZPEB, Vol 4, p 727).

With this certainty let us open these two letters and let the Holy Spirit bring them to life for us and strengthen us as they have strengthened all previous generations. As we are seeing from the prophetic updates, 2015-2022, all the signs of the Lord's Return are now beyond obvious to all who look at the facts. We are indeed in the last days of the Church Age, and we need to be focused on these "last words" of the apostles, for they speak directly to us all and call us to action.

1 PETER CHAPTER 1

VERSES 1 - 2

"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."

KEY WORDS

Apostle	apostolos	The one sent out to lead the rest.
Strangers	parepidemos	A stranger, residing in a land not their own.
Scattered	diaspora	Of the dispersion; a term for the Jews who left the land of Israel to live amongst the Gentiles, through war or commerce.
Elect	eklektos	Chosen, selected and choice ones of God.
Foreknowledge	prognosis	Knowledge with certainty well before the event occurs in time.
Sanctification	hagiosmos	The life of saint-hood, holiness, set apart for God's service.
Obedience	hupakoe	Obedience; standing firm in what one hears with total concentration.
Sprinkling	pantismos	Religious sprinkling of an object to ceremonially purify it Exodus 24 : 3ff.
Grace	charis	All that God provides for the believer, his unmerited favour to us.
Peace	eirene	Hebrew, shalom, peace and prosperity, all that is the foundation for a safe and joy filled life.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

This is the first letter of the "rock/pebble man", for that is the meaning of "Peter" (Hebrew – Sh'mon Kefa, Greek Cephas). Peter was called Sh'mon by his parents, but Peter is the name the Lord gave him (**Matt 4:18, John 1:42**), that he uses now, as it reminds him and others that they have strength and purpose in life only if they are established on the rock. The "Bed-Rock" (Petra) is Christ, Peter is the "chip (petros) off the bed-rock".

Peter is writing officially as the apostle of Christ. He is one of the twelve, and it is with the authority of God's appointed/anointed man to establish the earthly church that he writes this. It was Peter who preaches the first sermon to establish the church on the day of Pentecost, and as the Lord honoured him by appointing him to this service, so we must take his words here, written in the Holy Spirit's power, with the authority over our lives that they truly have! His words are to be the "sheet anchor in the trials of life" (Kelly, 1969, p 39), not only for those addressed, but to all believers through history.

Peter is the apostle to the Jews, as Paul was to the Gentiles, but both speak to all authoritatively. **Galatians 2:7-8, 3:26-28**. The verses that follow are addressed to the Jewish believers of the Roman Provinces listed but they stand for us all. They were "elect of God", and so are we; its God's purposes we are now here to fulfil, not our own, nor our culture's norms or expectations.

The Jewish believers who received this letter would have immediately seen Peter's reference here. It is to **Exodus 19:5-6**, and in chapter two of this letter, verses 9, 10, Peter will identify that the church has a superior place in God's election to that occupied by the nation Israel. The Jewish people were "elected" or chosen, called out from the nations around them to be a kingdom of priests, to show in their national and individual lives the holiness of God and the plan of God (refer below to discussion of **1 Peter 2:9,10**).

They were to be a beacon in a dark world; a people who separated themselves out to God's service. **Matthew 5:14-16**. This is what the biblical doctrine of election is all about. Election is God's choice, based on grace, of people to magnify his name. Election is always for service in the plan of God. It is based on and within God's holy character, and is never spoken of as an act in violation of our free will, for in scripture the two concepts are taught and placed alongside each other. In this doctrine eternity touches time; God's Plan meets our Free Will, and we are rightly baffled at it. No arrogance here, just grateful service/worship.

When we, in our arrogance try to work this out we develop theologies that go beyond revelation, and try to explain what cannot be understood fully by us this side of eternity. We are creatures of space and time and this is one of those doctrines that transcends that present reality. As Exodus 19 makes clear, so also the Gospel record of the Lord's words on the subject make clear; we must exercise our free will, for which we are responsible; we must be obedient, and follow the Lord's instructions. Service and true Worship are the result of a biblical understanding of election, not arrogant self satisfaction!

Mastermann, (1912, p 60 - 63) makes several good points in the following observation on this topic. "It was election to a trusteeship of spiritual blessings. And the Christian, by being grafted into the body of the Christian church, is chosen as an agent through whom God may fulfil His purpose of blessing for the world. . . . Election is national rather than individual, for service rather than for happiness".

"We are a people elect for the service of God. This is certainly a larger and nobler conception of election than the intensely individualistic conception of it which our protestant theology has made us familiar. . . . It is neither the arbitrary exercise of omnipotence to over-ride human free will nor mere foreknowledge of the direction that mans free will will take. It is the foreknowledge of a Father who both foresees the direction along which his child's character will develop and by wise training fosters what he foresees, . . . The purpose of election, obedience and union with Christ." Ibid.

When we look at words like election we must see them in the Jewish context in which the apostles used them, not in a reformation context that is often misleading. The reformers tried to tie up doctrines in a way that would produce secure arguments against the Roman Catholic Church, and they erred often by trying to tie up things that cannot be tied up by words that are time and space limited.

We simply cannot understand fully how free will and God's sovereignty can be reconciled, but that is only because we cannot think as God thinks! We cannot know what it is like for God, who is outside time and space and sees the past as he sees the future! We must be humble on these matters, but see what Peter here means for it is a doctrine he wants the believers to sing about. Do you humbly sing about election believer? If you don't, you do not know the biblical doctrine.

"Election is based squarely on the wisdom and knowledge of God. It is fruitless at this point to quibble about whether or not God elects on the basis of knowing ahead of time what man will choose to do. What we do know is that although God's decrees are absolutely sovereign they do not in any way over-ride the freedom of man to decide." (Mounce, 1982, p 9).

Election opens the plan of God for us, and Peter is going to base the stability of all believers on this fact. We are chosen to be part of a plan that was formulated in eternity past, and it is sure to succeed, victory has already been foreseen; it is certain! We are part of this plan and we can be secure in pressure, and secure and stable even through death, for the Lord is in control and the plan will end with his victory.

Peter develops the rest of the chapter around three words here. The election/foreknowledge of God means we are secure, for he has foreseen everything and provision is there for all we will ever need. Verses 3 - 11 cover this. The second word is sanctification. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is the topic of verses 13 - 17. The third word is obedience (also a word from Exodus 19). We are called to obey and with obedience there is security and blessing, for our obedience places us within God's power.

The order of the Provinces mentioned probably reflects the route that the bearer of the letter took as he travelled around and expounded the contents.

We are members of the Royal Family of God (**1 Peter 2:9-10**), in a place of blessing and honour through faith in the work of the Lord for us on the cross, but Peter draws attention to God's work and provision rather than our response. He reminds us that we stand on God's character not the strength of our faith. He reminds us that we are believers because of God's work within us and for us, not any work or power we have. Our power, our certainty, and our stability all flows from our grace-faith relationship with God.

As we have been saved by grace, so he reminds us that we are to grow in service and holiness (sanctification) by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that we are to be obedient to the Word and let the Holy Spirit have his way with us. The Spirit's work will always lead to obedience to the revealed Word and will of God.

This is an important principle to see in days where Pentecostal excess may cloud the issues of what is Christian maturity and what is not. Christian growth will always be seen in obedience to the revealed Word of God. A disobedient Christian is not a spiritual Christian no matter what apparent spiritual gifts they manifest. A holy life (**Matthew 7:13-23** again...) is the proof of the Holy Spirit's work not singing loudly with a spiritual look on the face in the church. It is our obedience in the world that marks us out as obedient believers not our participation in worship services of the local church!

As people scattered throughout the world the Jewish believers may have felt isolated from their people and culture at times, yet God was working it out for blessing, for through them the pagans of all the provinces would come to know of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Often we think in terms of our earthly positions, cultures, and nationhood, yet Peter reminds us that we are all like these people, away from our true home, our true place where we have identity, for that for the believer is heaven. We are citizens of heaven first, ambassadors of Christ, **2 Corinthians 5:20**. We have on earth no continuing city, **Hebrews 13:14**, as we are here to fulfil our part in the plan only, then report our work to heaven. Do we live like this or are we indistinguishable from our pagan neighbours?

It is the blood of Christ that has saved us. We stand upon the blood brought ground of salvation, and it is His blood that is our security, so let us stand upon this ground, knowing that we have had our sins completely dealt with, and are cleansed. We have been, as they were in ancient Israel, sprinkled with the blood and so are declared by God to be safe and secure in his love, rather than being under his condemnation. **Romans 8:1-2**. Also refer to Exodus 12, where the account of the first Passover is recounted by Moses. It is this that is in Peter's mind here, for we are as safe in the time of trial as the Israelites were on the night that the angel of death flew over Egypt. We are safe under the sprinkled blood.

If it is our time to die then we will glorify God in that death, but if we are to live then we are to stand tall, for we are to glorify the Lord in our confidence in all situations for we are part of his plan. **Psalms 69:20, 116:15**. The result of this mental attitude is always the fruit of the Holy Spirit, of which Peter picks one here, Peace, to stand for them all. Peace is the Jewish greeting 'shalom', and grace the Greek greeting 'charis', but these words are more than a formal greeting by Peter to the two majority cultures.

They are words that remind us of God's provision and God's plan for us. "The rabbis connected the greeting 'shalom', with the peace of the Messiah (Numbers 6:26, Isaiah 9:6, 52:7). Jesus had given it deep significance. On his lips it is not a mere pious wish, but his gift which as Messiah he was able to bestow. Mark 5:34, Luke 10:5, John 14:27, 16:33, 20: 9, 21, 26." (Cranfield, 1958, p 18).

The Lord himself makes a strong point about the fruit of people's lives. No fruit in the life = no position in the vine! If the Holy Spirit' fruit is missing in the life the person cannot be sure of their standing in Christ, for the Spirit will always produce Christ-likeness, and holiness. Refer to **Matthew 7:15-23** , and **John 15: 1-14**.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

Do we praise God for his Character, Person, and Plan, and the stability this reality gives us? Peter begins his letter by reminding us that we stand upon the strength of God's character and plan not the power of our faith in Him. Let us daily praise him for his character, his grace provisions, and his plan for our lives.

Do we daily sing about our election and worship him in our service for him in the world, as well as our songs on a Sunday? If our worship does not overflow into our walk in daily life our faith is hypocrisy. Without application of the Word of God to life we are play actors with our faith! Let us be obedient to the Word we hear and read, and let us moment by moment let the Holy Spirit loose in our lives, that his power might strengthen our weakness and his wisdom might guide us through the revealed Word of God to serve the Lord where he has called us.

Let us be aware of the terrible arrogance of much theology, and be careful how we read the Holy Scriptures, letting them teach and correct us, not read in our theology, and in effect, tell the scriptures what they say! Let us be taught and corrected and be humble in matters we cannot answer until we see Him face to face.

We, like Israel are in a diaspora - we are away from our eternal home, and we are to be servants in ambassadorship. Let us not get too comfortable here! Let us always be ready to move house, city, or country for our only true country is heaven! If we are attached to our house, car, and city and country we need to re-

examine our priorities, and discover again our role here on earth. The Lord leaves us here only to serve him, and if we are not doing that he may take us home early!

The only safe place to be is doing what God wants you to do, where he wants you to be. Do not assess risks as men assess risks, assess danger purely in terms of being in God's will (safe) or out of it (unsafe), doing God's work or evangelism and teaching, (safe) or failing in your role as an ambassador (unsafe) and in danger of removal in accordance with John 15.

APPLICATION

[b] PASTORAL

Let us be sure to preach the Holy Word of God in its Jewish context rather than in the theological context that we were taught at our training college. We stand on the faith once delivered to the apostles, **Jude 3**, not on the faith as interpreted by Councils or religious politicians/theologians!

Do we remind our flocks enough that God has saved them for service! Is the reason we have so many lazy Christians in the church that we as pastors have not reminded our people of these things? We are all here on earth to serve him in giving the gospel to the lost, and we are all to have holy lives, so that our lives do not create a conflict with the message we are proclaiming.

We cannot preach salvation to the lost if our lives are full of mischief, arrogance, and other gross or subtle sin. We are to be holy, set apart for God, not distracted by the details of life, by money, power, social position, work, promotion, or family and national activities. This mental attitude and behavioural life style begins by the example of the pastor in the pulpit. Are we giving this to our people?

We are training ambassadors for heavens court when we teach the scriptures in the local church. Let us, as pastors judge ourselves by that standard! How well are our people operating as the Lord's ambassadors in their community? **2 Corinthians 5:18-21**.

What is the impact of the local church you pastor upon the community? Do people associate your church with evangelism, do they associate it with holiness, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, so that they are drawn to you? Or do they associate your church with pious hypocrisy?

The Lord holds us, as pastors responsible for the outcomes of our bible teaching. Let us examine the fruits of our labours in this matter! If the results are not there, let us examine our preaching program and all training we do in the church, for these are the results God demands of us!!!

CONCLUSION

There is much "unprofitable controversy around this word election. Some men have seen nothing else in the Bible, while others have hardly acknowledged it to be there at all. Then some have laboured to reconcile to their understanding the two truths of God's sovereignty and the freedom of the human will. Not content to believe that in God's economy there may be things beyond their measure. . . . Christians are called 'elect', chosen to be saints, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. The election is maintained when their lives are constantly hallowed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, while in Christ they have not only an example of perfect obedience after which they must strive, but a redeemer whose blood can cleanse them from all the sins from which their most earnest strivings will not set them free. . . . Limited human knowledge is what we have, . . . Men gaze upon this as they do upon the wrong side of a piece of tapestry as it is woven, . . . for full knowledge we have to wait to the end. . . . He who would rejoice over God's election, must feel and constantly foster within himself the sanctification of the Holy Spirit." (Lumby, 1893, pp 7 - 14).

DOCTRINES

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

1. The Biblical concept of predestination does not conflict with human freewill. It reflects the work of God for our salvation and describes the meeting of the Plan of God and human Free Will (Volition). As such it is a doctrine that straddles space-time and eternity-infinity and so we are never going to fully comprehend it this side of ternity.

2. Christ was predestined for a specific purpose from eternity past - to go to the cross and be raised to glory (Isaiah 42:1, 1 Peter 2:4-6, Acts 2:23).
3. All members of the human race are potentially elect by the Father under the concept of unlimited atonement (2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:2).
4. When a person trusts in Christ for salvation, he is united with Christ and therefore shares His election and destiny (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, Romans 8:28, 32, Ephesians 1-4).
5. Election is closely linked with foreknowledge. In eternity past, God knew who would believe, He therefore predestined them, called them, and they were saved (Romans 8:29-30, 2 Timothy 1:9).
6. Therefore, election and predestination applies to the believer only. No person is predestined for hell - it is a choice of freewill (John 3:18, John 3:36).
7. Election is a present and future possession of every believer (John 15:16, Colossians 3:12).
8. Election is also the foundation of the universal church (1 Thessalonians 1:4).
9. There are five Greek words used in conjunction with predestination:
 - a) Pro Orizo - to predesign (Romans 8:28, 29, Ephesians 1:5, 11)
 - b) Protithemi - to predetermine (Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:9)
 - c) Prothesis - a predetermined plan (Romans 8:28, 9:11, Ephesians 1:11, 3:11, 2 Timothy 1:9)
 - d) Proginosko - to foreordain, to preordain. (Romans 8:29, 11:2, 1 Peter 1:20)
 - e) Prognosis - foreknowledge or predetermined purpose (Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:2).
10. The life of Judas is a good illustration of predestination and freewill:
 - a) God's call is to all people, His desire is that all will be saved. (Matthew 28:18-20, John 3:16 1 John 2:2, 3:23)
 - b) God is long suffering towards the lost, not willing that any should perish. (2 Peter 3:9)
 - c) God's call is to all, but people must respond. (John 3:36, 16:8-11)
 - d) God's call is of love. (Jeremiah 31:3, John 3:16)
 - e) Those who resist become hardened in their souls and open to Satanic influence or possession. (Romans 1:20-32, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)
 - f) Judas was chosen in love by the Lord (Matthew 10:1-4, John 13:18) and received the sop of the honoured guest and sat at the Lord's right hand at supper.
 - g) However Judas was a thief and a traitor. (John 12:6, 13:18)
 - h) As an unsaved man he was involved in evangelism. Others were probably saved through his reading of the word but he was not. (Matthew 10:1-8)
 - i) He became the Son of Perdition by his decision, he could not blame anyone else (John 17:12)

GOD: CHARACTER OF GOD

Whilst God is three persons all three persons have exactly the same essence or character:

a) **SOVEREIGNTY**

The Father (Ephesians 1:11, cf. Isaiah 40:8, Matthew 6:10, Hebrews 10:7, 9)

The Son (John 5:21, Revelation 19:16)

The Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11, cf. Hebrews 2:4)

b) **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

The Father (John 17:25)

The Son (Luke 1:35, Hebrews 7:26, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

The Spirit The Holy Spirit

c) JUSTICE

The Father (Job 37:23, cf. 8:3)
The Son (Acts 3:14, John 5:22, Revelation 19:11)
The Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20)

d) LOVE

The Father (John 3:16)
The Son (Ephesians 5:25, 1 John 3:16)
The Spirit (John 16:7-11, 1 Corinthians 2:10)

e) ETERNAL LIFE

The Father (John 5:26)
The Son (Micah 5:2, cf. John 1:1-2, 1 John 5:11)
The Spirit (Isaiah 48:16)

f) ALL-KNOWING

The Father (Hebrews 4:13, cf. Matthew 11:27, 1 Peter 1:2)
The Son (John 18:4, cf. Matthew 9:4, John 2:25, 1 Corinthians 4:5)
The Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, cf. 1 Corinthians 2:11)

g) EVERYWHERE

The Father (2 Chronicles 2:6)
The Son (Matthew 28:20, cf. Ephesians 1:23)
The Spirit (Psalm 139:7)

h) ALL-POWERFUL

The Father (Mark 14:36, cf. 1 Peter 1:5)
The Son (Hebrews 1:3, cf. Matthew 24:30, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 3:21)
The Spirit (Romans 15:19)

i) UNCHANGEABLE

The Father (Hebrews 6:17, Psalm 33:11)
The Son (Hebrews 13:8)
The Spirit (John 14:16)

j) TRUTH

The Father (John 7:28, John 17:3)
The Son (1 John 5:20, cf. John 1:14, 14:6, Revelation 19:11)
The Spirit (1 John 5:6, cf. John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13)

SANCTIFICATION

1. Sanctification means to be made holy - to be set apart unto God. One who is sanctified is called a saint.
2. We are sanctified (made holy) in Christ Jesus (1Corinthians 1:2).
3. Sanctification is in three stages:
 - a) Stage 1: At salvation - union with Christ - positional sanctification (1Corinthians 12:13, Romans 1:1-7).
 - b) Stage 2: Christian way of life - filling of the Holy Spirit - spirituality (Romans 16:2; 1Corinthians 1-2).
 - c) Stage 3: Resurrection body - In heaven - Ultimate sanctification (1John 3:2).
4. Our position in Christ entitles us to share Christ's righteousness. It therefore:
 - a) protects us from divine judgment (Romans 8:1)
 - b) qualifies us to live with God forever
 - c) makes us a new creature in Christ (2Corinthians 5:17)
 - d) guarantees eternal security for every believer (Romans 8:38, 39).
5. However, because we still have the old sin nature, we will still sin during this life (Romans 7:21). When controlled by his carnal nature however, the believer is positionally sanctified but experientially carnal.

6. When we receive the resurrection body, we no longer sin - our sanctification will be complete (1Corinthians 15:56, Philippians 3:21, 1Thessalonians 5:23).

SPIRITUALITY

1. All Christians have the Holy Spirit indwelling them. When we allow Him to control our lives, we are said to be "filled with the Spirit" or "walking in the Spirit".

2. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be lost by:

- a) Grieving the Spirit - by sin
- b) Quenching the Spirit - by not submitting to His leading
- c) This is called being carnal, or controlled by the flesh, the old sin nature.

3. The filling of the Holy Spirit can be regained by:

- a) confessing sin (1 John 1:9)
- b) surrendering your life to God (Romans 12:1-2)
- c) This is called being spiritual, or controlled by the Holy Spirit.

4. Only the Holy Spirit in us can produce good works acceptable to God - anything in our own strength is unacceptable (Romans 8:8-9, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

5. The spiritual believer:

- a) Imitates God (Ephesians 5:1, 1 John 3:9)
- b) To glorify Christ (John 7:39, John 16:14)
- c) Fulfills the Law (Romans 8:2-4, Romans 13:8).

MATURITY – SPIRITUAL GROWTH

CATEGORIES OF BELIEVERS

1. Standpoint of Spirituality:

- a) Spiritual believer - the Holy Spirit controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6b).
- b) Carnal believer - the sinful nature controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6a).

2. Standpoint of Growth:

- a) Baby - one who has just received Christ as Saviour.
- b) Adolescent - one who has learned some doctrine but is not yet in the application state.
- c) Mature - one who knows and applies doctrine and spends a maximum amount of time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

3. Relationship of Maturity and Spirituality:

- a) Spirituality is an absolute. The Holy Spirit either controls or He does not. One cannot be a little bit carnal. If he is carnal he is NOT spiritual.
- b) Maturity is speeded up by spirituality, but a baby believer can be either carnal or spiritual, and a mature believer can be carnal or spiritual.

MATURITY: CROSS TO THE CROWN

1. Salvation is only the beginning of the plan for man. After salvation the believer's objective is to advance in stages of spiritual growth on the path from the Cross to the Crown.

2. At each stage the believer faces increasing intense tests that can only be passed by faith. Paul in Romans 1:17 says believers progress from faith to faith. The five Hebrew words for faith illustrate the five stages of growth described in the New Testament.

a) The Babe - 1 Peter 2:2 - AMEN - the leaning faith of Genesis 15:6

All believers enter the family of God as infants when they exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After the tremendous stress of birth, of coming from darkness into the light the infant's impulse is to nurse. The objective is nourishment but the baby also receives great comfort in feeding. God's objective for the spiritual infant is for growth, but He commences this with comfort. Not much is expected of a baby in his first few years, he cannot feed or change himself. Spiritual infants are just as helpless and need a great deal of nurturing, encouragement and patient instruction.

b) The Adolescent - 1 John 2:13-14 - BATACH - the wrestling faith of Psalm 37:3

Adolescents young, strong and eager believers. This is the stage where people have grown to the point at which they understand some of the principles of truth and are beginning to apply them to their lives. But like most adolescents, they have the growing pains of arrogance and rebellion against authority; they are sometimes too eager to act on their own, and this often gets them into trouble. They have knowledge which they mistake for wisdom, but they lack the experience. Their tendency is to want to apply the truth to other people's lives. Adolescents may be troublesome, but at least they are not apathetic. They must be patiently trained and encouraged to channel their energies. No one makes it to maturity without passing through adolescence.

c) The Mature - Hebrews 5:14, 6:1 - CHASAH - the confident faith that takes refuge in the Lord - Psalm 57:1

The mature believer is able to take meat, the advance doctrine of the Word. A believer who has arrived at spiritual maturity knows enough about the Bible to take responsibility for his own life. He knows how to apply the Word of God to himself so rather than airing all his problems he knows how to solve them. He is not ready to take on every one else's problems but he can take control of his own life. He understands that God has a plan for his life and sets about fulfilling that plan. He gives himself to training and discipline, exercising himself and building spiritual muscle.

d) The Hero of Faith - Isaiah 53:12, Hebrews 11 - YACHAL - the healing faith of Job 13:15

Heroes of faith are men and women who have gone beyond maturity and have learned to fight the good fight. They have advanced beyond simply taking responsibility for their own lives to becoming responsible for the lives of other people. They are always willing to pick up fallen comrades, to treat their wounds, to encourage them and supply their needs. Heroes of the faith still make mistakes, they still fail but they always stand back up and go back into battle.

e) The Friend of God - James 2:23-25 - QAWAH - the enduring faith of Isaiah 40:31

The highest of all possible achievements in life is to become a friend of God. Every believer has the potential and the assets necessary to reach this point, but very few Christians do. It takes persistency and tenacity. The only people who make it this far are those who absolutely refuse to quit.

MATURITY - SIGNS OF MATURITY (Romans 15:1-15)

1. Helping others (v 1-3) The mature believer should bear the infirmities of the weak (v 1; cf. Galatians 6:2). Paul includes himself as a believer of mature strength.

a) A mature believer is characterised by:

- i) Knowing doctrine.
- ii) Knowing promises.
- iii) Spending a maximum amount of time by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

b) A weak or immature believer may be:

- i) A new believer.
- ii) An ignorant believer who does not know the Word.
- c) A mature believer bears the infirmities of the weak believer by:
 - i) Giving information about the Word (doctrine, promises, procedures). This may be in private conversation.
 - ii) Giving advice based on the Word.
 - iii) Exercising grace; listening to and helping others with problems.
- d) The mature believer is not to "please himself" (v 1,2):
 - i) He is not to feed his ego or brag about helping others. It should never be done for self-glory or self-stimulation, but for God's glory.
 - ii) Christ as the supreme example (v 3):
He did not please Himself; but as a man He received more pressure than we will ever have.
The Old Testament says, "the reproaches of Israel ('them') that reproached the Father ('Thee') fell on the Son ('Me') on the cross." Paul quotes a Messianic Psalm (Psalm 69:9). Christ was under maximum pressure when He bore our sins on the cross.

2. Knowledge of the Word of God (v 4)

- a) The Old Testament ("things written aforetime") was the only scripture existing at the time Romans was written. The canon is now completed.
- b) the purpose of the Word:
 - i) Learning - doctrine God wants us to know.
 - ii) Patience - faith in the long distance race. Believing moment by moment.
 - iii) Comfort - in trials and difficulties of life.
 - iv) Hope - for the future. Believers know where they are going.

3. Attitudes (v 5-6)

Believers are to see others from the divine viewpoint and be "like-minded one toward another". Their one purpose in life, after salvation, is "with one mind and one mouth, glorify God" (v 6). This is only possible from the divine viewpoint.

- i) We are all saved by grace. Christ died for us when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8).
- ii) We all have the same spiritual privileges and responsibilities (except spiritual gifts).
- iii) Every believer has a sinful nature but have different ways of expressing it.
- iv) We all get spirituality the same way (filling of the Holy Spirit) and all grow the same way, by the Word.
- v) God loves each believer with the same amount of love, whether we are in or out of temporal fellowship.

4. Fellowship as the basis of grace (v 7)

- a) Believers are to receive one another as Christ received them.
- b) He received them in GRACE to the glory of God.

5. Ability to distinguish between Israel and the Church (v 8-12)

- a) Christ was a minister under the Law (v 8).
 - i) He was born, ministered, died, arose and ascended under the dispensation of the Law.

ii) Therefore all He said (except Matthew 16 and John 14-17) amplified the Mosaic Law, confirmed the four unconditional covenants to Israel and the future of Israel with Him as their King. Some principles He gave are re-stated in the Epistles as the Christian way of life.

b) Before the Law was given (v 9) the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants promised blessing to the Jews, that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy.

c) Paul quotes (Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117; Isaiah 11:1-10). (Jesus Christ as the root of David and Jesse, is to reign over the Gentiles too.)

6. Faith that appropriates (v 13)

a) The God of hope is to fill the believer with joy and peace in the sphere of believing. Faith is the means.

b) Faith appropriates salvation, restoration to fellowship, filling of the Holy Spirit, doctrine, promises.

7. Knowing the operation of grace (v 14,15)

a) A mature believer realises all he has is because of God's grace and he operates his life on the basis of grace.

b) Grace is manifested in the believer in:

i) Salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9)

ii) Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)

iii) Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9)

iv) Releasing power (2 Timothy 2:1)

v) Growth and stability (2 Peter 3:18)

vi) Restoration and fellowship (Hebrews 12:15; 1 John 1:9)

vii) Producing works (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 9:9)

viii) Christian way of life (2 Corinthians 1:12; Hebrews 12:28).

GRACE

1. Grace is all that God is free to do for man on the basis of the cross. Therefore Grace is unmerited favour from God.

2. Grace depends on the character of God therefore Grace depends on who and what God is. Grace is what God can do for man and still be true to his own character.

3. The believer must recognise the difference between legalism and grace. Legalism is man's work intruding upon the plan of God.

4. The greatest thing God can do for the saved person is to make him exactly like His Son Jesus Christ. This is accomplished in three stages of sanctification.

5. Positional Sanctification: At Salvation every believer enters into union with Christ. (Hebrews 1:2-4) Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father and is therefore superior to all angels in his humanity. At the point of salvation we are entered into union with Christ thus we are positionally higher than angels. We are positionally seated with Christ at God's right hand.

6. Experiential Sanctification: During the Christian's life on the earth the time spent under the power of the Holy Spirit. During this time we produce the character of God in our lives - gold, silver, precious stones. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

7. Ultimate Sanctification: When the believer receives a resurrection body he loses the sin nature and all human good. At this point the believer is physically superior to all angels. He remains in this perfect state eternally.

8. All believers have tasted of Grace at least once (1 Peter 2:3). This refers to the point of Salvation at which the believer receives at least 34 things which he did not earn or deserve. (Ephesians 2:8, 9) Disorientation to grace is the believer's greatest occupational hazard in his Christian life. (Galatians 5:4, Hebrews 12:15)

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9. The divine attitude to grace is expressed in (Isaiah 30:18, 19) God is constantly waiting to pour out his blessing on all believers in the Christian life.

10. Grace in salvation is expressed in many ways. It is always the same - believing in Jesus Christ (Psalm 103:8-12, Romans 3:23-4, Romans 4:4, 5:20, Ephesians 2:8, 9)

11. There are many ways in which the Christian life expresses GRACE:

- a) Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)
- b) Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)
- c) Growth (2 Peter 3:18)
- d) Stability (1 Peter 5:12)
- e) Lifestyle (Hebrews 12:28, 2 Corinthians 1:12)
- f) Production of Divine Good (1 Corinthians 15:10, 2 Corinthians 6:1)

12. Grace is the correct attitude in relation to giving. (2 Corinthians 8 & 9)

13. Grace is the only means of coping with suffering in the Christian life. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Through Grace God is able to bless the believer in the midst of the pressures and adversities of life. (1 Peter 1:6,7)

14. Implications of grace:

- a) God is perfect, his plan is perfect.
- b) A perfect plan can only originate from a perfect God.
- c) If man could do anything in the plan of God the plan would no longer be perfect.
- d) A plan is no stronger than its weakest link. Grace therefore excludes all human merit, all human ability.
- e) Legalism, human works is the enemy of Grace.
- f) The works of human righteousness have therefore no place in the plan of God. (Isaiah 64:6)

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life - love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5:22-23). Note that "fruit" is singular - all the characters are produced at the same time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. The reason we are left on the earth after salvation is to produce fruit (John 15:16, Philippians 4:17).
3. We produce fruit by hearing the word (Mark 4:20-28), and applying it to our lives (Hebrews 4:2).
4. Failure to grow and produce fruit means divine discipline even to the point of the believer's early departure from this life (Luke 13:6-9 John 15:2).
5. Rewards in eternity are distributed on the basis of faithful production (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

APOSTLE

1. Apostleship is the highest spiritual gift in the Church. - Like all other spiritual gifts it was sovereignly bestowed by the Holy Spirit to certain individuals (1 Corinthians 12:11,28, Ephesians 4:11)
2. Apostleship was a temporary gift. It was designed to establish and direct the early church until the canon of scripture was completed.
3. The apostles to the church were appointed after the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:8). Hence, they must be distinguished from the "Apostles to Israel" in (Matthew 10:2ff).

4. This spiritual gift exercised authority over all local churches. Once the canon of scripture was complete the gift was removed (1 Corinthians 13:10). Today all local churches are autonomous with authority vested in the canon of scripture and the local pastor
5. The qualification of apostles:- Apostles had to be eye witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. This qualified the eleven, Paul being qualified on the Damascus Road (Acts 1:22, 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8,9).
6. The authority of the apostles was established by the possession of certain temporary gifts that went with this gift. Apostles also had the gifts of miracles, healing and tongues (Acts 5:15, 16:16-18, 28:8-9).
7. There are twelve apostles (Revelation 21:14). We have the eleven (excluding Judas). Mathias was elected by men, but not appointed by God (Acts 1:26). The twelfth apostle was Paul (1 Corinthians 15:7-10). Paul was appointed by God on the road to Damascus.
8. The word "apostle" means "one sent". Hence, some believers are called apostles in this sense. They include Barnabbas (Acts 1 4:14, Galatians 2:9), James (half brother of Jesus) (1 Corinthians 15:7, Galatians 1:19), Apollos (1 Corinthians 4:6), Silas and Timothy (1 Thessalonians 1:1).

PEACE

1. Peace on Earth:- The unlimited peace when Jesus Christ establishes his millennial reign on the earth. (Isaiah 9:6, 7, Isaiah 11:1-12, Luke 2:14)
2. Peace with God:- Which comes when a believer is born again as a result of justification by faith. (2 Peter 1:1,2, Ephesians 2:14-17, Philippians 4:9). Reconciliation.
3. Peace of God:- Which is the peace of believers in their soul and spirit who have cast all their cares on the Lord. (1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:6,7). The Spirit filled life.

PARAPHRASE

“Peter, the man built on the rock, the one sent out to lead you by the Lord, to those of you who feel like stranger in a strange land, scattered through the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. You are God’s elect, in that place because of God’s character (foreknowledge), through the holiness that the Holy Spirit produces, to make you obedient to God’s revelation, for you are secure under the sprinkled blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the fruit of the Holy Spirit; all that God is free to do for you in Christ Jesus, and his peace of mind and stability of spirit; be multiplied within the lives of you all.”

VERSES 3 - 5

“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.”

KEY WORDS

Blessed	eulogetos	worthy of praise and honour
Abundant	polus	very many, great in magnitude/number.
Mercy	eleos	pity for another’s suffering and mercy given to assist and heal.
Begotten	anagenao	to be brought to life again, or born from above.
Lively	zao	living hope (elpis), or lively confidence that brings full life with it.
Inheritance	kleronomia	an inheritance, possession.
Incorruptible	aphthartos	imperishable, everlasting, not able to be destroyed within time.
Undefiled	amiantos	sincere, pure and without spot or blemish of evil, or wrong doing.
Fadeth not	amarantos	unfading, not spoilt by the sun or elements, as a garment is.
Reserved	tereo	perfect, passive participle of the verb, that indicates that our eternal inheritance is guarded completely and thoroughly by God. We have eternal security, and eternal certainty of rewards.
Kept	proureo	present, passive, participle of the verb to be securely guarded.
Power	dunamos	dynamic power of god.
Faith	pistis	confidence expressed in trusting action.
Salvation	soteria	deliverance.
Revealed	apokalupto	to be uncovered, brought to light, revealed by an action.
Last time	kairos eschatos	the times of the end , the last days prophetically.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Note the triumph filled and joyful start to these verses - "Blessed, or praised be God". This is the start of the common prayer of the Jewish people through to this very day. Peter is drawing his cultural heritage to find voice for his praise of God of the grace received by the believers. Note the perfect tense in this section also.

God's character is again in view here. We praise him for who he is, and in this third verse it is for his mercy. This is an appropriate aspect of the Character of God to meditate upon when you face pressure and possible persecution, even suffering and death. For in the midst of your suffering you are able to remind yourself of the unchanging character of God and claim the promises of God's Word relating to this aspect of his nature. God is great (overwhelming in his magnitude) in his mercy; He feels our pain, sees our suffering and loves and cares for us in the midst of it, for He suffered for us.

The Bible does not say that believers will escape from suffering, but it does say we will be kept in the midst of them, and that we will never lose God's loving caring presence. **John 16:33**. We do not speak to an abstract "god"; we speak to a loving father who has made himself known in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why we may have confidence in the midst of suffering, for we know him, and through him we know the love and plan of God. **Hebrews 4:14-16**.

Verse 3. Hope, in the biblical sense of confidence, is the theme here. How can we have hope in the face of what many would call disasters? By seeing all things in and through the character of the God who is revealed through the scriptures. "Hope is the theme of this whole section, though the actual word does not occur again, the idea runs through it like a golden thread that holds it together". (Cranfield, 1958, p 16).

Just as it holds this chapter together, so hope should hold the church together under pressure, but it can only do that, if believers know the Lord's character, his promises, his revealed plan, and encourage each other with these things. We have a living hope, for we are in union with and daily fellowship with a living God. "A living hope is one that is never extinguished by untold circumstances, just as living waters flow fresh from a perennial spring". (Selwyn, quoted in Reinecker, 1980, p 398).

Remember also, that to call Jesus, "lord" (kurios) was to call him God. He is Lord of life, because he rose from the dead. The resurrection is the key doctrine of Christianity. Our faith rests upon the empty tomb. No resurrection = no Christianity! Another equation to reflect upon in light of this is, no resurrection power in the life (Holy Spirit fruit) = no genuine faith exists! **Romans 8:9, James 2:12-26**.

Peter never forgot what he had done at the Lord's trials, and he never forgot that the Lord had restored him to service. Too many believers are stuck in past failure, and they have not heard that we have a forgiving and restoring God. The Lord is not restricted with what he can do with us because of our past failures, for he has made perfect provision for forgiveness.

Peter's sins that terrible night nearly killed him with guilt later, but the Lord restored him, and the Lord can restore all those who come to him. The Lord receives us, he welcomes us, for he has fully provided for all our sins and they are no longer an issue between us and him, for he has removed them! **Acts 10:43, Romans 15:7**. "The Lord forgave his sinning and sorrowing servant, and through his (the Lord's) forgiveness, he (Peter) lived again." (Lumby, 1893, p 18).

We were "born again", or born with power from above. We have had a natural birth into a world that is dominated by sin, but through the work of the Lord, in accordance with the plan of God, we have been born again, through faith, into a new life that is eternal and has with it blessings that are neither tainted nor destroyed, nor are they limited by time or space.

Verse 4. Peter refers to our eternal inheritance as something that is undefiled, unfading, and imperishable. These words indicate an eternal reward for the obedient believer that is absolutely secure from all the things that decay peoples so called "wealth" down here on earth. Forgiveness opens the door. **Psalms 103:8-17**.

The word unfading is used of flowers and takes us back to the words of the Lord during the Sermon on the Mount. **Matthew 6:19-21, 28-34**. Read these verses and reflect back on Peter's words here in his letter. "The three verbal adjectives indicate that the inheritance is 'untouched by death', 'unstained by evil',

'unimpaired by time'; it is compounded of immortality, purity and beauty". (Beare, quoted in Reinecker, 1980, p 398). These are the things we should be searching after in daily life are they not? Paul urges us to do so in **Philippians 4:6-9**.

The verb 'tereo', to keep, is the reminder to us that not only is our eternal reward kept for us, but that we are also kept (perfect passive participle of the verb phroureo) by the power of God with eternal results that can be rested upon. The reward is reserved for us, it has our name on it, and no-one can take it away from us, and we are securely "kept" by the power of God until the moment when we pass over from time to eternity and receive our reward. This is the Christian conception of death that needs to be taught and proclaimed for all to hear and see. The perfect tense of the verb indicates that the matter is settled, it has already been done by God for us and it will last forever.

Verse 5. We are kept or better guarded by God's power. The verb phroureo is a military one and indicates the security with which we are kept. The passive voice of the verb in the Greek language indicates that the subject receives the action of the verb, that is, we do nothing, we are guarded by God's power, we receive this, it is his grace provision for us. The present tense here means that the action of God in guarding us is on-going. We are at all times kept by the Lord's armed guard right up until the moment that it is our time to leave this planet and return to our true home in heaven, and there collect our reward for service well done.

The word salvation here is used in the sense of "deliverance" for it refers to those who are already saved and secure in God's kingdom, with eternal reward there for them! We will be in the times of persecution, delivered by the Lord and physically live to serve the Lord again on earth, or we will be delivered through death to our eternal reward.

Peter is spelling this out to us indicating that the believers only thought is to be on their "active service" for the Lord, leaving the results with the Lord who loves and protects him or her. For similar uses of the word refer to **Romans 13:11, Hebrews 1:14, 9:28**. What all this means is that the believer can rejoice in the midst of suffering, as long as they know they are serving the Lord where and how he has made clear they are to serve. All of this will be revealed in the last days of the planet, when the full details of the plan of God will be finally seen by all.

The last chapter will put into context the whole book! Does evil still work its cancer? The answer is yes! Do believers still die under persecution? The answer is yes! Is this part of God's plan? The answer is still YES! This is why we need to live prayerfully and be heeding the Holy Spirit's work within us, so that we are every day where we should be doing what we are called to do in accordance with the plan. Then and then alone we can relax with all outcomes.

When will we know all the facts and see the whole thing and be able fully to praise God for all that has happened? Only in the end, when all the facts of time are seen; only then when all will be finally revealed or unveiled can the full truth be known about each "tragic case" we see today. At this point we only know and see "in part". How do we deal with that all too human desire to have all the facts? Only by resting securely on the certainties inherent in the character of God and our knowledge of his revealed plan. Refer to Paul's words in **1 Corinthians 13:9-12**.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

"But how can we talk with vivid conviction of that which occupies so small a space in our own inner life?" (Meyer, 1953, p15).

This is the challenge to us all. Do the doctrines covered in this section of Peter's letter enliven our days as they clearly enlivened his? They ought to! We have an eternal destiny and each day should be lived in constant awareness of that.

We have new life that is eternal. Do we live as if that is true or would another person looking on see only a person living for today? Do we live as the pagans do? Or do we truly live as those who have an eternal destiny and eternal reward and a true home in heaven.

So many believers spend more time on doing up their house than they spend on things related to the furnishing of their mansion in heaven **John 14:1-3**, and then read on to verses 19-27. Note the similar

themes of this section of the Olivet discourse of the Lord to Peter's words in this chapter. Peter never forgot that night of his betrayal, the Lord's words were burned into him. His sadness at his actions never left him, but the joy of the Lord's forgiveness never left him either.

Let us ensure that the Lord's words are also burned into our daily walk. Let us not be distracted by things that rot and decay and that the bank can take away, but let us rather focus on the things that are eternal, for that is our destiny. No distractions!!!!

[b] PASTORAL

How many times does Paul urge us to "encourage one another" with the words of Scripture? Do we do this enough from the pulpit, or do we engage in topical preaching that gives our views of events, but not the Lord's character, and the Lord's promises, and the Lord's plan! Let us ensure that the people leave every service fired up for service under pressure, even if none exists now in your neighbourhood. Let us ensure we give our people the anointed Word of the Living God, not the opinions of men.

How long since you preached and mentioned the empty tomb, and our eternal life and rewards? How long since you expounded on the resurrection of the Lord, and the believers own resurrection? These are the doctrines that Peter starts with to encourage the saints under pressure, surely we ought to be mentioning them more often? These are the things that create stability, and this is what is needed today in the church.

How often are we asked questions that are not able to be answered this side of eternity or until we have all the facts. These verses remind us that the facts are not all in until the end. Only the Lord has the full picture now. Let us not be ashamed or embarrassed about saying, "I don't know", when the truth is, that we do not at this point know a lot of things!

All will be clear then, at the end, but until then we can be strong in faith through our knowledge of the character of the Lord. Let us ensure that every day we live we encourage each other by reminding each other of the wonderful dependability of the character of God.

CONCLUSION

The ancient Jewish prayer, "Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha olam", is echoed in this section. "Blessed are you, our Lord God, King of the whole world". We are, in these verses, reminded that our God is king of kings and Lord of Lords. His plan is going to work out and we are part of that plan and he has certainty in the plan and certainty in his provision for us in time with protection and in eternity with rewards.

DOCTRINES

RESURRECTION

1. The resurrection of Christ is central to the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
 - a) Had there been no resurrection then we would all still be in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17).
 - b) Resurrection indicates completion of justification (Romans 4:25, 2 Corinthians 5:2 1).
 - c) Resurrection is a guarantee of ultimate sanctification (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).
 - d) The resurrection is the Father's seal on Christ's completed work, and the public declaration of its acceptance.
 - e) Without the resurrection it is impossible for Christ to be glorified. The humanity of Christ is glorified higher than the angels. (John 7:39, John 16:14)
2. Historical proof of the resurrection:
 - a) The empty tomb. (Matthew 28)
 - b) Many of witnesses died rather than change their testimony.
 - c) Subsequent changes and confidence of the disciples after the resurrection.
 - d) The day of Pentecost. The reality of the resurrection was so well known that when Peter preached the first two sermons in Jerusalem over 8000 people were saved. (Acts 2:41, Acts 4:3-4)

- e) The observance of the first day of the week as the worship day. (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Revelation 1:10)
 - f) The historic existence of the church. The church worships a literal risen Saviour, and not merely the memory of a dead martyr. (Romans 5:12,14,17, 6:3-9, 8:2, 1 Corinthians 15:26,54-55, Hebrews 2:14)
3. Baptism is a sign of the new resurrection life (Romans 6:3-11, Colossians 2:12).
4. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of the expected return of the risen Lord (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
5. Order of the resurrections:
- a) The first for believers only including Jesus Christ which is divided into four parts:
 - i) The resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:23, Romans 1:4, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Peter 1:3)
 - ii) The Rapture of the church (1 Corinthians 15:51-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)
 - iii) The Old Testament saints and tribulation martyrs at the end of the Tribulation (Daniel 12:13, Isaiah 26-19-20, Revelation 20:4)
 - iv) The Millennial saints and those who survive the Tribulation to enter the Millennium in their physical bodies.
 - b) The second resurrection occurs at the end of the Millennium and is for unbelievers only. They are judged and cast into the lake of fire forever. (1 John 5:28, 29, Revelation 20:12-15, 2 Peter 3:7, Matthew 25:41)
 - c) Jesus, who must be the first eternally resurrected human, was not raised until three days after the crucifixion.
 - d) People in the Old Testament who were "raised from the dead" were merely resuscitated, and later died.
 - e) Matthew 27:52-53 is a transfer scene not a resurrection scene. The transfer is one of saints from paradise to the third heaven (Ephesians 4:8). Some were given resuscitated bodies to witness to the Jews.
6. The sequence of events at the Lord's resurrection is as follows:
- a) Mary Magdalene, Salome and Mary the mother of James and Joses head towards the tomb followed by other women carrying embalming spices.
 - b) The three find the stone rolled away. Mary Magdalene goes back to tell the disciples (Luke 23:55-24:9, John 20:1-2).
 - c) Mary the mother of James and Joses draws near to the tomb and sees the angel (Matthew 28:2).
 - d) She goes back to the women carrying the spices.
 - e) Peter and John who have been advised by Mary Magdalene arrive, look inside the empty tomb and go away (John 20:3-10).
 - f) Mary Magdalene returns weeping, sees two angels and then Jesus (John 20:11-18).
 - g) As instructed by the Lord she goes to tell the disciples.
 - h) Mary the mother of James and Joses meets the women with the spices and returning with them they see the two angels (Luke 24:4-5, Mark 16:5).
 - i) They also receive advice from the angels and, going to seek the disciples, are met by Jesus (Matthew 28:8-10).
7. Recorded appearances after his resurrection:
- a) Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18)
 - b) Women returning from the tomb (Matthew 28:8-10)
 - c) Emmaus couple (Luke 24:13-31)
 - d) Peter (Luke 24:34)

- e) Ten disciples (Luke 24:36-43)
- f) Disciples including Thomas (John 20:24-29)
- g) Lake Tiberias appearance (John 21:1-23)
- h) To the 500 (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- i) James (1 Corinthians 15:7)
- j) Disciples at the ascension (Acts 1:3-12)
- k) Stephen (Acts 7:55)
- l) Paul on Damascus Road (Acts 9:3-6)
- m) Paul in the Temple (Acts 22:17-21)
- n) Paul at night (Acts 23:11)
- o) John on Patmos (Revelation 1:10-19).

8. The resurrection body of Jesus Christ:

- a) Retained the nail prints in the hands and feet (Psalm 22:16, Zechariah 12:10, John 20:25-29)
- b) Retained the wound scar in the side (John 20:25-29)
- c) Christ was recognised on 15 appearances by his disciples as the one who died and rose again.
- d) Resurrection body of Christ could eat (Luke 24:42-43)
- e) It had substance, it could be touched and felt (Matthew 28:9, Luke 24:39, John 20:17)
- f) His body could breathe (John 20:22)
- g) His body possessed flesh and bones (Luke 24:39-40)
- h) Could walk through closed doors (Luke 24:36, John 20:19)
- i) Appears and disappears suddenly (Luke 24:31,36)
- j) Could move vertically or horizontally (Acts 1:9,10)
- k) Our body will be just like His without the nail prints or wound in the side.

SALVATION

1. Salvation is the gift of God by grace through faith.
2. We cannot work for salvation - we must receive it as a gift (Ephesians 2:8, 9, Romans 4:4-5).
3. The only means of salvation is by trusting that Jesus Christ died for your sins, was buried and raised from the dead. He therefore paid the penalty for sin, and conquered death (Acts 16:30-31, John 3:16, 14:6, 1Corinthians 15:3-4).
4. We are saved so that we can serve God. (Ephesians 2:8-10) Our good works show that we have been saved.
5. Salvation includes many other doctrines such as Imputation, Justification, Redemption, Propitiation, Reconciliation and Sanctification.

REGENERATION: BORN AGAIN

1. General Scripture - (John 3:5-8) 'Ye must be born again' (v7). You are born of the Spirit (v8). We then become new creatures in Christ.
2. Natural man cannot understand spiritual phenomenon (1 Corinthians 2:14). He lacks the ability to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). They are unable to please God (Romans 8:7, 8).

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3. New birth is a creation of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10, 4:24). Through the Holy Spirit we become aware that we are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16, 17).
4. The requirement for the new birth is belief on Christ, that He is crucified and risen (John 1:12, 3:16-18,36). New birth occurs at the instant of belief.
5. Through new birth (Regeneration) the believer lives in Christ, and Christ in the believer (Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:10, 4:24, 1 Peter 1:23-25, 1 John 5:10-12).
6. Once you are born you cannot be unborn.

ETERNAL SECURITY

1. When a person truly trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, he is saved forever. He cannot lose his salvation.
2. POSITIONAL APPROACH (Romans 8:38-39)
We are united with Christ ("in Christ"). Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ.
3. LOGICAL APPROACH (Romans 8:32, Romans 5)
As unbelievers we are enemies of God (Romans 5), as believers we are his children. If he did the most for his enemies what will he do for his children? This excludes loss of salvation for he saved us while we were his enemies.
4. GOD'S HANDS APPROACH (John 10:28, Psalm 37:24)
Neither shall anyone seize them out of my hand. God is all-powerful.
5. EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH (2 Timothy 2:12-13)
If we deny Christ He is going to deny us rewards (context=suffering and rewards). If we renounce Him, HE REMAINS FAITHFUL. The believer is in Christ and Christ indwells the believer. He cannot deny Himself.
6. THE FAMILY APPROACH (Galatians 3:26, John 1:12)
When you believe in Christ you are born again as a child of God. You cannot be unborn, once a child always a child.
7. THE INHERITANCE APPROACH (1 Peter 1:4-5)
We have an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God. Perfect tense - it will always be reserved, since it is kept by God, not us.
8. THE SOVEREIGNTY APPROACH (2 Peter 3:9, Jude 24)
He is not willing that any should perish - refers to the whole human race (2 Peter 3:9) Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling (from perishing). Once you are saved, it is His will that you don't perish.
9. THE BODY APPROACH (1 Corinthians 12:21, Colossians 1:18)
Christ is the head, we are the members of the body. If any are lost, the body of Christ is incomplete.
10. THE GREEK TENSE APPROACH (Ephesians 2:8-9)
"For by Grace are ye saved." Perfect tense of the verb "sozo". For by Grace have you been saved in the past so that you go on being saved forever.
11. THE SEALING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT APPROACH (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30)
In the ancient world the seal was a guarantee for protection. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit guarantees our security.

PARAPHRASE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the standard of his great mercy has brought us into newness of eternal life through the resurrection power of the Lord from the dead., to bring us securely through to an inheritance unstained by evil, unimpaired by time, untouched by death, pure, beautiful and forever. We also are guarded by God's power, and will be delivered from all evil, and in the last days will see all of this as the Lord reveals it to us."

VERSES 6 - 9

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

KEY WORDS

Greatly rejoice	agalliao	leap for joy, exult and rejoice in victory.
Season	oligos	for a little while, a very brief moment in relation to something else.
Heaviness	lupeo	aorist passive participle of the verb, to receive grief, be saddened, be offended, aggrieved.
Manifold	poikilos	many and various sorts of colours (clothing).
Temptations	peirasmos	great adversity that tries and proves one, to see what he is made of.
Trial	dokimos	proving in fire of pottery or metal to ensure it is pure, and approved.
Precious	timios	of great price, of supreme value.
Perisheth	apollumi	to be completely destroyed so that nothing remains.
Tried	dokimazo	put to the test to ensure it is pure and approved.
Praise	epainos	to be commended and praised, as when a warrior receives a medal.
Honour	time	honour, as of a person held in high regard as a brave warrior or great statesman or public servant.
Glory	doxe	recognition of renown and honour, praise to one worthy.
Appearing	apocalupsis	revelation , manifestation, enlightenment.
Seen	eido	be aware of, behold, understand.
Love	agapao	love that comes from reason, esteem that is rooted in appreciation.
See	horao	to stare at, really paying attention to.
Believing	pisteuo	commit yourself in faith and trust
Rejoice	agalliao	leap for joy
Unspeakable	Aneklaetos	unable to be spoken of in human words.
Full of glory	doxazo	Perfect, passive, participle; filled with glory forever.
Receiving	komizo	recovering, receiving.
End	telos	the purpose, end point, destination, or objective.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Given all that Peter has mentioned in the first verses there is only one appropriate response; it is to leap for joy within the certainty of the gracious and abundant provisions of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, who is our Saviour. Even if we find ourselves in the midst of a time of "heaviness" we can praise the Lord who has a plan and purpose, and a direction that he wants us to take in the midst of it. **Isaiah 61:3**. With knowledge of his character and plan we are meant to be unmoved by troubles. They will touch us, and they will hurt us, but as long as they bring us to our knees, we will find the answer in the Lord's love for us. 1 Peter 5:5-9.

There is a hint of self pity in the verb used here. Like ourselves these people felt it was somehow unfair of the Lord to let this grief hit them. Peter is challenging them with a completely different mental attitude to take under these pressures.

Verse 6. Peter refers to the many types of pressure situations as "many coloured" as if they are simply sets of clothes that we put off and put on daily. His choice of words here is more than poetic, for it reminds us that all the events of time are like garments, that are often changed daily, or in a moment. All of us have experienced a great time of pressure that dissolved in a second with new facts, or a change of circumstance. That is Peter's point. Pressure situations come in all shapes, sizes and colours, but they are all like clothing; they can be changed in a moment. His challenge is to adopt a mental attitude towards the pressures of time that will transform their effect on you even before the Lord's gracious provisions remove them as testing.

The aorist participle in verse six tells us that the distress has already started for these believers. They are now worried, and Peter is challenging them to reconsider their worry in the light of the character and eternal provision of the Lord for each and every believer. They are to walk in the light of God's unchanging character.

"Already the storm clouds are gathering. There is an oppressive sense of insecurity. The Christians of Asia minor, to whom this letter is addressed, are also seriously alarmed, and we suspect somewhat liable to give way to self pity". (Cranfield, 1958, p 20). Is not worry always self pity? Peter's call is to passing over the problems to the Lord. Rather than sitting in the place of self pity, we are to stand upon the promises of God; walk in the light of who he is, not cringe in the shadow of our worries.

Verse 7. The first word of verse seven, 'hina', reminds us that there is a purpose to the trials, and that they are occurring in accordance with a plan. They are, "providentially ordered for divers and eternal ends". (Stibbs, 1959, p 77).

Peter uses the Old Testament analogy of the refiners fire, from **Malachi 3:3**, to describe what the Lord is doing and going to do with them all. Within this concept there are six principles, that are grounded in God's holy character, for them to rest their weary heads upon. (After, Meyer, 1953, pp 30-32).

1. He permits the fire to do it's work of refining to purify the person. Job 1.
2. He superintends the fire to ensure it is the right heat. 1 Corinthians 10:13
3. He watches over the progress of the trial and changes things to achieve his goal with the person
4. He limits the testing. It is for a season only; it comes to pass. Ecclesiastes 3:9-17.
5. There is an eternal purpose that has value in time and reward in eternity associated with it.
6. These results will more than compensate us for the distress we may endure here. 1 Corinthians 9:25

"So God uses Trial and suffering to separate the believer from those things that hinder fellowship with God and growth in the spiritual life". (Ironsides, 1984, p 18).

Peter is addressing people in his own day and our own, who believe that trial is an awful and ugly thing, and indeed from a human perspective some trials can be ugly and traumatic. Peter's challenge is to see them as "precious", as a thing of highest value. The human value system refers to suffering as an evil, to pain and violent death as terrible, to financial pressures as awful, but Peter tells us here that from God's viewpoint these things, when part of his fire, are things of great value.

We value "things"; we value houses, cars, jobs, money, friendships, yet all these things may be "burned up" in the fire of persecution. Peter says that being able to transform our way of seeing things will lead us to the place where even the loss of all our goods under pressures, even the death of loved ones under persecution, is seen as, of "great value", for we see that we are on an eternal stage rather than an earthly one.

Winning for the worldly viewpoint is "dying with the most goods", but from God's viewpoint it is maturity in spiritual growth with him, and standing for the truth as his ambassador here on earth. As persecution draws near Peter challenges the believers to get their eyes firmly set on the eternal value system, not anything associated with, and thereby limited to space-time.

Houses, cars, money, jobs, family members, friends, may all be lost, but the losses can be of "supreme value" if they are part of the Lord's plan; there is no tragedy in the will/plan of God. His permitted trials may involve great earthly loss as far as men are concerned, but the heavenly reward will compensate us more fully than any mansions of earth can ever satisfy us.

"Faith is not the stoical endurance of evil, but a personal affection and devotion to the Lord, and loves proves its sterling quality by standing the strain of life in his service. . . . Out of sight, but not out of reach; such is Peter's description of Christ." (Moffatt, 1963, p 98).

Verse 8. The Christian life is about Jesus Christ. Success is always about occupation with Christ; being more focused on his "well done" than on all that the world has to offer! "We cannot take his words and ignore him. Christianity is the personal relationship of the soul to Christ. Begin not with his words, but with himself, and when you possess him, you cannot fail of having all he said and did, and is, and will be without end." . . . After all, love is measured, not by feelings, or sighs, or tears, but by acts. You love Christ by just as much as you are prepared to do, or suffer, or give up for him." (Meyer, 1953, pp 35, 37).

Praise, honour and glory! These are to be our goals on earth, and they come only through our loving service of the Lord who gave his all for us. The Lord wants to "find" these things in us, that our lives might be reasons for hymns of praise. He comes for us, we remind ourselves of this each time we take communion, as we say, "until he comes", **1 Corinthians 11: 26**.

All our life should be lived with this phrase burning in our ears. He is coming again, **Acts 1:11**, yet we like the apostles on that hill prefer to stand gazing into the sky. We are told directly to "wait actively" by serving him, until he comes! Verse eight tells us the appropriate mental attitude, and it is glorying and joying! We keep on rejoicing in him with joy that is beyond human words. The present tense of the verbs in this verse speak of on going actions of the believer who is focused on their faith in Christ, rather than their problems in the world!

Verse 9. This verse tells us that the end point is the deliverance of our souls with glory in it. The souls here refer to the whole man, in a Jewish sense, rather than the Greek usage which split men up into parts. Jewish thinking always saw man as a unity, not three "parts", but three aspects of the one whole. We are delivered, and not because we deserve to be, but because we have a wonderful Saviour who has provided all for us and met the needs of us all!

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

Do we feel sorry for ourselves when we face pressure situations, or do we praise the Lord in the midst, certain of his provision and deliverance? The standard when facing pressure is to “leap for joy in the Lord”. All else is sin, for it reflects lack of faith in our Saviour God.

Romans 14:23 is a tough verse but must be applied to our audit of daily life: “whatever is not of faith is sin”; but it is our given standard for life in this world. This is what we are called to! He did not save us to leave us in troubles without hope, yet how often we act as if that is true! Testing times are, “for a season” always, they end, yet do we keep our focus through the midst of them?

Eternal rewards last forever, and they are the things that we work for here in time, if our heart is set on the Lord rather than the earth! **2 Corinthians 4:17**. Let us grasp the importance of the mental attitude that sees things God’s way rather than through the panic that so often grabs us! Let us praise God for deliverance before it comes in time (for it is already certain from his eternal provision for us from before we were born!), and let us leap for joy at his answer to the testing time even before we see what form the answer will take, for in his economy it is certain!

We have not seen the Lord but we can still love him for who he is and what he has done and will do, as we meet him through his word and through his indwelling Holy Spirit. We must walk daily in this reality or we will conform to the world’s standards and waste our time striving for things that don’t last.

[b] PASTORAL

Occupation with Christ; the Christocentric life is the heart of the apostolic message. Do we hear it today from our pulpits? Perhaps this is why we are so easily seduced from our task, for if we value the things of earth ahead of the things of Christ we cannot ever serve him in the place of troubles, and that is where the real work is to be done.

The task of the minister is through the systematic teaching of the Scriptures to assist the believers to get to know the Lord Jesus Christ. All preaching that does not advance that task is wasted time and effort on the part of the minister. “Sir, we would see Jesus”. That was the question of the men who came to the apostles in the Temple Courts, it is still the task of all who would stand in the apostolic legacy.

We must not get in the way, and all we do must be based on helping people get to know him. The end of time is secure; we are with him! The only question for each believer is how loud their shout for joy now, and how great is their reward at the time of his coming! As pastors we are responsible to urge the believers on to greater service and therefore greater rewards.

DOCTRINES

SUFFERING

1. Ultimately, all suffering is a result of the sin of Adam.
2. God is sovereign and allows even undeserved suffering to come upon the world for a reason (Romans 8:28)
 - a) To bring people to a point of helplessness where they call out to Him
 - b) To test and develop faith, so bringing glory to Himself.
3. There will be no suffering for believers in eternity (Revelation 21:4).
4. Unbelievers will suffer forever in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:12-15).
5. Suffering can be caused by:
 - a) Discipline for your own sins
 - b) The effect of the sins of others on you - gossip, war, crime

c) Self-induced suffering as a result of your own actions – e.g. sickness from smoking, poverty from poor stewardship

d) The sovereign will of God - health, weather.

6. Premise of Suffering:

a) All suffering is designed for blessing in the Christian walk (1 Peter 1:7, 8, 4:14)

b) Even discipline is designed to restore fellowship (Hebrews 12:6)

c) Suffering follows the principle of grace (Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

7. Purpose of Christian Suffering:

a) To receive discipline for carnality or backsliding (Psalm 38)

b) To glorify God (Job 1:8-12, Luke 15:20, 21)

c) To illustrate doctrine (Book of Hosea)

d) To learn obedience (Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 5:8)

e) To keep down pride (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

f) To develop faith (1 Peter 1:7, 8)

g) To witness for Christ (2 Corinthians 13:4)

h) To demonstrate the power of God (2 Corinthians 11:24-33, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

i) To manifest the fruit of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 4:8-11)

j) To help others who suffer (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

k) From indirect action - because other believers get out of fellowship (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 26, 1 Samuel 21, 1 Chronicles 21).

FAITH

1. The Christian life can be divided into three sections or stages:

a) Stage 1 - Salvation

b) Stage 2 - The Christian Walk

c) Stage 3 - The Christian in Heaven.

2. Man has three means of obtaining knowledge:

a) Faith - to believe or trust that something is true

b) Reasoning - using human logic to deduce that something is true

c) Experimentation - to test and prove something to satisfy yourself that it is true.

3. The only acceptable method of gaining grace is by faith, since this means depending upon God without our human merit.

a) Stage 1 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved - salvation (Acts 16:31).

b) Stage 2 - Trusting in the promises and principles of the Word of God - the Christian walk.

c) Stage 3 - Trusting in God's provision - Heaven.

4. Salvation faith is the complete trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for your sins and rose from the dead to give you eternal life (Romans 4:20-25).

5. Anything added to becomes works, and therefore nullifies faith (Romans 4:4).

6. Faith is shown outwardly by confession with the mouth (Romans 10:9-10).

7. Since faith does not depend on our own abilities, anybody can believe. Even little children (Matthew 18:2-4).

8. Assurance is by faith (Hebrews 10:22).

9. Overcoming by faith:

- a) The heroes of faith are illustrated for our encouragement in Hebrews 11:1-39
- b) By faith learn to accept conditions as God's will for life and be thankful - Romans 8:28, 1 Thessalonians 3:3; 5:18
- c) By faith maintain fellowship with God, walking in the light - 1 John 1:7
- d) By faith consistently day by day examine your conduct, confessing all known sins - 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31, 1 John 1:9
- e) By faith receive the Word of God daily - Matthew 4:4; 5:6, 2 Peter 3:18
- f) By faith pray, casting every care on Him - Hebrews 4:15,16; 1 Peter 5:7
- g) By faith resist the attempts of Satan and he will flee from you - Ephesians 6:10-13, 1 Peter 5:8
- h) By faith meditate on spiritual values and priorities - Philippians 4:6-9
- i) Walk by faith and not by sight - 2 Corinthians 5:7.

LOVE

- 1. Love for others is an important feature of the Christian life.
- 2. There are three types of love:-
 - a) love for God.
 - b) love for your spouse.
 - c) love for other members of the human race.
- 3. It should be noted that only in type (b) is the body involved. The rest involve the soul or soul and spirit only.
- 4. Love For God
 - a) love for God is a response to the love of God. (Deuteronomy 6:5)
 - b) the capacity for this love depends on your maturity. (Philippians 1:20,21; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 4:17-18)
 - c) for the Church age believer love for God occurs first through the filling of the Spirit. Confession of sin is therefore critically important. (Ephesians 5:2, cf. 5:18)
 - d) Jesus Christ is the initiator of love of God through grace. (Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 John 4:8-10; 4:19)
 - e) the believer loves God using his free will.
 - f) the believer who does not love Christ is under a special curse and perpetual discipline. (1 Corinthians 16:22)
 - g) love for God is the true motivator for working for God such as witnessing. (2 Corinthians 5:14)
 - h) this love is initiated by grace and increased in the believer who has a gracious attitude towards God and mankind. (Daniel 9:4; Psalm 31:23; 119:132; 1 Corinthians 2:9)
 - i) love for God was commanded to all O.T. saints. (Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 11:1; 11:13)
 - j) love for God is the basis of all true happiness as well as capacity for loving members of the human race. (Deuteronomy 30:16)
 - k) love for God provides courage in battle. (Joshua 23:10-11)
 - l) as we see God through his Word it is impossible to love God except through his Word. (Psalm 119:165-167, 1 Peter 1:8)

5. Love For Your Spouse

- a) is love for a member of the opposite sex designed by God for you in eternity past unless you have the gift of celibacy. (Song of Solomon 8:6-7)
- b) it is as strong as death and is a provision from God.
- c) death does not destroy this love. (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)
- d) this type of love is exclusive to one person. (Proverbs 5:18-19)
- e) this type of love is protective both in absence (Song of Solomon 1:13, 4:6) and in presence. (Song of Solomon 2:4) The man is a banner of protection to the woman.
- f) love for your spouse illustrates relationships with the Lord. (Ezekiel 16:8, Ephesians 5:23-33)
- g) mental sins attack all forms of love. (1 John 5:18)
- h) God has set aside time in each life for love. (Ecclesiastes 3:8)

6. Love For Others

- a) love for others has great stability and power. (2 Samuel 1:26, Proverbs 27:9,10, John 15:13, Galatians 5:4)
- b) love for others provides pleasant and relaxing environment. (Romans 13:10, Proverbs 10:12)
- c) love for others is free from hypocrisy. (Romans 12:9)
- d) love for others is outgoing and objective. (Galatians 5:13, 2 Samuel 1:26)
- e) love for others promotes orientation to grace. (Philemon 9-12)
- f) love for others has enemies and can be destroyed by:-
 - i) mental attitude sins. (Job 19:19, Proverbs 16:28)
 - ii) sins of the tongue. (Proverbs 17:9)
 - iii) national catastrophe. (Jeremiah 6:21-23, 20:4-6)
- g) love for others can be counterfeited. (Proverbs 19:6-7)
- h) love for others can be removed because of divine discipline. (Psalm 38:11, 88:18)

SOUL AND HUMAN SPIRIT

- 1. The real person is in the soul (Genesis 2:7), the body is merely a house for the soul (2 Corinthians 5:1-4).
- 2. The soul and the spirit are separate (Hebrews 4:12).
- 3. In creation, Adam received soul and spirit (Genesis 2:7).
- 4. It is the soul that is saved, not the body (Romans 5:12, Psalm 19:7, 34:22, Mark 8:36,37, Hebrews 10:39, 1Peter 1:9).
- 5. The unbeliever has body and soul only (1 Corinthians 2:14).
 - a) The unbeliever does not have an activated spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14, Jude 19).
 - b) The Holy Spirit acts as the regenerator of the human spirit (Genesis 6:3, John 16:8-11, 1 Corinthians 2:14-16).
 - c) At the point of salvation the human spirit is activated.
- 6. The believer has body, soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
 - a) The believer has an activated spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

- b) The human spirit deals with spiritual understanding.
- c) He understands spiritual phenomena (1 Corinthians 2:14).
- d) The believer grows in grace and knowledge (Ephesians 3:16-19).

7. Characteristics of the Soul

- a) Deals with human understanding.
- b) Self awareness (Genesis 35:18, 1 Kings 17:21) - either focus on Christ, or on self (either pride or self-pity).
- c) Thinking (Luke 12:19) - either divine viewpoint, or human viewpoint.
- d) Freewill (Acts 3:23) - either obedient to God's will, or self will.
- e) Emotions (Song of Solomon 1:7, Luke 12:19, 2 Peter 2:8) - either controlled, or pleasing self.
- f) Conscience (Acts 24:16, Romans 2:15, 9:1,2) - either God's standards, or (either lawlessness or self-righteousness).
- g) Sin nature (Leviticus 5:1, Psalm 58:2-5, Ezekiel 18:4, Matthew 15:19) - either controlled, or in control.
- h) Departs from body at death (Job 27:8, Psalm 16:10, 2 Corinthians 5:8).
- i) Area of love (1 Samuel 18:1).
- j) Area of misery (Psalm 6:3, 106:15, 119:25,28,81).

CONCLUSION

Joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit that Peter emphasises should be there under pressure. The mark of the mature believer is joy under pressure. Let us rejoice in it ourselves, and see it in others, as we set them an example worthy to follow. Peter is our example here, as the Lord was his.

PARAPHRASE

“In which circumstances you leap for joy anticipating victory in advance, even though for a brief time here on earth are saddened and weighed down by pressures, through many types of temptations. The plan of God allows these things, in order that, the testing for approval of your faith, a process much more valuable than gold or silver that does not last, though you must go through fire, might result in praise, honour and renown, at the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. You have not seen him in the flesh but you love him, you express your faith in him, and believing in him you are able to leap for joy, and rejoice with a depth of feeling that words cannot express, filled up to overflowing with glory, finally receiving the rewards of your faith through the deliverance of your selves into life eternal with him forever.”

VERSES 10 - 12

“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired 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.”

KEY WORDS

Inquired	ekzeteo	aorist active indicative of the verb, to seek out intensively, purposively.
Searched	exereunao	aorist active indicative, to seek out with diligence / effort and concentration.
Diligently		(understood in the verb above) , minute search pattern / earnestness!
Prophecied	propheteuo	aorist active participle of the verb to foretell.
Searching	ereunao	present active participle of the verb to concentrate in a search.

Manner	poios	what kind of, what sort of thing was to occur.
Signify	deloo	to reveal, bring to light, discover/uncover
Sufferings	pathema	suffering, affliction, enduring pain in spirit and mind.
Revealed	apokapupto	aorist passive indicative of the verb, to receive uncovering.
Minister	diakoneo	imperfect active indicative, the imperfect indicating continuous action in the past, to serve as a waiter at a table, meeting the needs of others.
Reported	anaggello	aorist active indicative of the verb to announce
Preached	euaggelo	present middle participle of the verb, announce good tidings.
Desire	epithumeo	present active indicative, to desire eagerly, long for with passionate interest.
Look	parakupto	aorist active infinitive, to stoop down to search into a place that is dark.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

This is a call to action. Note the verbal forms in this section. Present continuous tenses with the active voice are all reminding us that continuous action is called for every day of our lives. We have information now through the Word that the Old Testament prophets longed to see, yet we are too often ignorant of the revealed counsel of God.

Daniel was told that he couldn't know, even some of the things he spoke of, but we can know a great deal, for the Holy Spirit has revealed so much more of the Plan of God by our day. Let us rejoice as we hungrily study the revealed plan of God. The Bible is for time not eternity! It is for us to master and apply now. Study with hunger for results, and apply with vigour all that is read that applies to you.

Verse 10. Note Peter's points. The great doctrines of, Election in Christ, foreknowledge of the Father, sufferings of Christ are all related parts of a plan, and we are in that plan! Glory is the result of seeing your part in the plan and playing that part to the full. There is security in the midst of it all due to the provision of God from eternity past for each of us in the plan. Peter challenges us to see the planned nature of history that is truly "his story".

The prophets were really keen to know what is now clearly revealed to us, and they searched with all their strength, but could not see it all, for it was not their time. We have the information, and the challenge is to use the same energy the old prophets used to learn and apply the details of the plan into our daily life. They ministered to us, to people who they would not meet until the end of time, or in heaven, yet they kept their focus and did their job. We have so much more than they did but often "lose the plot" and go off after earthly things that don't matter. Let us keep the plot, and apply the plan!

Verse 11. "The men of the Old Testament lived in the strength of God's promise. With their faces turned towards the future, knowing that the divine intervention, which they expected could alone make sense of their life, . . . Over their lives there stood a great "not yet". They knew that they were waiting for something which had not yet come." (Cranfield, 1958, p 29).

"What reconciled Christians of the apostolic age to the initially shocking enigma of a crucified Messiah was their persuasion, confirmed by the resurrection, that it was an essential element in God's saving plan as attested by prophecy." (Kelly, 1969, p 62). If we truly understand the purpose of the cross and resurrection, then we can see that suffering, death and loss can all play their part in the eternal plan. Losses on earth are irrelevant; it is the "win" in the end and the gains of heaven that matter. The perspective is heavenly not earthly here.

Verse 12. The angels desired to know in advance what is revealed to us in Christ Jesus, yet even they were not permitted to know all that was to occur when the Lord came to earth. We have revealed to us the things that the angels were not allowed to know! **Mark 13:32, Romans 16:25, 1 Corinthians 2:8.** We have a superior position to them.

"So incredibly great is the gift which the Christian believers have received, that not even angels were permitted to observe the mystery connected with the coming of Christ and of his salvation". (Reike, 1964, p 81). With such blessing comes greater responsibility. We are here on earth with a purpose, a role and a tasking for which we are held responsible. We are to preach, teach and stand as ambassadors for the King of Kings, not resemble the "scoffers", who Peter will criticize in the second letter, chapter 3.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

“The truly Christian reader, unlike the scoffers will look back to the privileges conferred on him, of partaking in the divine nature, and will seek to live worthy of it. He will also look forward to the day of assessment, and strive to live in the light of it.” (Green, 1968, p 77).

To those who receive much more, much more is expected! We are recipients of a great revelation and we must live in the light of it, not in the darkness of the values of this present corrupt carnal age! The world has entered the church, and we must be sure that we allow the Word of God free access to our soul and spirit, so that we do all that is required and expected of those who have received as much as we have.

[b] PASTORAL

The heavenly perspective is the only perspective that is to come from the pulpit. We must train our people to see things God's way so that they might serve him with focus and direction.

DOCTRINES

ANGELS

1. There are two kinds of angels:

- a) Elect Angels (1 Timothy 5:21) - those which have chosen to remain with God.
- b) Fallen angels - those which have rebelled against God and followed Satan:
 - i) imprisoned ones (Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4) - apparently active on earth prior to the Flood (Genesis 6).
 - ii) demons, currently active on earth (1 Corinthians 10:20,21, Mark 5:1-20).

2. There are various orders in the angelic realm.

- a) Cherubim (highest order) - (Genesis 3:24, Exodus 25:19-20). Cherubs were originally the defenders of divine holiness. Lucifer (Satan) was a cherub (Ezekiel 28:14).
- b) Seraphim - (Isaiah 6:2). Seraph means burning ones.
- c) Rulers, Principalities and Powers - can refer to human authorities, but usually refers to angels (and generally to fallen angels). (Ephesians 3:10, 6:12, Colossians 1:16). They control certain segments of the human race, they can control the voice and the mind (Mark 5:1-20).
- d) Ministering Angels
 - i) Guardian angels (Hebrews 1:14). Protect and assist believers.
 - ii) Angels of the waters (Revelation 16:5). Water is used as a prison. Abyss (Greek), refers to an underwater prison.
 - iii) Angels of the abyss (Revelation 9:1,11). An angel which has a special responsibility for the abyss.
 - iv) Angel of fire (Revelation 14:18).
 - v) Angels of judgment (Revelation 8:2, chapters 15,16) - trumpets and bowls.
 - vi) Watcher angels (Daniel 4:13).

3. Appearance of angels:

- a) Angels can appear as human beings (Genesis 18:1-2, Hebrews 13:2)
- b) Angels are described variously as having wings, many eyes, many faces (Isaiah 6:2, Ezekiel 1) and often glow with brilliant light (Matthew 28:2-3).
- c) Lucifer (Satan) was the most beautiful creature ever to come from the hand of God (Ezekiel 28:12-17).
- d) Angels are NOT pink fat babies with wings, or red skinned creatures with horns and forked tails.

4. Named angels:

- a) Lucifer, son of the morning, was the covering cherub over the Throne of God (Isaiah 14:12). His name is now Satan, the accuser/slanderer (Revelation 12:10).
- b) Gabriel a messenger angel (Daniel 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:19,26).
- c) Michael a fighting angel (Revelation 12:7, Jude 9) and guardian angel of Israel (Daniel 10:21, 12:1).

5. Angels and Christ's Incarnation

- a) At his birth - (Luke 2:9-15)
- b) At his temptation - (Matthew 4:11)
- c) At his resurrection - (Matthew 28:2)
- d) At his ascension - (Acts 1:10)
- e) At the Second Advent - (Matthew 13:37-39, 24:31, 25:31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7)

6. Angels and Man

- a) Angels were watching at the time of creation (Job 38:7).
- b) Angels were present when God gave Moses the Law (Galatians 3:19, Acts 7:53).
- c) Angels are watching us now (1 Corinthians 4:9, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:21, 1 Peter 1:12.).
- d) The elect angels rejoice whenever someone is saved (Luke 15:7-10).

7. Many times revelations from God were mediated through angels:

- a) The Law of Moses - Exodus 3:2 , Galatians 3:19, Acts 7:53, Hebrews 2:2
- b) Prophetical announcements to Daniel - Daniel 7:16, 8:16-26, 9:20-27, 10:1-12:13
- c) Prophetical announcements to Zechariah - Zechariah 1:9, 2:3, 4:1,5, 5:5, 6:4,5
- d) Announcement of the birth of John to Zacharias - Luke 1:11-20
- e) Announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary - Luke 1:26-38, and Joseph - Matthew 1:20-21

ETERNITY PAST AND ETERNITY FUTURE

1. In eternity past:

- a) The Father, Son and Holy Spirit existed in eternity past (John 1:1 -2; 17:5,24).
- b) God allowed sin to come into the world, to be eliminated forever after human history (Hebrews 9:26).
- c) The Son of God agreed to come to earth as a human being to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).
- d) It was ordained that Christ would be slain for the ungodly (1 Peter 1:18-20; Hebrews 10:5-10).
- e) The world and stars were created by Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:10; Colossians 1:16).
- f) Believers were chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4). Christ is chosen, we share as believers his election.
- g) A book was written containing the names of those who would believe (Philippians 4:3; Revelation 17:8; 20:15).

2. In eternity future:

- a) God reveals to us exceeding riches of His grace (Ephesians 2:7).
- b) God brings many sons into glory (Hebrews 2:10).

- c) Believers enjoy an inheritance (1 Peter 1:4).
- d) It is God's purpose for the church to know the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10).
- e) All former things pass away. There will be no more death, sorrow, pain, crying, sea, night or sun. (Revelation 21:1-5,23)
- f) The curse will be lifted (Revelation 22:3).
- g) All things in heaven and earth will be gathered in Him (Ephesians 1:10).
- h) The present creation will be forgotten (Isaiah 65:17).
- i) A river of water of life will run (Revelation 22:1).
- j) The tree of life will be seen again (Revelation 22:2).
- k) The Son of God will rule eternally (Daniel 2:44; 7:13,14).
- l) He will still be subject to the Father (John 10:29; 1 Corinthians 15:28).
- m) The lake of fire will continue forever (Isaiah 66:24; Revelation 14:11).

REWARDS AND CROWNS

1. Rewards and Salvation are carefully separated in the Scriptures. Salvation is a free gift from God, rewards are for meritorious service in the power of the Spirit.
2. Salvation - a free gift to the lost (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23, John 4:10) - an everlasting possession (John 3:36, John 5:24, John 6:47).
3. Rewards - to the saved who faithfully work for the Lord (1 Corinthians 9:24, 25, Revelation 22:12) - distributed at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Romans 14:10).
4. Rewards as Crowns:
 - a) The incorruptible crown - for faithfulness in exercising self-control (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
 - b) The crown of glory - for faithfulness in suffering (1 Peter 5:4).
 - c) The crown of life - for faithfulness under trial (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10).
 - d) The crown of righteousness - for faithful testimony (2 Timothy 4:8).
 - e) The crown of rejoicing - for faithful service (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20, Philippians 4:1).

SECOND ADVENT

1. Israel under dispersion no longer represents Christ on this earth.
2. Israel is replaced by the Church, the Body of Christ. (Acts 2:47, 1Corinthians 12:12-14, Ephesians 1:22,23,2:16, 4:4, 5, 5:23, 24, 30-32, Colossians 1:18, 24, 2:19)
3. The Body of Christ is being completed by entering every believer of the Church Age into union with Christ. (Colossians 2:10, Hebrews 2:10)
4. When the Body is completed, the Rapture of the Church occurs. (1Thessalonians 4:13-18)
5. Then the Body becomes the Bride, and is prepared for the Second Advent.
 - a) The Bride receives a resurrection body like Christ's (1Corinthians 15:51-57, Philippians 3:21, 1John 3:1,2)
 - b) The Bride's old sin nature is removed (Philippians 3:21)
 - c) The Bride is cleansed from human good (1Corinthians 3:12-16).

6. The Bride returns in triumph with Christ at the Second Advent (1Thessalonians 3:13, Revelation 19:6-8).
7. Then follows the conquest:-
 - a) Satan imprisoned (Revelation 20:1-3)
 - b) Demons removed from the earth (Zechariah 13:2, 1 Corinthians 15:24, 25, Colossians 2:15).
8. The removal of the demons changes the environment of the earth and causes perfect conditions during the Millennium.
 - a) Religion removed.
 - b) False doctrine removed.
 - c) Perfect environment restored.

ANGELIC CONFLICT

1. There is a spiritual warfare between elect and fallen angels, which affects the human race (Ephesians, 6:12, Revelation 12).
2. Angels and mankind have a number of parallels:
 - a) Angels began in innocence and full obedience to God (Job 38:7 Ezekiel 28:14-15)
Man began in innocence (Genesis 2:25)
 - b) Angels sinned - rebellion of Satan (Isaiah 14:12-14)
Man sinned - rebellion of Adam (Genesis 3:1-7)
 - c) Angels are divided into two categories - elect or fallen
Man is divided into two categories - believers and unbelievers
3. Freewill is the key to the angelic conflict.
 - a) In eternity past, Satan was called Lucifer, the most important angel. However, he became proud and rebelled against God (Ezekiel 28:12-17, Isaiah 14:12-14). One third of the angels chose to rebel with Satan (Revelation 12:4,9).
 - b) In eternity past, God sentenced Satan and the fallen angels to the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41). This sentence will be executed at the end of human history (Revelation 20:10). The delay in the execution of this sentence suggests that God created the human race to provide a clear legal witness to Satan and his angels of their sin. The whole of human history is to prove certain points to the angels.
 - c) It appears that God created Adam and Eve, to show Satan that mankind, created lower than angels (Hebrews 2:6-7), would choose to obey God. Mankind therefore, by a choice of freewill, would decide whether to obey God and be blessed, or to disobey God and be judged (the same choice that Satan had).
 - d) A test was instituted for man's freewill - obedience to God or disobedience. (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam - and therefore all mankind - sinned and thereby rebelled against God. All of mankind, therefore, is in the same condition of sinful rebellion as Satan.
 - e) However, God instituted another test of freewill for mankind - will they choose to return to God through Jesus Christ, or will they choose to continue in sin and rebellion (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9).
 - f) Anyone who chooses to return to God will be saved; anyone who chooses to remain in rebellion to God will be judged in the lake of fire, the same fate as Satan (Matthew 25:41).
 - g) Therefore, by the work of Christ on the cross, and man's freewill faith in Christ, God has vindicated His love to save and His justice to judge.
4. The result of the angelic conflict:
 - a) Stage 1 - Salvation - by faith, man is saved and made positionally superior to angels (Hebrews 2:6-7)
 - b) Stage 2 - Christian Walk - by faith, the believer overcomes Satan (Ephesians 6:10-17)
 - c) Stage 3 - Eternity -in Christ, the believer will judge Satan and his fallen angels (Hebrews 2:8, 1 Corinthians 6:3)

5. Angels watch the human race (1 Corinthians 4:9, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:21, 1 Peter 1:12). Elect angels rejoice every time someone is saved (Luke 15:10).

6. Adam was made ruler of the world (Genesis 1:27-28). When he sinned, Satan obtained control of the world (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2, John 16:11). What makes it possible for man to live in Satan's world and not be under his control? By faith and obedience to God and His Word, we can resist and overcome Satan.

7. The angelic conflict answers three basic questions:-

a) Why did God create man? Jesus Christ, as perfect man in perfect obedience to God, paid the penalty of sin. Jesus Christ is able to save mankind. The key is freewill and obedience to God. It is a matter of freewill choice whether we are saved by God or judged by God. This shows that God's judgment of Satan is totally just.

b) Why sin? Mankind, through the fall of Adam, was reduced to the same sinful and rebellious condition as Satan and his fallen angels. However, through Jesus Christ, man is able to choose to return to God.

c) Why does God allow suffering? Suffering, sickness and death is the result of Adam's sin. However, God still uses this for our good because suffering makes people look in faith toward God. God is therefore able to strengthen our faith (1 Peter 5:6-10).

8. Satanic attack:-

a) In the Garden of Eden, Satan attacked Adam and Eve, resulting in their sin. Satan thought he had destroyed the plan of God, because man had sinned and rebelled against God. However, God promised to send the Messiah to remove sin and defeat Satan (Genesis 3:15).

b) In the Old Testament, Satan attacked the Jews and Jesus Christ Himself. Satan wanted to prevent and/or destroy the Messiah (Revelation 12:1-5).

c) Now that Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, Satan has turned his attack on believers on earth. Satan wants to thwart and/or delay the plan of God, and his own final judgment (Revelation 12:12,17).

PARAPHRASE

“Concerning which deliverance, the prophets requested, searched and inquired with all their being, but they received no answer. They, instead prophesied the gracious provision of God that should come to us! They tried to find out the details of when the Lord should come, but the spirit of God that worked through them testified through them, of the Lord's sufferings and the glory that would then follow. The spirit revealed to them that they would not see this, and that the words were not for them, but they wrote for us, and it is these things that the preachers today speak of in the power of the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven for this purpose. These things the angels desired to search into and know, but it was hidden from them.”

VERSES 13 - 17

“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 of your ignorance: 15 but as he which has 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 mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear!”

KEY WORDS

Gird	Anazonnumi	hitch up the flowing outer clothes ready to run or fight.
Loins	Osphus	the loins, the seat of sexual potency, and dynamic power for running/fighting.
Mind	Dianoia	the thinking and understanding of the person; that which guides and directs.
Be Sober	Nepho	be self controlled, under control of reason, not emotion or alcohol.
Hope	Elpizo	be expectant, hope with trust and confidence, looking forward expectantly.
To the end	Teleios	perfectly, completely, to the end in view by the author of all things.
Brought	Phero	bear a burden habitually
Obedient	hupakoe	obedience
Fashioning	Suschematizo	to conform oneself to something else other than what is intended present middle participle, meaning, do not fashion/conform yourself.

Former	Proteros	former, in the sense of, life before salvation.
Lusts	Epithumia	lusts of the flesh, strong desires from the natural self.
Ignorance	Agnoia	a state of not really knowing what is true or false.
Called	Kaleo	summoned, called formally for a purpose.
Written	Grapho	Perfect, passive, indicative; it has received recorded form – with eternal results for all who heed or ignore the Word.
Holy	Hagios	set apart for the work of God.
Conduct	Anastrephe	whole manner and detail of the public life/way we live.
Call	Epikaleo	to call upon, to appeal to in prayer by name.
Respect of	aprosupoleptos	impartiality, without looking to the outward appearance, or reputation or status of people, as others would judge them.
Judgeth	Krino	to sit in judgement and make an assessment of a person.
Work	Ergon	labour that is right for a person to do.
Pass	Anastrepho	pass you time, or conduct your life.
Sojourning	Paroikia	dwelling as in a strange land that is not your real home.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verse 13. “Get ready to do some hard work!”, Peter urges. To gird up the loins was to hitch up the outer garment to either work or fight. “Get serious!”, Peter tells us all, echoing Paul’s words from Ephesians 5:14, and 6:14, and the commands of Exodus 12:11, before the people left Egypt. Girding up the loins occurred when a prophet was to prophesy, **Jeremiah 1:17**, “**ready to run**”, **1 Kings 17:8**, and spoke of mental alertness, Job 38:3.

Peter is calling the church out of bondage to a spiritual Egypt, just as Paul did in Galatians; ready to move away from all dependence on earthly/carnal thinking, and to think and act as true ambassadors of Christ. The power of the mind must be harnessed, and self control must be the ruling power. We must be ruled by the Holy Spirit and reason, not any other substance, emotion, or thought pattern.

“Conversion to Christ and regeneration by the Spirit are meant to be accompanied by mental awakening, by a new exercise of powers of understanding now divinely released and renewed. **Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:17, 6:23**”. (Stibbs, 1959, p 85)

The battle for the mind must be won daily for the believer to serve the Lord as they are called to. We are to be confident; to express hope/confidence through until the end of our race. Our confidence is to be in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, not in any other thing, or other person.

Verse 14. That word “obedient” crops up again here. “Trust and obey, for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey”. The words of the old hymn are so true. Peter calls us to take the word as seriously as the prophets of old did and as the angels do. The “pilgrim attitude and temper” (Meyer, 1953, p 48), is in view here again also; we are citizens of heaven and to be living as strangers on the earth. “Like all the early Christians, Peter was conscious of the transitory nature of this life. The men of faith in Gods Israel had always been tent dwellers. Hebrews 9:11.” (Green, 1968, p 78-79).

In his Jewish New Testament commentary David Stern notes, “Be mentally prepared for opposition, distractions, temptations and unexpected setbacks. This, having a clear hope for future reward and refusing to be shaped by the evil desires you used to have when you were still ignorant of Yeshua and Messiah, are necessary in order to heed Kefa (Peter)’s main exhortation, namely to become holy yourselves in your entire way of life.” (Stern, 1992, p 745).

The religions that dominated Asia Minor were immoral, as most Greek ones were, and these people had a habit from their days as unbelievers or moral laxity. It is vital that they do not slip back into their old slackness, even if now they are believers. Even if we do not become actively immoral again, the laziness and inaction associated with paganism/fatalism is to be feared, for it stops our service.

Peter will move to the place where he will ask us all to be fearful of falling short of the standard God sets. We must always remember that it is man’s natural state to slip into immorality, and that lazy living becomes very quickly immoral living. Energy must be spent in staying in the Lord’s will, but if we commit ourselves to this path we have the Holy Spirit’s assistance.

Verse 15-16. God’s standard is holiness, but what does that word mean to Peter? In our day it is a tainted word, influenced by the hypocrisy of past ages where “holy” men were often easily ridiculed because they were so clearly false. The word as Peter uses it does not come anywhere near the pious, self righteous, self important person who wants everyone to know that they alone are perfect and pure. It is written,

(perfect tense) with lasting results that holiness is God's standard from the earliest days of mankind on the planet – God doesn't change – we must.

Holiness meant a life that was separated for the service of God; it was a word that meant action, but action for God's standards rather than mans. God is set apart from his creation, and we are to be also! Christians are meant to be different, to stand out as people who will not go along with the evil of their age. We are to be known as the people of God, those who stand for God and his plan rather than the ethos of the world. We are to be different without offensiveness. **1 Corinthians 10:32, 2 Corinthians 6:3.**

The cross will be offensive to some but we are not to magnify this by our actions. The issue is Christ and the cross and resurrection not us! We are set apart to serve God as his heralds, not magnify ourselves. Our opinion is not important at all, and we must be careful to ensure people see Jesus, not us. This is what separation, and holiness mean; our emphasis is service of, and for, only him.

Verse 17. In the last verse in this section Peter reminds us that to call God Father is not an invitation to be slack and casual, but is a reminder in the very word used that respect and awesomeness is due to our heavenly Father. In Peter's day a father was not the cuddly, cute and powerless item he has often become in Western society in the 21st century.

A father of the first century was ruler of his household, protector of the members, had power of life and death, and was responsible for providing the necessities of life for all in the household. Great respect was due a father and that is the strong point here. Abba, was the word for "daddy" that a child used, but as a child grew it stopped using that term alone, joining it in times of great emotional power to the adult word for father, and was very respectful. **Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6.**

We have already seen in this chapter that emotions should not runaway with us; they must always be under the guidance of the reasoning faculty, and always morally pure and respectful of God. Awesomeness is the dominant feeling from this verse. When we approach our Heavenly Father we are approaching the creator of the universe, and while, like our Lord, we may use the term "Abba", we also use "father" in a respectful manner, as he also did.

God is not impressed by anything we have achieved, or any title we have won, or any post we hold on earth. God hears us because we are in Christ. We have no merit in and of ourselves. We are to have a healthy fear/awesomeness as we approach him.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

We are here on earth for such a short time. We are sojourners, not permanent residents. No arrogance is justified, for we are temporary residents of a planet that is made by the creator of the whole universe. Bow in awe before your Lord and God. Baby believers have an excuse to be a bit "goofy" in their prayers, but as we mature we should be adult in our conversations with God, with respect and awe.

Are we children of obedience? Are we daily winning the battle for our minds? Are we keeping our hearts, minds and bodies pure? Are we alert to dangers to our mind or have we become lazy and let things distract us from what the Lord would have us do? Are we separated for service, or distracted by the details of daily life and events from the things the Lord wants us to do?

[b] PASTORAL

The challenge for all of us as pastors is clear here. Our messages must portray correctly the standards of God and the respect and awe that the Lord is to be held in. Do we preach biblical "holiness" or have we let the false views of the last few hundred years cloud our teaching? We stand on the apostolic faith, not the faith of the men of 200 or 400 years ago!

Let us be sure our people are hearing what the Holy Spirit said to Peter here, not the word as distilled and edited by a commentator a hundred years ago! Away with "cloudy" teaching and let us be straight and clear in our exegesis of the words of scripture.

CONCLUSION

The mind is the battlefield for the believer and the mind must be under the Holy Spirit's control rather than the old desires of the old sin nature we followed before we met the Lord. We are not ignorant now of the truth and so should live daily in the truth. Lazy believers, who fail to apply the word of God to daily life, fail to live up to the holy (separated for service) standard that God requires. We should be fearful of falling short of this standard, for this is the one we are judged by!

DOCTRINES

HOLY SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

1. The Holy Spirit is God, the third member of the Trinity.
2. The Holy Spirit is Jehovah God (Isaiah 6:8, 9, Acts 28:25, Jeremiah 31:31-35, of Hebrews 10:15).
3. He has the characteristics of God:
 - a) sovereignty 1 Corinthians 12:11
 - b) all knowing (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11)
 - c) all powerful (Genesis 1:2)
 - d) everywhere (Psalm 139:7)

HOLY SPIRIT: THE SEVEN SPIRITS

The Seven Spirits of God is a description of the one Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, Revelation 1:4):

1. The Spirit of the Lord.
2. The Spirit of Wisdom.
3. The Spirit of Understanding.
4. The Spirit of Counsel.
5. The Spirit of Might.
6. The Spirit of Knowledge.
7. The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.

HOLY SPIRIT: SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are a number of symbols for the Holy Spirit in the Bible:

1. Dove. (Matthew 3:16)
2. Oil. (Exodus 35:28)
3. Water. (John 7:38-39)
4. Wind. (Acts 2:2)
5. Fire. (Acts 2:3)
6. Seal. (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30)
7. Pledge. (Ephesians 1:14)

HOLY SPIRIT: MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit did not indwell all believers, since Christ was not yet glorified (John 7:39). Instead,

He only came upon some Old Testament saints to perform special functions.

- a) JOSEPH, a believer who was a prime minister (Genesis 41:38).
- b) Believers who were artisans occupied in the construction of the Tabernacle (Exodus 28:3, 31:3).
- c) Believers involved in administration (Numbers 11:17, 25).
- d) A believer who was both a political and military leader - JOSHUA (Numbers 27:18).
- e) Certain Judges: OTHNIEL (Judges 3:9, 10) GIDEON (Judges 6:34) JEPHTHAH (Judges 11:29) SAMSON (Judges 13:24, 25, 14:5-6, 15:14).

- f) Kings of Israel (1 Samuel 10:9, 10, 16:13).
 - g) DANIEL (Daniel 4:8, 5:11, 6:3).
 - h) Post exilic rulers (Zechariah 4:3, 12-14).
2. Believers in Israel could be disciplined by the removal of the Spirit:
- a) SAUL (1 Samuel 16:14)
 - b) DAVID (Psalm 51:11)
3. A believer could obtain the Holy Spirit by request, but not as an indwelling presence (2 Kings 2:9, 10, Luke 11:13).
4. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit without request to the disciples just before the ascension. Purpose: To sustain them for the ten day interim before the Church Age would begin (John 20:22).

HOLY SPIRIT: MINISTRY TO JESUS CHRIST

- 1. The ministry of the Spirit in sustaining Jesus Christ was prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 11:1-3, 42:1, 61:1-3).
- 2. The virgin birth was only possible by the work of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18, 20, Psalm 40:6, Hebrews 10:5).
- 3. The Holy Spirit was given without measure (constant unhindered filling) to the humanity of Christ (John 3:34).
- 4. The Holy Spirit was related to the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:16).
- 5. The Holy Spirit sustained Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry (Matthew 12:18, 28, Luke 4:14,15,18).
- 6. The Lord acknowledged the work of the Spirit in his works and miracles - Matthew 12:8 (Quoting Isaiah 44:1), 18, 28, Luke 4:14-21.
- 7. The sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the Lord when he bore our sins on the cross (Matthew 27:46, Psalms 22).
- 8. The Holy Spirit had a part in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:11, 1 Peter 3:18).
- 9. The present ministry of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ (John 7:39, 16:14).
- 10. The same sustaining ministry of the Holy Spirit is passed on to us at salvation, and we are commanded to make use of this ministry
- 11. To grow thereby (Galatians 4:19, 5:16, Ephesians 3:16, 17, 5:18, Romans 13:14).

HOLY SPIRIT: MINISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. TO THE UNBELIEVER

- a) RESTRAINING (2 Thessalonians 2:7)
If unbelievers were unrestrained in the Church Age the one world system which Satan is trying to establish would come. After the rapture of the Church it will come.
- b) CONVICTING (John 16:7-11)
 - i) Sin - the barrier which remains in unbelief.
 - ii) Righteousness - God is totally righteous, man is only relatively righteous and needs God's righteousness for salvation.
 - iii) Judgment - Satan and all unbelievers are judged.
- c) REGENERATION (John 3:5)
Man without the spirit cannot understand spiritual things. The Gospel is spiritual, the Holy Spirit makes the gospel a reality to the unbeliever when one believes and is "born again" or regenerated (1 Corinthians 2:14).

2. TO THE BELIEVER AT SALVATION

- a) Regeneration (John 3:1-16, Titus 3:5)
- b) Baptism (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:5). We are baptized into union with Jesus Christ and become part of the body of Christ. This is not to be confused with the Filling of the Holy Spirit.
- c) Indwelling (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). From salvation on the believer is indwelt by the Spirit.
- d) Sealing (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30). This ministry relates to your future with God, the guarantee of eternal security.
- e) Distribution of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11). Each believer receives a spiritual gift at the point of salvation in order to function in the body of Christ.

3. TO THE BELIEVER AFTER SALVATION (Spirituality)

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit after salvation is the means by which we live the Christian life ordained by God (Ephesians 2:10, 5:18).

- a) The Filling of the Holy Spirit (spirituality through confession of sin and surrender of the life). (1 John 1:9 Ephesians 5:18)
- b) The character of Jesus Christ is produced by the believer when he is filled with the Spirit (Galatians 4:19, 5:22,23).
- c) Glorification of Christ (John 7:39, 16:14, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).
- d) Fulfillment of the Law (Romans 8:2-4).

HOLY SPIRIT: FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. We are commanded to allow Him to fill (or fully control) our lives (Ephesians 5:18).

2. The filling (controlling) of the Spirit can be broken by:

- a) Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) - sin, doing something you shouldn't.
- b) Quenching the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) - not doing something you should (like quenching a fire, allowing the flame to go out).

3. The filling (controlling) of the Spirit can be restored by confession of sin and full surrender to do the will of God (1John 1:9)

4. The Spirit produces the very character of the Christ in the believer: (Galatians 4:19, 5:22, 23, Ephesians 3:16, 17, Philippians 1:20, 21, 2 Corinthians 3:3)

- a) The fruit of the Spirit:
 - i) Galatians 5:22-23 - Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control.
 - ii) Romans 14:17 - Righteousness, Peace, Joy.
 - iii) Colossians 3:12-15 - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness.
 - iv) 1 Thessalonians 1:3 - Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope.
- b) Rejoicing in Christ (Philippians 3:1, 4:4).
- c) Loving one another (John 15:12, Romans 12:10, Ephesians 5:2).
- d) Striving for the faith (Philippians 1:27, Jude 3).
- e) Putting away all sin (1 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 12:1).
- f) Abstaining from all appearances of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

- g) Submitting to injuries (1 Corinthians 6:7).
 - h) Subduing the temper (Ephesians 4:26, James 1:19).
 - i) Shunning the wicked (2 Thessalonians 3:6).
 - j) Abounding in the works of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58 1 Thessalonians 4:1).
 - k) Showing a good example (1 Timothy 4:12, 1 Peter 2:12).
 - l) Following after that which is good (Philippians 4:8, 1 Timothy 6:11).
 - m) Perfecting holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1, 2 Timothy 3:17).
 - n) Hating defilement (Jude 23).
 - o) Overcoming the world. (1 John 5:4-5)
 - p) Adorning the gospel. (Philippians 1:27, Titus 2:10)
 - q) Forgiving injuries. (Romans 12:20)
 - r) Living peaceably with all. (Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14)
 - s) Visiting the afflicted. (James 1:27)
 - t) Sympathising with others. (Romans 12:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:14)
 - u) Honouring others. (Romans 12:10)
 - v) Submitting to authorities. (Romans 13:1-7)
 - w) Being content. (Philippians 4:11, Hebrews 13:5)
 - x) Walking worthy of the Lord. (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)
 - y) Walking in the newness of life. (Romans 6:4)
 - z) Walking as children of light. (Ephesians 5:8)
 - aa) Glorifies Christ in his body. (Philippians 1:20, 21)
 - bb) Christ is at home in his body. (Ephesians 3:16,17)
 - cc) A lifestyle which honours God in the presence of men. (2 Corinthians 3:3)
5. The filling of the Holy Spirit in every believer only occurs in two dispensations:
- a) Church age Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23
 - b) Millennium - Joel 2:28, 29 (characterized by ecstasies)

HOLY SPIRIT: COMFORTER

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (paraclete = one called alongside to help)

1. He abides forever with the saints. (John 14:16)
2. He dwells in the saints and is known by them. (John 14:17)
3. He teaches the saints. (John 14:26)
4. He imparts hope. (Romans 15:13, Galatians 5:5)
5. He gives us the love of God. (Romans 5:3-5)
6. He testifies of Christ. (John 15:26)

7. He communicates joy to the saints. (Romans 14:17, Galatians 5:22, 1 Thessalonians 1:6)
8. He edifies the church. (Acts 9:31)

HOLY SPIRIT: TEACHER

1. He is the Spirit of Wisdom. (Isaiah 11:2, 40:13-14)
2. He reveals the things of God. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
3. He reveals the things of Christ. (John 16:14)
4. He guides into all truth. (John 14:26, 16:13)
5. He enables ministers to teach. (1 Corinthians 12:8)
6. He teaches the saints to answer persecutors. (Mark 13:11, Luke 12:12)
7. He directs in the way of godliness. (Isaiah 30:21, Ezekiel 36:27)
8. He brings the words of Christ to remembrance. (John 14:26)

HOLY SPIRIT: SINS AGAINST THE SPIRIT

1. RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT (Unbelievers only) (Acts 7:51, John 16:8-11) This is hardening to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.
2. BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT (Unbelievers only) (Matthew 12:31) The purpose of the Holy Spirit was to reveal the person of Jesus Christ. The Pharisees rejected this by claiming He was demon possessed.
3. LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT (Believers only) (Acts 5:1-3) A sin of false motivation. - Ananias and Sapphira.
4. GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT (Believers only) (Ephesians 4:30) Any sin which the believer commits.
5. QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT (Believers only) (1 Thessalonians 5:19) A believer who is not allowing the Holy Spirit to exert His full influence.
6. UNPARDONABLE SIN (Matthew 12:22-32)
 - a) Rejection of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour is the only sin which cannot be forgiven. This unbelief is shown in Matthew 12:24, denying the person and power of Jesus.
 - b) It is impossible for a believer to commit the unpardonable sin. (Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 44:22, 1 John 1:7)

OLD SIN NATURE

1. We are born with a nature, inherited from Adam, which is against God and prone to sin (Ephesians 2:1, Romans 5:12).
2. The old sin nature is perpetuated in the human race by physical birth (Psalm 51:5, 1 Timothy 2:13, 14).
3. We are therefore considered spiritually dead at the point of physical birth (Romans 5:12).
4. Names for the old sin nature:
 - a) Flesh - Galatians 5:16
 - b) Old Man - Ephesians 4:22, Colossians 3:9
 - c) Carnal - Romans 7:14

- d) Sin - Romans 5:12
 - e) Heart - Jeremiah 17:9
 - f) Member - Colossians 3:5.
5. The believer continues to have an old sin nature after salvation (1 John 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:1).
6. The believer under the control of the old sin nature is called carnal (Romans 7:14, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3).
7. The old sin nature frustrates true production of the Christian life (Romans 7:15).
8. The old sin nature has two tendencies (Romans 6:6)
- a) Area of weakness - pushes us towards lawlessness and sins (Hebrews 12:1)
 - b) Area of strength - pushes us towards asceticism and self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6).
9. The old sin nature is not found in the resurrection body (1 Corinthians 15:56, Philippians 3:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:23).
10. Victory over the old sin nature is by achieved by considering your old life dead, surrendering to God, confessing sin and relying upon the filling of the Spirit (Romans 6:6,11, Colossians 3:9-10).

OLD SIN NATURE - THE FRUIT OF

The fruit of the old sin nature falls under four categories:

- a) Sensual
- b) Religious
- c) Social
- d) Personal

a) SENSUAL

- i) fornication – porneia – illicit sexual activity or any sexual activity other than with your partner.
- ii) uncleanness - akatharsia - all acts of indecency and uncleanness that shock people, this includes abnormal sexual acts
- iii) lasciviousness - aselgeia - unrestrained lust - people who are having sex for their own personal gratification, treating other people as sexual objects for their pleasure. Paul recognises that we are tempted in all these areas. Matthew points out that it is not only the doing of these acts but the thinking of these acts which are sins.

b) RELIGIOUS

- i) idolatry - eidoltria - worship of things other than God
- ii) witchcraft - pharmakeia - this involved magic, astrology, seances and sorcery.
- iii) hatred - echtros - this is unrestrained rage without a reason. You get so angry that no one can talk to you at all.
- iv) strife - eris - contentiousness - this is argumentation in regard to Bible teaching and spiritual matters.

c) SOCIAL

- i) jealousy - zelos - a bitter hatred towards another person who has something that you want. This is the father of all the other sins.
- ii) wrath - thermos - this is getting hot headed or flaring up. If the person does not control the power of a hot temper they are under the power of the old sin nature and not the Holy Spirit. If you get this type of trouble at a church meeting you turn to the Word of God.
- iii) seditions - - this is faction forming
- iv) heresies - this is one step forward from seditions and is a person who wishes to build on the factions. An example would be the KJV group. By separating on the basis of the KJV alone you have fallen into far more evil than is present in variations in the versions.

v) evil - this is tied into jealousy eating away at the souls of people who harbour resentment.

d) PERSONAL

i) drunkenness - methai - drinking alcohol to excess is not a sickness it is a sin. It is an inherited weakness, if your father is an alcoholic you should not touch alcohol at all because it is a weakness in the family. Avoid places where you could be tempted. If you have a weakness towards alcoholism you must deal with it.

ii) revellings - jomoi - which means hell raising, a person who cannot bear silence but has to be drowned in noise all the time. Their life is empty and has no purpose but as long as they party vigorously and run from function to function they do not have to worry about their sin and the pointlessness of their life. When you are tempted to sin think about the Lord. Paul now adds and such like which means that if he has not hit their particular weakness they should fill in the blanks.

We all have weaknesses and unless you are on guard you fall every time. You have to ascertain your weakness and set your guard against it. God's way is to walk in the Spirit that is the way to deal with it.

PRAYER

1. We may know the provision of God but we must communicate with Him in order to obtain this provision.

a) Prayer is the believer's means of communicating with God.

b) The Bible is God's way of communicating with man.

2. Promises Involving Prayer

a) Matthew 21:22 We should ask believing.

b) Matthew 18:19 The power of corporate prayer.

c) Psalm 116:1, 2 God is always available to hear our prayer.

d) Isaiah 65:24 God will answer while we are yet praying.

e) Matthew 7:7 We are commanded to pray.

f) John 14:13-14 We can ask for anything in His name.

g) Philippians 4:6 The prayer should be with thanksgiving.

h) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 We should pray without ceasing.

i) Hebrews 4:16 We can come boldly to the throne of Grace.

3. Prayer Divided into 4 Segments

a) Confession of sins (1 John 1:9)

b) Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

c) Intercession for others (Ephesians 6:18)

d) Petitions for one's own needs (Hebrews 4:16)

4. Power of Prayer

a) Individual - Elijah and the burnt offering (1 Kings 18:36-39)

b) Corporate - the release of Peter from prison (Acts 12:1-18)

5. One Prayer that could not be Answered The prayer of our Lord on the Cross (Psalm 22:1-18)

6. To Whom are Prayers Addressed?

a) Directed to the Father - (Matthew 6:5-9)

b) In the name of the Son - (Hebrews 7:25)

c) In the power of the Spirit - (Romans 8:26-27)

The Son (Jesus) and Spirit are interceding for us.

7. Prayers can be Divided into Petition and Desire

a) Petition - What you ask God for (e.g. a new car).

b) Desire - The desire behind the petition (e.g. happiness because you have a new car).

8. Four Possible Combinations

a) Petition answered - Desire not answered. Psalm 106:15 - The quails of the Exodus generation. 1 Samuel 8:5 - A King to reign over Israel.

b) Petition not answered - Desire answered. Genesis 18:23 - The preservation of Sodom. 2 Corinthians 12:7 - Removal of the thorn in Paul's side.

c) Petition answered - Desire answered. 1 Kings 18:36-37 - Elijah requests fire for the offering. Luke 23:42 - The penitent thief's prayer. Type c) represents the perfect prayer.

d) Petition not answered - Desire not answered. Type d) unanswered prayer has 8 main reasons which are shown in paragraph 9.

9. Reasons for Unanswered Prayer

a) Lack of belief (Matthew 21:22)

b) Selfishness (James 4:3)

c) Unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18)

d) Lack of compassion (Proverbs 21:13)

e) Pride and self righteousness (Job 35:12-13)

f) Lack of filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)

g) Lack of obedience (1 John 3:22)

h) Not in the Divine will (1 John 5:14)

Most of the reasons for unanswered prayer, is some form of sin in the life, which can be solved by confession of known sins as per paragraph 3 a) under the concept of 1John 1:9.

10. Intercessory Prayer

a) This is one of the four factors in a prayer, which are:-

- i) Confession of sins
- ii) Thanksgiving
- iii) Intercession
- iv) Own needs.

b) The power of intercessory prayer is taught in (1 Kings 18:42-46) the principle being found in (James 5:16-18)

c) The power of prevailing prayer is shown in (Acts 12)

d) The prayer for the unbeliever (Romans 10:1)

e) Prayer for an unknown believer (Colossians 1:3-11)

f) Prayer for the known believer (Ephesians 1:15-23)

11. The True Lord's Prayer (John 17)

a) That Jesus might be glorified as the Son who has glorified the Father (v 1 cf. Philippians 2:9-11).

b) That He might be restored to glory which He had prior to the foundation of the world (v 5).

- c) For safety of believers from the world and the devil (v 11, 15).
- d) For the sanctification of believers (v 17).
- e) For the spiritual unity of believers (v 21).
- f) That the world might believe (v 21).
- g) That believers may be with Him in heaven to see and share His glory (v 24).

PARAPHRASE

“For these reasons tidy up your mind so that you are mentally ready to work or fight, being self controlled, keeping alert and expressing confidence right until the end when the eternal blessings you have will be revealed with the Lord at his coming. For these reasons also, be obedient to God, and do not allow your lives to become conformed into the pattern of your past lust filled lives lived in ignorance. Instead of this we are to be holy, separated for God’s service, for God who called us is holy and this is his standard. The scriptures say, ‘be holy, for I am holy saith the Lord’. You call his Father when you pray to God, and remember, he judges all by his standard, which is the same for all. He has no favourites, and cannot be fooled by anyone, so spend the days of your very short time here in fear that you will fall short of his standard and not hear his “well done” at the end”.

VERSES 18 - 21

“Forasmuch as ye know, 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 from the dead, and gave him glory that your faith and hope might be in God.”

KEY WORDS

<p>Forasmuch</p> <p>Corruptible</p> <p>Redeemed</p> <p>Vain</p> <p>Conversation</p> <p>Tradition</p> <p>Precious</p> <p>Blemish</p> <p>Spot</p> <p>Foreordained</p> <p>Manifest</p> <p>Raised</p> <p>Gave</p>	<p>oida</p> <p>phthatos</p> <p>lutroo</p> <p>mataios</p> <p>anastrepho</p> <p>patroparadotos</p> <p>timios</p> <p>amomos</p> <p>aspilos</p> <p>prognosko</p> <p>phaneroo</p> <p>egeiro</p> <p>didomi</p>	<p>Perfect, active, participle; knowing, reverence rests on the knowledge of redemption and its application, for it applies forever.</p> <p>perishable in the normal scheme of things, subject to decay.</p> <p>aorist passive indicative of the verb to be redeemed, ransomed, paid for. Aorist tense = at a point of time, passive voice = the subject, receives the action of the verb, indicative mood = reality, this is true</p> <p>useless, empty, or no lasting value, lacking reality.</p> <p>manner of life</p> <p>traditions passed down from your fathers.</p> <p>of great price, valuable above all things.</p> <p>blameless.</p> <p>without any spot or mark that ruins the purity of the object, the term used in the LXX(Septuagint - the Greek translation of the Old Testament made in about 250BC) for the Passover lamb.</p> <p>Perfect, passive, participle of the verb to know before, with certainty by divine or complete knowledge.</p> <p>aorist passive participle of the verb to make clear for all to see.</p> <p>aorist active participle of the verb, aroused, awakened, raised up to life.</p> <p>aorist active participle of the verb, delivered, supplied, provided.</p>
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BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Peter now tells the recipients of the letter of aspects of their redemption that they ought to know, for they are things that will assist them in their present trials, as they meditate upon them. They are, firstly, the cost of redemption, the blood of Christ, secondly, the eternal origin of that sacrifice, thirdly, the importance of the resurrection in certifying that the redemption was successful, and fourthly, the desired and expected fruit of redemption, namely confidence in the church and individual regarding the future. Note the two perfect tenses above, and remember that the results of all we know ought to change things forever within us. God’s Plan has no errors or mistakes – we can relax into the outcomes – for they are God’s Plan for us.

Verse 18-19. Peter uses two pictures to illustrate redemption; for Greeks the payment of money to a pagan temple, for the Jews the blood of the Exodus. As Peter has a mixed audience of Greeks and Jews, both converted, either from paganism or legalism, so here he refers to both forms of redemption payments to free a slave.

We must always remember to find out the use of the words Peter uses in his own day. The word, 'lutron', "was a technical term for the money paid over to buy a prisoner of war or slave his freedom. In the latter case it could be temporarily deposited in the shrine of a god, whose property he thus, by a legal fiction, became." (Kelly, 1969, p73).

A slave who had been able to save up money to pay for his redemption could not legally buy his own freedom, for he was a slave and had no rights. He would deposit the money in a temple and so become the property of the god, the money (less a commission given to the temple) being paid back to his owner. Behind Peter's words is the observation that, "money can only ever buy things that are as corruptible as it is!" (Meyer, 1953, p 53).

Both the groups that Peter addresses were caught in an empty, if at times beautiful, religious system. The Jewish believers were involved in a legalistic system that could never set them free from slavery to sin, and could never give them the dynamic hope/confidence that the risen Lord can give.

The Greek speakers were caught in an immoral paganism that with all its rituals and sacrifices could provide them only with an empty life that ended in death and an afterlife of the "semi-life" of the shades/ghosts ruled over by the cruel god Hades. Both were trapped in systems without hope, and the blood of Jesus alone set them free to truly live, both now and forever.

We are once more confronted by the primacy of the Cross/Resurrection in the Christian message. Christianity alone, of all the faiths of mankind, gives real living hope for the future that isn't tinged by wishful thinking or base fantasy, but is rooted and grounded in the reality of the physical bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Remember the principle expressed well by Mounce. "If the future is without meaning, the present is futile - (it is) motion without progress, vain, pointless, and empty." (Mounce, 1982, p20).

Verses 20-21. Peter calls the life that both groups received from their forefathers 'vain'; lacking in reality and producing nothing but emptiness in the centre of the men who follow those faiths, in the place where they need genuine meaning and purpose and direction. Man's soul hungers for meaning and significance, and that is only found in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, for that only is the beacon of hope for mankind, the empty tomb that points to the one who can be trusted to provide real hope rather than just wishful thinking.

The redemption price was the perfect sacrifice of the Lord upon the cross. As Isaiah foretold (Isaiah 52 - 53), and Moses prefigured in the Passover Ritual (Exodus 12), the shed blood of God's perfectly provided sacrifice would cleanse forever the sin problem for mankind.

As John the Baptist announced, this is indeed the final lamb that takes away the sins of the whole world. **John 1:29.** He is the last Passover lamb, **Luke 22:7ff, 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.** He was the sacrifice without any blemish, any spot of sin; God's perfect provision for sin. **Leviticus 22:18-25, Hebrews 9:11-15.** The phrase, "blood of Christ", was the way the early disciples, with a Jewish frame of reference, referred to the total work of the Lord on the cross in terms of the fulfilment of the sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament.

The one paying the price owned the slave thereby ransomed. The Lord owns us, there is no polite way to say this! We are his as he has paid the price for our freedom. What does that mean to you believer? "The ransomer owns those whom he has emancipated at the cost of his own life". (Moffatt, 1963, p 107).

Peter's emphasis is on the plan of God through all these verses in this first chapter. This plan was laid down in eternity past, and it is within this plan that we have our confidence. "We must not think that Calvary was moulded on Leviticus (or Exodus), but that Leviticus was moulded on Calvary, as it stood out from all eternity before the mind of God." (Meyer, 1953, p 54).

The importance of considering the doctrine of the redemption, when you are under great pressure, is given in the last verse of this section. Redemption is provided in order that the faith and hope of all believers might be rested securely in the, persons and work, character and provision, essence of and plan of God. One author

has suggested it may read, "so that your faith may also be your hope in God". (Dalton, quoted in Reinecker, 1980, p 403).

The context of redemption is eternity. The plan was laid in eternity past and it's outcome has been secure from before the worlds were made. This is the certainty that Peter wants us to get hold of clearly. Even within Jewish Rabbinic circles there was an acceptance that God had provided for the Messianic deliverance before the creation of the world let alone the forming of Israel.

The security we have under pressures is the security that comes from the perfect character and plan of God not any other source. This pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned in, **John 1:1ff, Ephesians 1:3-6, 3:11, Colossians 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:1-3, and Revelation 5:5-6**. It is resting in the eternal realities of God's Holy Character and Plan that really makes a believer triumphant. We are called to rest in the character of the Lord, not our own strengths. We are called to express faith in the ransom paid, not sit in dejection with our sins, for they are forgiven in Him. The reality of Christ's work is meant to transform us totally.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

We are His, therefore how shall we live? To show real love for a master who set him free, rather than the slave paying the price, a slave could voluntarily enslave himself to that master for life. **Exodus 21:2-6, Deuteronomy 15:12-18**. Have we truly seen the necessity to be the Lord's slaves? Have we even started to be his ambassadors?

"Who then of us can live as we have been wont, following after vanity, treading in the footsteps of our forefathers, content to do as others before us? New claims have come in. Our redeemer is Lord!" (Meyer, 1953, p 56).

Do we take our daily orders from our Lord? "We are on a pilgrimage throughout our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance, and encouragement we shall walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed by darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the Word of God." (Green, 1968, p 87).

"Scripture is clear that the new birth is by means of the word which the spirit of God brings to bear upon the heart and conscience. Apart from this there is no divine life". (Ironsides, 1984, p 23).

Is our faith our hope/confidence? This is the challenge Peter gives us. What we believe should be within us a "living hope" ; every teaching (doctrine) of scripture being a source of confidence in the trials of life. Do a study of the concept of a living faith with your home group, and family. We have a living faith in a living way, **Hebrews 10:20**, that enables us to live fully in the midst of pressures as if they do not matter, **John 10:10**, for they do not!

[b] PASTORAL

"When we grasp what it cost God to free us from sin, we will respond with reverential awe and renewed commitment to live a holy life". (Mounce, 1982, p 21).

The text that springs to mind, is **James 2:19**, where James challenges the hypocrites to do more with their knowledge of God than the devils do! We are accountable as pastors for the productivity of the flock, for we are the Lord's under shepherds, and the owner of the flock returns to see how well our stewardship has been managed. We must be challenging always to application of the word to life. All things short of this are hypocrisy! **Luke 16:1-13**.

Do we preach the character and plan of God enough from our pulpits? Peter is clear that security of the mind rests on an understanding of the character of the God who planned our salvation from before we were made. If Christians have such a high view of God is it not to be expected that they will have a victorious view of the pressures of daily life. If they truly know God, will they not see things God's way, and rejoice, with Peter, in their troubles for they will see the Lord's provision in the midst rather than the problems.

We have been chosen in Him before the foundation of this world! **Ephesians 1:4**. What should this knowledge do within us? Do our people hear this enough from us as the Lord's heralds, his preachers. Will

they not, if they hear this often, then live in divine viewpoint, rather than live in the panic of human viewpoint. Let us hit the mark, and achieve the standards the Lord sets for our stewardship as shepherds of His flock.

CONCLUSION

Application of the character of God to testing = confidence in service that goes on through pressures to the glory of God on earth and throughout eternity. Lack of application = hypocrisy!

DOCTRINES

REDEMPTION

1. The purchase of a slave from the slave market of sin and the act of setting him free.
2. The principle of redemption is found in (John 8:31-36).
3. Christ paid the ransom for sin on the cross. In other words, He purchased our redemption. (Psalm 34:22; Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 2:6; 1 Peter 1:18,19).
4. Redemption is a doctrine which the believer can apply in times of pressure and catastrophe (Job 19:25,26), thereby finding both blessing and happiness.
5. Redemption results in adoption (Galatians 4:4-6).
6. Redemption provides the basis for the believer's eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).
7. The blood of Christ is the ransom money or the purchase price of redemption (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:13,19; 1 John 1:7).
8. Redemption includes forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22).
9. Redemption provides the basis of justification and immediate cleansing at salvation (Romans 3:24).
10. Redemption is the basis of our cleansing from sin during our Christian walk. (Leviticus 4:5; 6:1-6; 1 John 1:7,9).

THE CROSS

The work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross is:

1. Punitive - It was a payment, a judgment Jesus took on Himself, the judgment of all sin (Galatians 3:13, 2 Corinthians 5:21).
2. Substitutionary - Jesus Christ died in our place. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:5,6, Leviticus 1:4, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24).
3. Voluntary - Jesus knew the plan of the Father and He went willingly to the Cross (John 10:18). Isaiah says that He set His face as flint (Isaiah 50:7).
4. Redemptive - "Redeem is exagorazo. Agorazo means "to buy in a slave market" Ek means "out". When Jesus Christ entered this world we were in the slave market of sin. He walked in, paid the price for all of us, and opened the gate so all who wanted to could go free. (Galatians 3:13, 4:15)
5. Propitiatory - It satisfied God's righteous demand for a perfect sacrifice for sin; Christ was the perfect sacrifice (Romans 3:25, 1 John 3:2).
6. Reconciling - By it we are restored to a relationship of peace with God (Romans 5:1).
7. Efficacious - It is effective. When anyone puts faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, that work accomplishes the salvation (Romans 5:9, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 9:11-12).
8. Revelatory - It reveals much about God, His love, His compassion, His mercy and grace, His condescension, and more (John 3:16, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:9-10).

CROSS: TYPES OF CROSSES

1. Greek word 'stauros' meaning stake in an upright form or beam. It occurs 28 times in the New Testament.
2. Crucifixion did not occur in the Old Testament, although criminals who had been stoned were sometimes hung on a stake after death as a sign of disgrace.
3. Crucifixion was practiced by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians and later by the Romans for those of non-citizen categories.
4. Four types of cross:
 - a) Crux Simplex - the simple vertical stake.
 - b) Crux Commissa - a cross shaped like a T.
 - c) Crux Decussata - a cross shaped like an X.
 - d) Crux Immissa - held by tradition to be the type of cross on which Christ died. (This was confirmed by the Christian Ireneaus (AD 140-202) writings.)
5. This tradition is strengthened by the statements in (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19-22) to the title nailed to the cross of Christ over His head.
6. After a criminal's condemnation he was made to carry the cross beam (patibulum) to the scene of His death, not the whole cross as is usually depicted. The condemned man was then stripped naked, laid on the ground with the cross beam under his shoulders and his hands tied or nailed to it. The cross bar was then lifted and secured to the upright post so that the victim's feet were just above the ground. The main weight of the body was borne on a peg (sedile), astride which the victim sat. He died of exhaustion or hunger.

CRIES OF CHRIST FROM THE CROSS

1. There are seven phrases which our Lord uttered on the cross.
2. During the six hours between the crucifixion and our Lord's death, the following is the sequence of events that took place.
3. Christ having been scourged, the crucifixion party arrives at Golgotha, The Place of the Skull (Matthew 27:33).
4. A drink of red wine and a narcotic gall is offered to Jesus but he refuses because it would impair his free will (Matthew 27:34)
5. Jesus is crucified between two gangsters followed by the first cry from the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:32-34).
6. The first cry recorded of Jesus Christ on the cross was a prayer asking the Father to forgive those who had crucified Him. This was important because He was about to be judged for their sins.
7. The soldiers gamble for his clothes (Matthew 27:35,36, Psalm 22:18).
8. Monies raised from the sale of the clothes would be spent on rough red wine. Traditionally, those crucified were naked.
9. The Jews mock Him (Matthew 27:39-43). They tempt Him to come down from the cross. They say that they would believe if He did. (Psalm 22:7-8)
10. One of the gangsters trusted in Him (Luke 23:42)- It is of interest that all the gangster could do was believe. He was not baptised, he did not come from a church.
11. Principle: Faith in the work of Christ for one personally is the means of salvation.
12. The second cry: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise. " (Luke 23:43)
13. Principle: The soul of Jesus went to Paradise, the body of Jesus went to the grave, the spirit went to the Father (Luke 23:46).
14. Paradise, or Abraham's Bosom, was a temporary holding place for OT saints in Sheol or Hades pending the cross becoming an historical fact. The unbelieving gangster, at death, would go to Torments, an area separated from Paradise by a great gulf fixed.

15. The two gangsters represent humanity in its two categories - believers and unbelievers (John 3:36).
16. The third cry: He said unto his mother "Woman, behold thy son. " Then said He to the disciple, "Behold thy mother." (John 19, 26,27)
17. Jesus never called His mother 'Mother'. He always called her 'Woman'. He emphasised that she was the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ, the seed of the woman (Genesis 3.:15) and not the mother of God. By not using the word 'mother' He was seeing problems in the future involving Mary, the mother of God.
18. He also made provision for His mother complying with the fifth commandment "Honour thy father and mother." (Exodus 20:12) by saying to John, "Behold thy mother" ' John would appear to have lived to be 100 years old, which confirms the second portion of the fifth commandment "that thy days may be long".
19. At 12 noon darkness covered the earth (Matthew 27:45).
20. The fourth cry: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (cf. Psalm 22:1) Christ was forsaken. This cry showed that Jesus Christ was being judged for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24). The Father and Spirit forsook Him because they can only judge sin.
21. The fifth cry: "Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, 'I thirst' " (John 19:28). His work on the cross now completed, He fulfilled the scripture of (Psalm 69:21) which was a drink of vinegar and gall.
22. Even in His greatest extremity, Jesus put the greatest of emphasis on the Word of God and fulfilled the total prophetic spectrum in the correct sequence. He had refused the drink previously
23. The sixth cry: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar he said, 'It is finished ' " (John 19:30). Christ's work on earth is completed. He has been judged for the sins of the whole world. Salvation is complete.
24. Principle: You cannot add man's works to salvation. It was completed in total in AD 32 at Golgotha. The attitude of each individual to the sacrifice of Christ determines their eternal future. Either they attempt by their own works to enter heaven (Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:9; Titus 3:5) or by Christ's work through belief.
25. The seventh cry: "Father, into thy hands I commit My spirit " (Luke 23:46). It is of great significance that there is the change of vocative towards God here. Christ is no longer bearing our sins. He is back in an intimate relationship with His Father, rather than forsaken. (See fourth cry, 12.) Jesus Christ's timing is perfect as he dismissed His spirit to the Father at the very instant that was the Father's will.
26. Christ dies physically on the cross at 3.00 p.m. (Matthew 27:50), thus fulfilling the Mosaic Law that no person who is killed on wood should hang overnight. So Christ was buried before sunset on that day. (Matthew 5:17; Deuteronomy 21:22,23).

THE CROSS AND SATAN

1. With His death on the Cross Christ dealt with sin as a whole (Colossians 1:15-22, 1 John 2:2).
2. With the removal of the sin barrier Satan's power was negated (John 12:31, 16:11, Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 2:14).
3. Judgment upon Satan has been pronounced but the sentence has not been executed, he is still prince of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2).
4. He is still the deceiver and liar who leads astray foolish believers (1 Peter 5:8-9).
5. The cross is God's grace provision for the salvation of all who will believe in the Lord. Satan's attack is the philosophy of works, promoting the idea that man can do without the need of a Saviour (Ephesians 2:8-9).
6. Satan's judgment has been progressively revealed:-
 - a) In the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15)
 - b) At the Cross. (John 12:31)
 - c) In the Tribulation. (Revelation 12:7-12)
 - d) At the Second Advent. (Revelation 20:1-3)

e) At the Last Judgment. (Revelation 20:10)

7. Satan's rebellion centres on two sins, pride and lying (Isaiah 14:12-24, Ezekiel 28:17, John 8:44).
8. God's plan calls for sin to be removed and with it Satan's power. The victory on the Cross will lead to the glory of God and the proclamation throughout all eternity of the perfect justice of God. (1 John 3:8)

RESURRECTION [See page 28 above]

ETERNITY PAST AND ETERNITY FUTURE [See page 41 above]

ATTITUDE

1. Every believer faces the inner conflict of divine versus human viewpoint (Isaiah 55:7-9).
2. Mental attitude determines both the life and character of a person - what you think is what you are (Proverbs 23:7).
3. As Christians we are commanded to have our thinking in tune with the mind of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:5, 2 Timothy 1:7).
4. Knowledge of the Bible (the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:16) and control by the Holy Spirit renews the mind of the believer, giving divine viewpoint (Romans 12:2).
5. The right mental attitude produces joy (Philippians 2:2), confidence (2 Corinthians 5:1,6,8), stability (Isaiah 26:3-4, Philippians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:2), true giving (2 Corinthians 9:7), love (1 Corinthians 13:5).
6. Human viewpoint is called worldliness (Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:2).
7. Evil is something you think rather than something you do. Doing results from thinking. (Matthew 9:4, Galatians 6:3)
8. Mental attitude sins produce self-induced misery (Proverbs 15:13).
9. Without clear thinking there is conflict in the mind of the believer (Isaiah 55:6-9, James 1:7-8).

MATURITY – SPIRITUAL GROWTH [See page 20-21 above]

PARAPHRASE

“Fully knowing (and applying the knowledge of) the nature of your redemption from your traditional lives that had no eternal significance, for you were not redeemed with things that decay or lose their value, like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the Christ, like that of the lambs of the Old Testament, without any defect or sin. So great is this redemption, for it was arranged before the creation was made, but has been made clear for all to see in our day, to be fully seen by those who express their faith in God. The resurrection shows us the character of God, and gives us a glimpse of his glory. All this occurs so that your faith may also be your hope in God.”

VERSES 22 - 25

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, with unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: **23** being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. **24** For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; **25** but the Word of The Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

KEY WORDS

Purified **agnizo** **Perfect, active, participle; of the verb to be ceremonial/moral**

Obeying	hupakoe	cleansed or purified – with eternal results.
Unfeigned	anupokritos	obedience.
Love of the brethren	philadelphia	without hypocrisy or play acting, genuine.
Love	agapao	brotherly love within a loving family.
Fervently	ektenos	agape) one another, this is an order.
Born again	anagenao	Intently, earnestly, with real commitment and fervour.
Corruptible	phthartos	Perfect, passive, participle; of the verb to be born again – with eternal results – eternal security I again in view.
Incorruptible	aphthartos	perishable in time.
Liveth	zao	not perishable at all.
Seed	spora	present active participle of the verb, living as an entity.
Word	logos	seed, as biological, but perhaps also a double reference to the Lord, who is referred to as” the seed of David”.
Abideth	meno	word (genitive masculine singular), word, perhaps a reference to the Lord, as well as to the Word of God in the text of Scripture. A double reference here?
Forever	eis ton aiona	present active participle of the verb, dwelling, abiding.
Withereth	xeraino	to the end of the ages.
Falleth	ek-pipto	dries out and dies.
Word	rema	agorist active indicative of the verb, to fall away from it’s source.
Endureth	meno	words spoken and written. Note different word from earlier verse.
Preached	euaggelizo	dwells and abides.
		agorist passive participle of the verb to announce good tidings.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Start the study of this section by looking back to **John 13:34,35**. The true result of a biblical faith is biblically appropriate fruit, and the key fruit of the Holy Spirit is love for the brethren. A believer without love is a contradiction. They are a hypocrite, a false child not a true one, **1 John 3:3,13 -24, 4:7 -19!** If we do not love, and we are not convicted about it, then the scriptures are clear, we are not his at all, we are referred to as, “bastards or hypocrites”! **Hebrews 12:8**. God is not polite with us, He is truthful and blunt!

Verse 22. Note the use of the different Greek tenses of the verbs in this section, each underlining an application. The Greek perfect tense reminding us that in Christ there are many things that began at a specific point in time but their results go on forever. This applies to the first verb in the section, the verb for purification.

At the point of application of God’s Word to our lives through obedience to it’s holy demands, we are purified in our whole being. Remember the Hebrew mind does not split up a human being into body-soul-spirit, we are seen as a total entity. Purification of thought and deed occurs at that point in time but the results of that once for all cleansing go on forever.

The present tense, active voice, reminds us of the reality of on-going action of the words of God’s revelation to us; they keep on living and abiding forever, for they are of God, and reflect the true logos of God, the Lord himself. With reflection on this passage I believe that Peter is referring to the scriptures and the Lord in verse 23, as he uses the word “logos” , where-as in verse 25 he uses the word “rema”, a word that emphasises only the ‘words’. I suspect he uses logos in verse 23, with double reference; intending us to think of both the words of the scriptures, which give us the mind of Christ, but also to think of the Lord who is their source, and who guarantees their reality, truth and power. 1 Corinthians 2:16.

The agorist tenses in verse 25 remind us of the action of the verbs (falleth, preached), which occur at a point in time. Like the leaf of the grass we fall in our time, and that awareness is to be the power that drives our focus in time. We are here for such a short time! At a point in time we die, and leave this place where it is too easy to feel at home.

Peter urges us to see in this quote from an unknown poet, that we must focus on eternity rather than time. We must not be “at home” here or we will lose our perspective on the events we are to play our part in, for only an “eternal life viewpoint” will give us the perspective that will enable us to serve the Lord without the cares and pressures of the world overwhelming us.

Moral purity is always the result of feeding on, and application of, the holy Word of God. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential for this process to occur. Without the spirit we are nothing! The result of the Holy Spirit’s work will always be the fruit of his presence, and the primary fruit is love. 1 Corinthians 13.

Like James, Peter urges the believers to “be hungry” for opportunities to show love for their fellow believers. **James 1:22-27, 2:14 -26.** There is to be no isolationism in Christianity; for it is meant to be worked out in community. A person who sits at home and studies their Bible and does not fellowship with and assist other believers is a contradiction in terms. “To whatever preparation the Christian is exhorted, it is never with a view to himself”. (Lumby, 1893, p 55).

It is said that the founder of the Salvation Army, when he died had one last word for his followers; that was, “OTHERS!” It is a good motto for the Christian life, but it begins, not with self effort, but with the filling of the Holy Spirit, as he works upon the living Word Of God. “In a day of constant change man needs some source of stability, something that endures. Only God and his word provide such permanency.” (Mounce, 1982, p 23).

Verse 23. Our spiritual birth was super-natural, and its results go on forever, for we cannot be “unborn”. We were brought to new life in Christ by the power of God working within us, not by any efforts of ourselves or others. The Lord uses believers to announce the good news but it is the Holy Spirit’s convicting ministry in the life of the unbeliever that transforms them into the children of God. The seed of our faith is the Word which comes with the power of God and changes us into his likeness.

Verse 24. It is a wise person who reflects daily on two things; the grandeur of the heavens, and the frailty of the grass. Peter quotes from some unknown poet, perhaps even from a love song of the day; we can only speculate, and such speculation is time wasting. The poet spoke truly, for all flesh is as the grass. We err in this life when we act as if it will go on forever, for earthly life has an allotted span and when that person’s life has reached it’s limit the person “falls” from the presence of the living.

All that is changed when we enter into Christ. We cross over from the realm of life and death into the eternal life of the born again believer. This is why we **MUST BE BORN AGAIN!** To have the Lord’s life we must receive his free gift of eternal life so that we can live with him.

Verse 25. Eternal life is the gospel message! This is the “good news” and it has eternal significance. This is the message that we should daily meditate upon; the Lord has delivered us from sin and death. Praise his holy name, and appreciate the wonder of the revelation and live fully within it! The Bible we hold is a wonder, and Peter urges the believers of the local churches of his day, and our own, to embrace the Word of Life, for this life and for rewards in the next that cannot be lost.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

Have we reflected on the heavens and the grass today? We should both look up, and look down each day, and then look ahead, and serve the Lord who called us to minister to him in this location where he has placed us.

Are we hungry enough for eternal rewards today? Are we hungry to do some good thing for a fellow believer? Are we hungry to give the gospel to someone who does not know the good news yet?

[b] PASTORAL

The preachers are challenged by this section very thoroughly, are we not! God’s standard for behaviour is holiness and love. Our preaching must reflect this. We are to ensure we give the “good news” of eternal life. Ask yourself how long it is since you spoke about eternal life, and the shortness of this life. Remedy this, if it be a problem, for your flower will fall one day and the Lord will require of you an account of every word preached and said!

Let us encourage each other to live with eternity in our thoughts and heaven in our deeds. Each person seeing us through each day should receive a breath of heaven from us, for we are heaven’s ambassadors, and they will not see this glory anywhere else. That is why the Lord has left us here!

DOCTRINES

HOLY SPIRIT (MINISTRIES) [See page 47-51 above]

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT [See page 24 above]

BIBLE: CANONICITY

DEFINITION - Canon - KANON (Greek) – a measuring rule or standard.

1. Why do we need a canon of Scripture?

- a) So that believers in every generation might have complete revelation from God.
- b) That man might have God's Word in writing (1 Corinthians 2:16).
- c) A need for the preservation and circulation of sacred writing in the time of oppression.
- d) That people might know what was scripture and what was not, and know how God thinks.

2. CRITERIA FOR OLD TESTAMENT CANONICITY

- a) The question of Inspiration (2 Peter 1:21) - every existing book of an acknowledged messenger of God was immediately accepted as the Word of God being commissioned by God to make known his will.
- b) The principle of Internal evidence (Deuteronomy 31:24-26, Joshua 1:8, Judges 3:4). Nehemiah 8:1-8 shows that people were taught the word of God. Daniel in captivity read (Jeremiah 25:11--12, Jeremiah 29:10) and discovered Israel had a future giving rise to (Daniel 9:2, 5, 6. Zechariah 7:12)
- c) Documentation by quotation - New Testament quotes by Jesus Christ and others declare them to be the Word of God, e.g. (Matthew 22:29, John 5:39, John 10:35)
- d) The Law of Public Official Action (Nehemiah 8:5)
- e) The Law of Cause and Effect. In this area canonicity is a recognition of what God has done in the field of communication. Passages such as (2 Kings 22:1 - 23:2 and Nehemiah 8) are not historical accounts of the ratification of the Canon but the result of the existence of the Canon.
- f) Principle of external evidence - Israel had gone down spiritually prior to the Babylonian captivity (2 Chronicles 36:11-21). During captivity the Jews realised the importance of Bible doctrine and there was a spiritual resurgence led by people like Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi, Zerubbabel who extrabiblically attested to the canon of scripture. The Old Testament canon was closed in 425 BC-

3. DIVISION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT - Three sections:

- a) Torah or Law - The Pentateuch consisting of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- b) The Nabiim or Prophets. This was divided into 2. The Former and the Latter Prophets, the division being the Babylonian Captivity.
- c) The Kethubim or Writings which were further subdivided into 3 subsections:
 - i) Poetical Books - Psalms and Job.
 - ii) The Five Rolls or Megilloth books that were read at various feasts:
 - Song of Solomon - Passover
 - Ruth - Pentecost
 - Ecclesiastes - Tabernacles
 - Esther - Purim
 - Lamentations - Anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC-
 - iii) Historical Books - Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

4. NUMBER OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS

The number of books in the Hebrew Old Testament was 24 compared to 39 in the English: 1st and 2nd Kings etc. are combined and many of the prophets also combined into scrolls, e.g. Matthew in the New Testament when quoting Zechariah said "As Jeremiah said" (Matthew 27:9-10), Zechariah was in the Jeremiah scroll (Zechariah 11:12-13).

5. CLASSIFICATION OF OLD TESTAMENT CANON

- a) Homologoumena - these are writings that were accepted and had always been accepted as canonical.
- b) Antilegoumia - these were five books which were eventually accepted as canonical which were disputed in the 1st - 5th centuries AD:
 - i) ESTHER - because the name God was not mentioned.
 - ii) SONG OF SOLOMON - this dealt with a love affair which the early church fathers apparently were somewhat embarrassed about and thought it non-canonical.
 - iii) ECCLESIASTES - where Solomon was looking at life from a human viewpoint which was not reconcilable with Judaism or Bible Doctrine.
 - iv) EZEKIEL - because chapters 40-48 seemed to contradict the Mosaic Law. Ezekiel 40-48 deals with annual sacrifices in the Millennium not the Levitical usage.
 - v) PROVERBS - because one proverb seemed to contradict another.
- c) Pseudepigrapha - these were the false writings and were rejected. Such books as "The Penitence of Jannes and Jambres", "The Magic Book of Moses", are in this category.
- d) Apocrypha - these were books written after 425 BC and have been rejected as not being canonical. The Apocrypha includes 14 books which are found in the Septuagint and Vulgate but never in the Hebrew Canon. False doctrine found in the Apocrypha includes:
 - i) Prayers and Offerings for the Dead - 2 Maccabees 12:42.
 - ii) Suicide Justified - 2 Maccabees 14:41.
 - iii) Atonement by Almsgiving - Ecclesiasticus 3:32, 4:1-11.
 - iv) Salvation by Almsgiving - Tobit 4:11
 - v) Cruelty to Slaves Justified - Ecclesiasticus 33:25-9.
 - vi) Pre-existence of souls - Wisdom of Solomon 8:19,20.
 - vii) Other fallacies include magical incantations, purgatory, assassination, angels having the power of intercession.

6. REJECTION OF OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

- a) These books are included in the apocrypha:
1 & 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, additions to Esther, The wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, The letter of Jeremiah, The prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The prayer of Manassah, 1 & 2 Maccabees.
- b) The apocrypha was never in the Hebrew Canon.
- c) Neither Jesus Christ nor any of the New Testament writers ever quoted once from the Apocrypha.
- d) Josephus expressly excluded them from his history of sacred scriptures.
- e) No mention of the Apocrypha was made in any catalogue of canonical books in the first 4 centuries AD.
- f) These apocryphal books were never asserted to be divinely inspired or to possess divine authority.
- g) No prophets were connected with these writings.
- h) These books contained many historical, geographical and chronological errors.
- i) The apocrypha teaches doctrines and upholds practices which are contrary to the canon of scripture.

7. CRITERIA FOR NEW TESTAMENT CANONICITY

- a) Apostolicity - every book must either to have been written by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle (Mark with Peter, Luke with Paul). An early date of writing is essential - prior to 100 AD.

- b) Reception by the Churches - must be accepted by the churches as authentic when written.
- c) Constancy of Doctrine - with Old Testament scripture and Apostolic teaching.
- d) Inspiration - each book must have internal and external evidence of inspiration. This was evaluated using the spiritual gift of discernment during the formation of the canon (1 Corinthians 12:10).
- e) Recognition - each must be recognised by the Church Fathers as canonical. Four councils were held - Laodicea (336 AD), Damascus (382 AD), Carthage (397 AD), Hippo (419 AD).
- f) Internal - each must contain exhortation to public evaluation of the word (Colossians 4:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:27, 1 Timothy 4:13, Revelation 1:3).

8. CLASSIFICATION OF NEW TESTAMENT CANON

- a) Homologoumena - the accepted books.
- b) Antilegomena - the disputed books which were eventually accepted - James, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Hebrews.
- c) Pseudepigrapha - the false writings - Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Andrew etc.
- d) Apocrypha - the rejected writings - Acts of Paul, Epistle of Barnabas, Shepherd of Hermes, The Revelation of the Twelve, The Revelation of Peter.

BIBLE: INERRANCY

1. The Scriptures are quoted as the absolute standard of truth. (Daniel 10:21, John 10:35)
2. The source of the Scriptures is God, there is no imperfection or error permissible with God. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, 1 John 1:5, James 1:17)
3. The Scriptures therefore becomes the final authority in the resolution of disputes. (Romans 4:3, 11:2, Galatians 4:30)
4. The Scriptures are seen as authoritative. (Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27, Luke 4:8, Acts 23:5 Romans 11:8)
5. The person who does not know the Scriptures is in error. (Mark 12:24)
6. The Lord believed the Scriptures:-
 - a) He implied there was only one Isaiah. (Isaiah 61:1,2 cf. Luke 4:16-21, Isaiah 53:1, and Isaiah 6:1-4, 9-10 cf. John 12:38-41)
 - b) Jonah was a prophet not a myth. (Matthew 12:39, Luke 11:29)
 - c) Daniel was a prophet not an historian. (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14)
 - d) Adam and Eve were created. (Matthew 19:8)
7. The Bible is called God's Word (Mark 7:13, Luke 5:1, 11:28, John 10:35, Acts 6:7, 12:24, Romans 10:17)

BIBLE: INSPIRATION

1. The principle of inspiration is found in (2 Timothy 3:16) "All Scripture is God breathed" - Gk. THEO PNEUSTOS.

The Holy Spirit communicated to the human authors God's complete plan (2 Samuel 23:2, 3, Isaiah 59:21, Jeremiah 1:9, Matthew 22:42, 43, Mark 12:36, Acts 4:24, 25, 28:25).

The human authors of Scripture so wrote that in spite of their personalities, they were able to communicate God's plan with perfect accuracy in the language they wrote.
2. The origin of Scripture is beyond human viewpoint (2 Peter 1:20, 21).
3. The Bible is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Therefore it is the absolute standard for believers (Psalm 138:2).

4. Pre-canon revelation from God occurred through the Holy Spirit. There was no written scripture until the time of Moses (2Samuel 23:2, Ezekiel 2:2, 8:3, 11:1, 24, Micah 3:8, Hebrews 3:7).

5. Four categories of Old Testament revelation:

- a) The spoken word - thus saith the Lord (Isaiah 6:9, 10, Acts 28:25).
- b) Dreams (Numbers 12:6, Genesis 15:12, 31:10-13, 31:24, Daniel 10:9) - whilst asleep.
- c) Visions (Isaiah 1:1, 6:1, 1 Kings 22:19) - whilst awake.
- d) Angelic teaching (Deuteronomy 33:2, Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19, Psalm 68:17).

6. The extent of revelation:

- a) The unknown past - the Bible portrays past historical details unknown to man apart from revelation (Genesis chapters 1-11). The accuracy of these historical facts is guaranteed by inspiration, e.g. Creation, Noah's Flood.
- b) Ancient history - whilst the Bible is not a text book of history, all historical citations are accurate.
- c) Objective law - the Old Testament contains many laws for both individuals and national life. These laws express perfectly the mind of God to those people to whom they are addressed.
- d) Some portions of the Bible contain direct quotations from God. The doctrine of inspiration guarantees that such quotations are properly recorded exactly as God desired.
- e) God uses the emotions, trials and triumphs of certain believers to declare His grace in devotional literature like the Psalms, Song of Solomon
- f) Inspiration extends to the recording of falsehoods just as they were uttered - Satan Genesis 3:4.
- g) Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of all recorded prophecies.

BIBLE AND THE BELIEVER

1. The Scriptures are designed to have the following effect on the believer:

- a) Illuminating (Psalm 119:130).
- b) Making wise the simple (Psalm 19:7).
- c) Producing faith (John 20:31), hope (Psalm 119:49, Romans 15:4), and obedience (Deuteronomy 17:19-20).
- d) Cleansing the heart (John 15:3, Ephesians 5:26) and the ways (Psalm 119:9).
- e) Keeping us from destructive paths (Psalm 17:4).
- f) Supporting life (Matthew 4:4 cf. Deuteronomy 8:3).
- g) Building up in the faith (Acts 20:32).
- h) Comforting (Psalm 119:82, Romans 15:4).
- i) Promoting growth in grace (1 Peter 2:2).
- j) Admonishing (1 Corinthians 10:11).
- k) Rejoicing the heart (Psalm 119:18,111).
- l) Sanctifying (John 17:17, Ephesians 5:26).

2. The Scriptures should be:

- a) Believed (John 2:22) and obeyed (James 1:22).
- b) The standard for teaching (1 Peter 4:11).
- c) Appealed to (1 Corinthians 1:31, 1 Peter 1:16).

- d) Read publicly to all (Acts 13:15).
 - e) Known (2 Timothy 3:15).
 - f) Received as the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13) with meekness (James 1:21).
 - g) Searched (John 5:39, Acts 17:11).
 - h) Used against our spiritual enemies (Ephesians 6:11,17).
 - i) Taught to everyone including children (Deuteronomy 6:7, 11:19, Nehemiah 8:7-8).
 - j) Talked about continually (Deuteronomy 6:7).
 - k) Not handled deceitfully (2 Corinthians 4:2).
3. For the unbeliever the Scripture should be for:
- a) Regeneration (James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23).
 - b) Quickening (Psalm 119:50,93).
 - c) Converting the soul (Psalm 19:7).

EVANGELISM

1. All believers are ambassadors for Christ, and are obliged to give the gospel to unbelievers. (Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5)
2. Two forms of witnessing - with the lips (2 Corinthians 5:18-21 and by the life (2 Corinthians 3:3)
3. The gospel is "good news".
4. Sin is not an issue. Jesus died for all sin on the cross. The penalty has been paid. The issue now is "Do you trust that Jesus Christ has died for your sins, and was raised from the dead to give life to all who believe on Him?" People choose to either rely upon Jesus Christ, or upon their own good works, to be saved (Romans 8:1, 9-30-33).
5. What about the heathen who haven't heard?
 - a) God is totally fair, and everyone has the chance to be saved
 - b) Unlimited Atonement (Colossians 2:14,15)
 - c) God's will - none should perish (2 Peter 3:9)
 - d) Man's negative will - God consciousness - Gospel hearing.
6. Witnessing is impossible except through the power of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:8-13) The Holy Spirit convicts of
 - a) Sin because of unbelief.
 - b) Righteousness.
 - c) Judgment because of Satan being judged (Matthew 25:41)
7. The natural man needs the Holy Spirit to understand the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:14)
8. The Bible is the weapon of witnessing. (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4)
9. Biblical Pattern of Witnessing (1 Thessalonians 2:1-12)
 - a) Effective contact (v1)
 - b) The gospel must be given even under opposition (v2)
 - c) The gospel must never be compromised or watered down (v3)
 - d) The believer in whom the gospel is deposited is tested by God and should not be for the praise of man (v4)

- e) Flattery should never be part of the gospel (v5-6)
 - f) Whilst the gospel should not be given to get praise from men it should be given in love without cost (v9)
 - g) The gospel must be followed up (v10) with discipleship and teaching (v11) so that the new believer can become spiritually self reliant (v10-12)
10. Your obligation to witness (Romans 1:14-16): you are a debtor (v14), you are ready (v15), you are not ashamed (v16)
11. Win souls, not arguments. Stay on the gospel, don't get side-tracked.
12. We are fishers of men (Matthew 4:19)
- a) Fishermen need to be equipped to fish. You need to be walking in the Spirit and you need to know the gospel.
 - b) Fishermen go to where the fish are. You must be in contact with unbelievers so that you can witness to them.
 - c) Fishermen are patient. Allow for the conviction and preparation of the Holy Spirit in the life of the unbeliever.
 - d) Fishermen know what bait to use for different fish. You have to be flexible and know how to approach different personalities.
 - e) Fishermen concentrate on fish and not the fishpond. Our primary concern is saving people - the evil in the world will continue to exist.

EVANGELISM - NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN

1. The pastor of the local church must practice a Bible saturated, spirit controlled life. By his systematic teaching of the Word he must encourage people to apply it in their life. The vessels that the Lord uses must be clean.
2. You must have a co-ordinated prayer life in the Church. This consists of the mid week prayer meeting and organising your prayer warriors. You need specific weekly prayer sheets.
3. You need to have weekly meetings with your deacons and elders to plan strategies for the church. You need to have that for a prayer plan for the week. It is good to have this on Sunday morning over breakfast so that the prayer points can be noted down and duplicated by the pastor for the morning service. This gives current material. You plan your visitations, your speakers and how it can be co-ordinated in with the overall preaching plan. There also needs to be a home fellowship strategy and a strategy for the Bible class and Sunday School.
4. In the preaching everything must tie into the evangelistic, witness function of the church. He must emphasise that they are ambassadors and evangelists.
5. The minister encourages the people to find the fish. Every week they should be reminded of their work in this area.
 6. Every believer should have his own list of people who he is praying constantly for. He should have a list of ten unbelievers and as one is converted a new name should be emplaced on the list.
7. The church contacts should be followed up as part of the strategy. This is the importance of a Sunday School. The Sunday School should be well known in the area. The unbelieving parents who send their children to Sunday School should be followed up by the minister to show friendliness towards them. You may be their only Christian contact.
8. There needs to be a church service follow up. Every visitor should be made to feel welcome but not embarrassed. Never ask a visitor to stand up. After the service have a coffee time and a special room set aside for visitors. It is an advantage to have a service which finishes a bit earlier. The minister follows up the visitors and lets an elder go on the door.
9. Organise visitation and be visible with walking through districts and greeting those you meet. This is far better than driving and parking. The morning should be in the study. Have a meal at home to have time with your wife or family, after lunch visitation. With walking you get exercise and are away from the phone. Plan to visit three or four locations only. Drive to a central location and walk. If you are seen on the street people get to know. You have raised the profile of the church. You are swimming in the sea with the fish. Sit down with street kids, help an old lady. The church needs to draw on the local area. You need to be decently dressed but not suit and tie.

1. Gospel means "good news" - there are four gospels found in the New Testament.
2. Gospel of the Kingdom.
 - a) Preached by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1, 2), the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:23) and his disciples (Matthew 10:7) Thy Kingdom come (Matthew 6:10).
 - b) It consists of the setting up on earth of Christ's 1,000 year Kingdom thus fulfilling the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7-16)
 - c) There will be another preaching of the gospel by the Jewish remnant in the days of the Great Tribulation before the 2nd Advent (Matthew 24:14, Revelation 7). After the 2nd Advent the 1,000 year reign commences (Revelation 20:1-6).
3. Gospel of Grace - the gospel of personal salvation by grace through faith. This gospel appears under many names and is the means of salvation throughout the history of mankind.
 - a) Gospel of God (Romans 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:2)
 - b) Gospel of Christ (Mark 1:1, Romans 1:16)
 - c) Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24)
 - d) Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15)
 - e) Gospel of your salvation (Ephesians 1:13)
 - f) Glorious Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4)
4. The Everlasting Gospel - (Revelation 14:6) - the good news is everlasting. This gospel will be preached on earth just before Christ's return in glory (Matthew 25:31, 32). This gospel is the means of salvation to countless thousands both Jews and Gentiles (Revelation 7:9-14).
5. Paul's "My Gospel" - (Romans 2:16) This is the same gospel of salvation by grace through faith but includes the mystery doctrines of the church age not previously revealed. The gospel in the Old Testament was revealed by the Tabernacle, Feasts, Levitical Offerings etc.
6. "Another Gospel" which is not another (Galatians 1:6, 7, 2 Corinthians 11:4) This is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1:8, 9) The curse is proclaimed on any who preach it. There have been many perversions - legalism in Galatia, angel worship in Colossae (Colossians 2:18) among others.

ETERNAL LIFE

1. Mankind was created by God to enjoy fellowship with Him forever (2 Peter 3:9).
2. Entry into eternal life is by faith in Christ (John 3:36, 5:24, Acts 13:46, Galatians 6 :8, Matthew 25 :46).
3. Those who are serious about life and death ask about it (Matthew 13:40-43, 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 10:25, 18:18).
4. The Lord provides the answer to questions about life and death (John 6:68, Romans 5:20, 21, Romans 6:22, 23).
5. It is the Lord who gives eternal life (John 5:39, 40, John 12:50).
6. Believers have eternal life now, as a present possession (1 John 5:11-13). This guarantees our salvation.
7. Eternal life is received in full at the rapture/resurrection when we all receive our new bodies from the Lord.
8. We are all urged to live each day with the eternal life perspective in mind, thinking of our place with the Lord forever (Matthew 19:29, 30, Mark 10:29-31, John 12:25, John 4:36, Romans 2:6,7).

SANCTIFICATION [See page 19 above]

PARAPHRASE

“You have morally purified yourselves by means of your obedience to the word of truth through the ministries of the Holy Spirit, in order to love your fellow believers, without hypocrisy. So, out of this pure heart, at every time there is practical opportunity to show it, demonstrate love for your brethren with real commitment to them and fervour! (For these things demonstrate the fact that you have been) born again, not from the source of things that decay away, natural seed, but from a seed (the very seed of David) that does not perish at all, through the living Logos of God, who is eternal (as you are also now, in him). For (to quote the poet) ‘all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass, the grass withers, and the flower of it falls’, But, the word of the Lord abides forever, and it is this word through which the good tidings (of the gospel message) were announced to you.”

CHAPTER TWO

VERSES 1 - 5

“Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envies and all evil speakings, 2 as new born babies, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; 3 if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. 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 .”

KEY WORDS

Laying aside	apothemi	aorist, middle participle of the verb, to put off/away, reject.
Malice	Kakia	wickedness
Guile	Dolos	deceit, from the verb, to catch with a baited trap.
Hypocrisy	hupocrisis	pretence to be something you are not, a play actor.
Envy	phthonos	to hate another for enjoying a thing that you desire, but don't have.
Evil speakings	katalalia	to run down another, disparage, tell others secrets.
Newborn babies	artigennetos	recently born, fresh and new, ready for mother's milk.
Desire	epipotheo	aorist active imperative, to desire, long for, direct your soul towards.
Sincere	adolos	pure, unadulterated, uncontaminated, fit to eat.
Milk	Yala	milk, which meant fertility, plenty, pure food.
Grow	auxano	aorist passive subjunctive(mood of potential), to cause to grow.
Tasted	geuomai	aorist middle indicative of the verb to taste.
Gracious	chrestos	good, useful ,gracious. Similar word to Christos, Lord.
Living	Zao	present active participle of the verb, to live.
Disallowed	apodokimazo	perfect passive participle of the verb meaning to reject after examining – with eternal results for those rejecting Jesus.
Chosen	eklektos	chosen, choice, select.
Precious	entimos	precious, costly, expensive, high class.
Lively	zontos	living (building stones)
Built up	oikodomeo	present passive indicative of the verb to build up, erect an building.
Spiritual	pneumatikos	of the spirit, tied to the word for priesthood.
Acceptable	euprosdektos	acceptable as spiritual sacrifices.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“This world is but the nursery, the most advanced among us, only as babies”. (Meyer, 1953, p 63).

Paul in **Ephesians 4:22-24**, used the analogy of clothing, encouraging the believers to put off the old life and it's habits like a tired old garment, and put on the new spiritual life, like a godly priestly garment of service to God. Peter does the same sort of thing here, using the new birth and the food of a new-born baby as the structure of the analogy.

As a baptismal message this passage makes total sense as the new believers put off old clothes and put on new ones once they left the water. The new life in Christ was to be totally different. We have in recent years fitted our faith into life, Peter, and the other apostles, exhort us to reconsider this approach, for all things are to be new in Christ, all attitudes are to be transformed, all habits and values are to be brought into captivity to Christ. **2 Corinthians 10:5**.

Verse 1. The reasons for this total change are found in the new role the believer has. Chapter one verses 13-25, has introduced this and these verses simply flow from those earlier ones. We are to serve as the priests of the most high God, serving him as his ambassadors in this fallen world. We are here to live and if required die as his witnesses of his work, policy for man, and the plan for the ages. Let us look carefully at each of the commands Peter gives here.

Given the eternal life perspective of the last verses of the first chapter of the letter, the believers are exhorted to confront the behaviours that are incompatible with their “born again” spiritual status, and with the shortness and fragility of their lives. If our life is but grass, we are to put away all thoughts and deeds associated with five common sins.

1. All wickedness of thought and deed. Nothing associated with malice or evil must be given any time within our mind; it must be rejected, the very thoughts “stopped”, in our old sin nature.
2. All guile, deceit, is to be rejected as the way to achieve any goal. We are to “bait no traps” to achieve anything in the spiritual realm; we are to speak and act plainly and honestly.
3. No hypocrisy in our lives. We are not to be like play actors, pretending to be spiritual; what people see in us is what they are to get.
4. We are to win the battle against envy here and now, for what do we envy, but the things of this life that are also “like the grass” they decay and wither away. Why do we find ourselves envying those with bigger cars and houses and better jobs paying more money? Such things are of no consequence. All that matters is that we are where God wants, doing what he would have us do. We have a path to walk in this world, the Lord has selected it for us from before the worlds were made; let us walk with patience the particular path the Lord has for us and not envy the unbelievers (or other believers) who may be going to their eternal destiny with more things that decay in their bank!
5. All evil speaking is to be put away! Not just some but ALL! We are not to run down any other man or woman, at any time, in any way! Why is this? Because we are here as ambassadors of heaven, and the citizens of this world are not our responsibility; we are here to tell them of heaven and give the good news that through the Lord Jesus Christ, the door to heaven is open for them. Criticism gets in the way of the gospel.

Verse 2-3. The order is then clear. If we are indeed the children of God, we will show our family likeness by desiring the pure food of the baby in Christ, the Word of God. A lamb eats grass, but the wolf does not! We are known by our fruits (Matthew 7), but we are also known by our preferred food. Preach the truth of the Word of God and see the reactions of people, for it will tell you their genuine family.

A genuinely saved individual will desire with all their heart the pure food of the Word of God; they will seek out good Bible teaching and without it they will shrivel up and spiritually die. They have tasted the truth and they love it. This is where the enemy attacks the church, by first, stopping the message of the gospel being heard, and then by stopping the systematic verse by verse Bible teaching that will enable the young believers to grow up in the grace and knowledge of their Lord, that they may serve him.

Newly baptised believers in the early church were given milk and honey to drink, as a potent symbol of this truth, and a reminder that they were to both seek the pure, sweet and nourishing, food of the Christian, and that that they would one day experience the blessings of heaven. (Reicke, 1964, p 90, Moffatt, 1963, p 113, Kelly, 1969, p 34.)

“This word ‘babes’, should also teach us out true attitude towards God. Throw yourself on him with the abandonment of a babe. Roll on him the responsibility of choosing for you, directing, protecting, delivering you. If you cannot understand his will, expect him to make it plain.” (Meyer, 1953, p 65)

Total dependence on the Lord is the apostolic theme; Peter wants us to have the trust and mental attitude of the child that has eyes only for it’s parent. No problem is difficult if we see it through the eyes that see first the eternal plan of God and his provision for us in the midst of every testing situation.

Verse 4. Peter now discussed the Lord in the analogy of a “stone”, a word that for Peter had great significance, for that is how he was renamed by the Lord as the “rock man”. The word used is lithos, referring to a stone prepared for building, well shaped and fit for use in the foundation of a structure.

Two words stand out here. The word for “stone” takes us directly to the Messianic prophecies of the rock/stone. **Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10,11, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, Romans 9:32, 33, 10:11,13.**

The second word is “chosen”, bringing us back to the concept of the plan of God, the so called “Divine Decrees” of theology. **1 Peter 1:2, 2:9.** The Lord has been chosen by the father for glory; we either share in his glory or are a part of his final judgement of all those who rejected his plan. As true children, we are part of the blessing, and should demonstrate that in time, by our feeding on his word daily, and by the fruit in our life of obedience to the word taken in.

Peter uses the word ‘stone’ in four ways through this chapter to draw attention to the nature of the Lord’s work for mankind and to demonstrate the finality of man’s rejection of his work.

1. The Lord is the “living stone” (verse 4); the “bed-rock-living stone” – the one who gives life from death. Like the rock in the desert living waters come from him, but he is a hewn stone, not just a rock. The hewn stone (lithos) is a stone that has been under the mason’s hammer and chisel, and the Lord placed himself under disciple and obedience to win our salvation.
2. He becomes, through his obedience to the Father’s plan, the “precious cornerstone” (vs 6 -8); the key foundation of the new building, the church. Only those who are part of this Holy Spirit constructed structure are saved and secure for all eternity.
3. By most men he becomes the “rejected stone” (vs 4-7). They have observed him and they reject him as “unfit”, but God makes him the cornerstone of the future direction of history. Perfect tense here reminds us that such rejection of Him is fatal and eternal in its consequences.
4. He is to those who reject him the “stone of stumbling” (vs 8). They will stumble and fall into eternity without hope because of their arrogant rejection of God’s provided Saviour.

The unbelievers are judged because of their rejection of the Lord, and Peter makes it clear that they are culpable. They have rejected him after examining him, and they are responsible for their rejecting choice. The **perfect passive participle** of the verb apodokimazo, makes it clear that the results of their rejection go on forever!

Verse 5. In contrast to the rejecters, the Holy Spirit is taking us as living stones, and is building us into a spiritual house to the glory of God. The church here is referred to as a building, but it is not the bricks and mortar down the street, it is a spiritual structure held together by God’s power, and is the framework within which we function as the royal priest ambassadors of God to the world.

The fact that we are carefully finished stones (lithos, not rocks = petros), indicates that the Lord works on us to knock off the rough corners of the rock to fit us for his building project. We are here to be shaped and made fit for the building of the Lord’s church. Do we welcome the Lord’s shaping, the Lord’s testing situations that make us more fit for his purpose?

Peter is also encouraging us through this verse that we have a place, it is called the church; in the pagan world we do not feel we belong, but we have a place where we do belong, and that is where-ever the living church universal meets together. “In the world the Christian is a sojourner, but in the church of the living God he has a place”. (Mastermann , 1912, p95).

What are our “acceptable sacrifices”? We are to be daily functioning as priests. We became the Lord’s priests at the point of salvation and we must learn the job through the Word and teaching of the Holy Spirit. In the ancient world, the priest stood for the god and did all service the god required of them. So it is with us. We are here to stand for the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in his absence. The ‘works’ of the new priesthood therefore involve, witnessing by life and lips, ambassadorship, prayer, giving, praise, worship, teaching and encouraging others.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

“God’s training is empirical. Spiritual experience comes before spiritual knowledge.” (Lumby, 1893, p 66)

We know him through the work of the Holy Spirit on our life as young believers and we are convicted of sin, and are urged to respond to that conviction by obedience to the words of Scripture, and to turn away from the past evil we grew up amongst. Evil practises are to be put away and good spiritual food is to be taken in. How well are you doing believer on a daily basis? Is evil being put away, or are you playing with it? Do you shrink away from even the appearance of evil, or are you losing your revulsion towards evil things?

Conversely, is your hunger for the living Word Of God at such a level that you will not go a day without drinking deeply of the words that the Lord has for you? That is the Lord's will for you. Start right here!

Let us do the audit of verse one. Have we put away the five things Peter refers to here? If not let us take the actions required to put our lives right. The Holy Spirit wants to chip away all the rough edges of our life. Work with him and reject evil in all its forms.

Peter was a "rock man", as we are when saved, but the Lord wants to make us shaped and perfectly fitted stones in a building, lithos, and he will go to work on us. **Hebrews 12:1-13**. Let us rejoice in his work upon us and pray that anything that slows down our service might be removed from our life.

Is the local church the place of belonging for you, or are to getting too comfortable in the company of the unbelievers with whom you work or live? For the believer the gathering together with other believers is a crucial thing, a thing that cannot be gone without.

There is no solitary Christian, for we are made to be built together! A person who claims to be a Christian and stays alone is not a true believer at all, for the Holy Spirit makes us fit to be joined together with others. A solitary Christian is at best a confused block of rock, rather than a hewn stone ready for fitting into a building, at worst they are a pious fraud!

Let us serve the Lord as the holy (set apart from the world for service of God), priesthood, and bring the acceptable sacrifices of our time, goods, lips and total life, given for him, as he gave his all for us!

[b] PASTORAL

"But it is not enough to renounce what is evil; there must be positive growth in what is good and that requires true nourishment". (Cranfield, 1958, p 44) It is to the task of providing true nourishment and encouragement that we are called as the Lord's under shepherds: and it is the daily fulfilment of this task that ensures we are true pastors of the Lord's flock.

Are we working with the building stones the Lord has given us in the local church, are we seeking the structure that the Holy Spirit has given us in the shaped stones he is providing? Are we trying to do the shaping of believers, for it is not our job, it is the Holy Spirits! We are given a giant building puzzle when we get believers given to the local church. Our task is to help them find where the Lord wants them in the structure, not to force them into roles that they are not "shaped" for.

We have the Holy Spirit's help in this matter, and must use the help provided, for only a Holy Spirit empowered and led local church will even have a chance of getting believers to be doing the things they are supposed to!

"What was unthinkable in Judaism is fundamental to Christianity, proselytes became priests! . . . When religion was a matter of ceremonial sacrifice, it was a question of great moment whether the sacrifice offered would prove acceptable. . . . Christians are assured that their sacrifices will be acceptable to God." (Stibbs, 1959, p 100).

Our hope is in the Lord alone – His Plan alone has all the facts, the power and the purpose. We have a position in Christ that is unassailable, for it depends on God's grace not our saintliness, it depends on his plan, not on our strength.

We may fail, but the sacrifice of our prayers is always received by our gracious Lord. Do our people really know this? Do they praise God as they should? If they do not it may be because we have not told them the truth fully enough; let us do the job and tell the people of God the whole truth of God's marvellous word.

DOCTRINES

PLAN OF GOD

1. In eternity past, God designed a plan for every believer, which takes into account every event and decision in human history.
2. The plan centres around the person of Jesus Christ. (1 John 3:23, Ephesians 1:4-6)
3. Entrance into the plan is based on the principle of grace. (Ephesians 2:8, 9) where the sovereignty of God and the free will of Man meet at the cross. God brings salvation which is complete, Man brings his faith.
4. God's plan was so designed so as to include all events and actions. (1 Peter 1:2)
5. Under his plan God has decreed to do some things directly and some through agencies, Israel, the Church.
6. Without interfering with human free will in any way God has designed a plan so perfect that it includes cause and effect, as well as provision, preservation and function.
7. There are many functions in the Plan of God. They all constitute one whole comprehensive plan which is perfect, eternal and unchangeable.
8. The plan of God is consistent with human freedom and does not limit or coerce human free will. Distinction should be made between what God causes and what God permits. God causes the Cross but permits sin. God is neither the author of sin nor sponsors sin.
9. His plan portrays that man has free will. God never condones sin in the human race. Man started in perfect environment and innocence. Man sinned of his own free will. Man will sin in the perfect environment of the Millennium.
10. Distinction should be made between the divine plans which are related to the plan of God and divine laws which regulate human conduct on the earth. Divine laws occur in time, divine plans occur in eternity.
11. God's plans derive from His foreknowledge. He recognised in eternity past those things which are certain. The foreknowledge of God makes no things certain, but only perceives in eternity past those things that are certain.
12. There is a difference between foreknowledge and fore ordination. Fore ordination establishes certainty but does not provide for the certainty which is established. It is the plan that provides. (Romans 8:29, Acts 2:23, 1 Peter 1:2)
13. Therefore the elect are foreknown and the foreknown are elect. God knew in eternity past what way each free will would go for each particular problem in life. God does not coerce human free will but he does know what way each freewill will choose at any given time. As free will decides so God provides.
14. Since God cannot contradict his own character he plans the best for the believer. God is perfect, his plan and provisions are therefore perfect.
15. The cross was planned in eternity past but the human free will of Christ decided for the cross at Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:39-42) God has provided salvation through the cross and it is a free will decision as to whether one accepts it or not.
16. No plan in itself opposes human freedom but once a choice is made from the free will then the plan limits your human freedom. At the same time it gives you the freedom to love and appreciate God. God lays down the means of living the Christian life.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT [See page 24 above]

PRIESTS

1. A priest is a man who represents himself or other men before God.
2. There are three categories of priesthood in human history:
 - a) Family priest - from Adam until Levi
 - b) Levitical priesthood. - appointed under the Law of Moses
 - c) Royal priesthood:

- i) Melchizedek - king of Jerusalem, but also priest of the Most High (Genesis 14:18)
 - ii) Jesus Christ - King of Kings and the Great High Priest (Hebrews 10:17)
 - iii) Church Age believer - we share Christ's priesthood, since we are united with Him (1 Peter 2:9)
3. Until the Law was given the head of each family was the priest for that family. (Genesis 8:20, 26:25, 31:54)
4. When the Law was proposed the whole nation of Israel was to be "a kingdom of priests unto God". The nation of Israel however failed in unbelief.
5. God appointed Aaron and his family in the tribe of Levi as a specialised priesthood (Exodus 28:1)
6. All believers in the Church Age have become a kingdom of priests in Christ (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6)
7. The chief privilege of being a priest is to be able to approach God directly. (Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-22)
8. In their role as a priest the believer offers:
- a) Their own body. (Romans 12:1, Philippians 2:17)
 - b) Praise to God. (Hebrews 13:15-16)
 - c) Their possessions. (Romans 12:13, Galatians 6:6)
 - d) Intercession on behalf of others. (Colossians 4:12, 1 Timothy 2:1)
9. The priest must be a partaker of the nature of the people he represents. Jesus Christ had to be a human too. (Hebrews 5:1, 7:4, 5, 7:14-28, 10:5, 10:10-14)
10. Comparison of the priesthoods:
- a) The Melchizedek priesthood was a picture of the priesthood of Christ (Hebrews 5:6,10, 6:20, 7:1-21).
 - b) The Levitical Priesthood:
 - i) Was based on the Law, which could not save
 - ii) Was based on physical birth into the family of Aaron
 - iii) Was available only to the family of Aaron
 - iv) The priests came from the tribe of Levi. The kings came from the tribe of Judah. No person could be a priest and a king.
 - v) Was based on mere men, with their own weaknesses and sin
 - vi) Ended when the priest died.
 - c) The Royal Priesthood of Christ:
 - i) Is based on Christ's sacrifice, which took away all sin for all time
 - ii) Is based on spiritual birth, being born again into the family of God
 - iii) Is universal to all believers in the Church Age
 - iv) It is a royal priesthood - because of the Kingship and Priestly office of Jesus Christ
 - v) Is based on the perfect person of Christ
 - vi) Is eternal, since Christ lives forever.

1. Our hope is based on the reality of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and His message (Romans 5:4-6, 1Timothy 1:1).
2. Our hope is also of our resurrection (Acts 24:15). This hope influences our conduct here and now (1 John 3:3).
3. The hope of resurrection was longed for and believed in, in the Old Testament but after the Lord's resurrection we can be totally confident (Acts 26:6-8).
4. Hope of resurrection is a "lively hope" which influences every aspect of the soul who truly knows what we have (1Peter 1:3).
5. We also have hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7).
6. It is a key doctrine of the church, without it our faith is a sham (1 Corinthians 15:19).
7. We have the sure hope of deliverance from the Tribulation by the Rapture of the Church which occurs before the Tribulation (Romans 8:24-25, 1Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18).
8. The coming of the Lord to save us from coming catastrophe is a "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).
9. We all have the hope of blessing in time if we reach maturity (Galatians 5:5).
10. We all have one hope in maturity (Ephesians 4:4-6).
11. All true pastors hope that their flock will go on to maturity to the greater glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (1Thessalonians 2:19-20).
12. As we see and know what the Lord did for us we can take confidence from it (1Peter 1:21).
13. Confidence comes as we hear what God has for us through His word (Romans 15:4).
14. The way to know hope is to be firmly grounded in God's word (Colossians 1:23).
15. We are told to grow in hope (Hebrews 6:11-12).
16. We are to hold fast our hope, firm in doctrine (Hebrews 3:6).
17. All hope is anchored in doctrine in the soul (Hebrew 6:18-19).
18. God's grace provisions for us here in time provide the basis for hope and confidence (2Thessalonians 2:16-17).
19. The purpose of the pastor - teacher teaching the Word of God is to pass on God's information so that all believers can be partakers of this hope (1Corinthians 9:10, 2 Corinthians 3:12).
20. The pastor's prayer for his people will always be that they should know the hope of their calling (Ephesians 1:18) This would include salvation, resurrection, eternal security, eternal reward, eternal life, blessing and maturity and deliverance from the problems of life.
21. Unbelievers have no hope. This should be the motivation for evangelism (Ephesians 2:12, 1Thessalonians 4:13).
22. We should be ready to give a defence to our hope (1Peter 3:15).
23. "Now abides faith hope and charity and the greatest of these is charity" (1Corinthians 13:13).

ETERNAL SECURITY [See page 31 above]

PARAPHRASE

Because of all this, let us reject and put away from us all behaviour that could be called 'wicked', all deceitful actions and thoughts, all hypocritical play acting, all envying of others for anything we do not have. Like new born babies, let us be pure in our desires, and let us desire first the uncontaminated food that is found in God's Word, so that we might grow by means of it's application into our life. For we have all tasted and we know that the Lord is gracious. We come to him, as the living foundation stone of our lives, which after examining, Many men rejected, but God the Father chose him to be the precious one of all eternity. You are

all, also, living Holy Spirit hewn stones, part of the structure that the Holy Spirit is building together to form the church. Within this, you are set apart priests for God, and the spiritual sacrifices you offer to him are always accepted by him.”

VERSES 6 - 10

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scriptures, ‘behold I lay in Zion, a chief cornerstone, , elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded’ (Isaiah 28 : 16). 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’. (Psalm 118:22). 8 And, ‘a stone stumbling and a rock of offence’ (Isaiah 8 :14), even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people’ (Exodus 19 : 5, 6), that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of the darkness into his marvellous light. 10 Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (Hosea 1:9,10, 2:23) ”

KEY WORDS

Wherefore	dio	for these reasons.
Contained	pereichei	present active indicative of the verb, to be within, in the sense that a set of instructions is contained in a will. (Reinecker, 1980, p 405).
Lay	tithemi	present active indicative; I keep on laying a foundation
Chief cornerstone	akrogoniaios lithos	massive cornerstone that the building rests upon, or the main stone in the middle of the archway to hold it together.
Believes	pisteuo	present active participle, keep on resting in faith.
Confounded	kataschuno	aorist passive subjunctive of the verb, to be at a point in time put to shame.
Believing	pisteuo	present active participle, dative of advantage; those who are in the place where they believe they have great eternal advantage.
Precious	time	the honour status; Roman triumph is in view, indicating that even though we may feel we lose in time, we have final victory and triumph over those who laugh now.
Disobedient	apisteuo	present active participle of the negative form of the verb, no benefits!
Disallowed	apodokimazo	aorist active indicative, rejected after examination, thus no excuses!
Made	ginomai	aorist passive indicative of the verb, become.
Stumbling	proskommatos	“a loose stone lying in the way, against which the traveller strikes his foot”. (Hort, quoted in Reinecker, 1980, p 405)
Offence	skandalon	a snare, set to catch the unwary.
Stumble	proskopto	present active indicative, to strike ones foot against.
Disobedient	apeitho	present active participle of the verb to strongly go, against evidence, “to refuse to believe”. (IBID, p 405)
Appointed	tithemi	aorist passive indicative of the verb, to be placed, be put, be appointed
Chosen generation	eklekton genos	chosen race or people.
Royal priesthood	basileios	royal, kingly
Holy nation	hagios ethnos	a nation set apart for God
Peculiar	peripoiesis	people for a private possession
Shew forth	exaggello	aorist active subjunctive, in order that we might tell out to all what was not known before.
Praises	arete	virtue, the ability to do great deeds.
Called	kaleo	summoned, named, appointed, selected to do a specific role.
Darkness	skotos	physical darkness, cannot see in it, the reality of it emphasised.
Marvellous	thaumastos	wonderful, marvellous, great beyond words.
Light	phos	light as opposed to darkness.
Obtained#1	eleeo	perfect passive participle, at one point in time with results that go on forever, the verb means to receive mercy, pity,
Obtained#2	eleeo	aorist passive participle, emphasises the point in time at which point we receive the mercy of God, at salvation. Both realities of salvation covered; the point in time decision, with the eternally secure results.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Peter is grounding the believers in the Old Testament in this section. He is building on the last section underlining the fact that the plan of God was announced centuries before and the outcome is as sure as the prophecies were of fulfilment. This is a principle that is not applied enough today. If the Lord has literally fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies relating to his First Advent, then He will in like manner fulfil all the prophecies relating to his Second Advent.

Peter is also reminding the believers here that the Lord was indeed the Messiah, spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. There are a series of quotes here from Isaiah and other passages. Note the quotations for a moment in the AV text above. Notice that Peter quotes from Moses, David, Isaiah, and Hosea. Each and every phase of the history of Israel is covered here. Peter is underlining that the plan of God has unfolded over time, and that at each phase of history they were looking for the coming one.

Verse 6. The foundation stone is laid in Zion. While some commentators identify Zion here as referring to the heavenly Jerusalem, (Stibbs, 1959, p 102, Mounce, 1982, p 26), it must be remembered that the “city of Zion” was an actual place, called the Ophel today it is the site of the old city of David, and the Lord literally came to that place and it was there that he laid down his life for us all. It was in Jerusalem that the church was established on the day of Pentecost, so it is not necessary to spiritualise this passage, for the church was founded, established and led in the early days from the physical “Zion”.

The emphasis in the first verse here is upon the result of the laying of the foundation stone, and that result is a salvation that works for mankind! To all who put their trust in him, he will never leave them in a place where they are confounded, or put to shame. We have security in our position in him, because he is able to keep and deliver us through unto eternity. **Jude 24, 25.**

Verse seven underlines this again. “We have certainty of acceptance in him”. (Lumby, 1893, p 73). This principle is stated also in **Ephesians 3:12, Hebrews 10:22**. He is precious, marked out for all eternity as “approved and first class”, and it is upon his position and status that we are built up to form the church.

“Stones were examined and approved (for use) before they were used in a first century building. Rejected stones were described, and perhaps in some way marked as ‘disapproved’. **1 Corinthians 9:27.**” (Stibbs, 1959, p 102 -103).

Our belief in him enables us to recognise the glory and preciousness of the Lord, but to those who examine the claims of Christ and then reject him they have cast a judgement, that Peter says here, will come back to haunt them, for the one they have rejected as “unfit for building” has been made by God to be the chief cornerstone of the building that God is constructing. Those who reject the Lord are outside this construction project, they are outside the plan of God, without hope and certain of judgement.

Verse 7-8. Rejection of God’s plan and provided Saviour is a serious thing, and in verse eight Peter reminds us all that this has been set out from hundreds of years before the cross. The writer of Hebrews will seriously underline this a few years later, **Hebrews 10:30ff, 11:6, 12:28-30**.

Peter makes it clear by quoting **Isaiah 8:14**, that those who reject the Lord are responsible for their free action, but that these actions of individuals rejecting the Lord were foreknown by God, and are all provided for within his plan. Free will of man, and the foreknowledge of God, and provision for disobedience within his plan, is also stated in passages like, **Romans 9:19-21, Philippians 2:13**.

The Bible teaches both the free will decision making of each person, and the sovereignty of God. From our side of eternity, in a world where we cannot have a thought that isn’t limited by space and time, this is hard for us to understand, but was not difficult for God to arrange within his perfect plan from before this present space-time universe was even made. Remember in debating this subject that you are not God, and cannot see things the way He has and does! Remember you are the temporary resident in a temporary universe.

“They stumble at the word because of their disobedience, and to this they were appointed. Do not misunderstand; they were not appointed, or predestined to be disobedient. God does not so deal with any man. The supralapsarian theology dishonours his name while imagining they are defending his righteousness when they teach.” (Ironside, 1984, p 29).

“The disobedient must stumble, but the bible does not teach that they were appointed to disobedience. Such fatalistic lessons are alien to God’s love. The two ways are set before men.” (Lumby, 1893, p 76).

“Just as in Chapter 1 verse 2, he represents his readers as marked out by God for salvation, so here he envisages their adversaries as predestined to destruction; but in both cases his mention of obedience, or it’s opposite, implies that the personal decision of the individual is involved.” (Kelly, 1969, p 94).

This passage, like all others in the scriptures, underlines that man is held responsible for his choices about the Lord. God’s Word calls this rejection, ‘disobedience to the Creator’. “Men stumble over the message

because they disobey. Disobedience is not the some philosophical or intellectual difficulty with the message itself. It is the root cause of the unbelievers down fall." (Mounce, 1982, p 27)

They think they have considered the claims of the Lord, and are justified in rejecting him, but the Lord is who he claimed to be, and so their rejection of him will, "trip them up in time and cause them to stumble in eternity, right into the Lake of Fire. **Revelation 20:11-5**. They were not careful enough! Just as the traveller who isn't careful cannot curse the stone she/he trips over, just so the unbeliever cannot blame the Lord, for they should have seen him truly. They are without excuse.

Verse 9-10. Look at the position we have, as Peter sings about it in verse nine. We are blessed, and privileged in four ways:

1. Chosen generation - We are chosen people in God's plan, and this selection occurred in eternity past; well before we were aware of our choices God was, and we are part of his plan. Remember, do not get into a foolish discussion about whether our choice occurs before God's election of us, for all this occurs in eternity past, where time and space have no relevance or significance. The question itself, in philosophy is called a category mistake, asking something in one dimension that only applies to another! We will not understand this until we ourselves leave the limits of space and time, but until then let us praise God and go on our way rejoicing!
2. Royal priesthood - We are royal because the priesthood we, "belong to and is in the service of the King of Kings". (Mounce, 1982, p 28). The application of the Old Testament passage to Israel is gone beyond and applied to the church. Israel was a kingdom of priests, where-as we, within the church we are, royal priests! We have the same royalty through our second birth as the Lord has. We are princes and princesses of heaven.
3. A holy nation - Before salvation we were of all nations, but now we are the true people of God, of the eternal "nation" of heaven. We have not permanently replaced Israel in God's plan, but during the period of history when they are "set aside"(Romans 11:17-26), we have the role that they had, and more besides!
4. A set apart people - a people for the Lord's possession. We are his, we are owned by him, for he has paid the price for our redemption. All our problems are his problems, and all our joys are causes of praise and glory to Him.

Beware of so called, "Replacement Theology" here. The church has not permanently replaced Israel, for all is temporary here on this earth. Paul makes it very clear in the Romans 11, as does James in Acts 15, that Israel has been set aside due to her unbelief, but that after the church's removal the Lord will fulfil literally all his promises to that nation, and they too will, as a people, look upon whom they pierced. (**Psalm 22:16, John 19:34-37, Zechariah 12:1 - 14: 21.**) We are, in Christ the recipients of God's grace and mercy, and the results go on forever, and are renewed every morning with a new supply of mercy and grace for each and every day. Let us praise the one whose provision for us is so great.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

In verse seven, "Peter is not speaking of the intrinsic value of the cornerstone but of the honour that comes to believers because they have placed their trust in him. Ephesians 2:5-6." (Mounce, 1982, p 27). We have a place of glory and honour, let us daily celebrate what the Lord has done.

"Just as true faith manifests itself in obedience, so heart unbelief inevitably finds expression in deliberate disobedience." ((Stibbs, 1959, p 103). The two paths are always before mankind; once we have received the Lord as our Saviour we still face the daily decision to be obedient in the things he wishes or to disobey. Let us obey him and serve him in accordance with our high fourfold calling in Christ Jesus. Let us behave as becomes a king, a priest, and ambassador, and a child of the living God, who is always and ever under his gracious provision. Let us live in the light, praising the virtues of the one who called us out of darkness.

[b] PASTORAL

"The presence of Christ in the world elicits faith and unbelief. The belief of Christ is thrown into relief against the background of repudiation on the part of others." (Moffatt, 1963, p 117). Are we making the Lord's claims

clear? Are we standing for him in our societies so that men are indeed rejecting the real Saviour? How many reject the Saviour having only ever heard a little, or a wrong thing from a “fake Christian”?

We are responsible for getting the truth about him out there, then what each do, they are responsible for! Are we preaching enough about the greatness, and glory of our position in Christ. Do our believers understand the, at least, thirty four things the Lord has already done for them at the point of salvation? Verse by verse teaching is demanded of us that all God’s people know what they have and utilise fully the position they are held by God responsible for!

CONCLUSION

No distractions! “Encouraged by the assurance of the hope to come, they were to be holy in all their behaviours, not being conformed to their former lusts (1:14-16). They were to conduct themselves with reverent fear during their (short) stay on earth (vs 17 - 21). They were to long for the pure milk of the word, putting aside all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy and slander (2:1-10).” (Slaughter, 1995, p 84).

DOCTRINES

AMBASSADORSHIP

1. An Ambassador does not appoint himself, he is appointed by the nation he represents, the king he represents, the person he represents. We are appointed by God (2 Corinthians 5:20).
2. An Ambassador does not support himself. We are sustained and protected by God (Philippians 4:19).
3. An Ambassador does not represent himself. We represent God on earth (Matthew 28:19-20).
4. An Ambassador does not belong to the nation to which he is sent. Positionally we are in heaven, experientially we are in the world (Philippians 3:20, John 15:19).
5. All Ambassadors have instructions in written form. We have the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 4:1-2).
6. An Ambassador representing his country does not treat any insult as personal (Matthew 5:11-12).
7. When an Ambassador is recalled from a country it is tantamount to declaration of war. After the Rapture there will be massive warfare on earth. All Christians will be recalled at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION [See page 17 above]

FREE WILL

1. Free will is the responsibility before God to choose a course of action.
2. God gave Adam choice in the garden (Genesis 2:16-17).
3. Free will exists in both believer and unbeliever (John 7:17).
4. In Christianity free will cannot be coerced - it is a matter of obedience (2 Corinthians 5:10).
5. Man is responsible for his actions, and must give an account to God (Revelation 20:11-15).
6. Because man is subject to judgment there is an age at which children become accountable before God for their actions.
7. Three problems which the Bible solves regarding free will:

- a) What about babies who die before they hear the gospel or those who are mentally not able to decide?

Solution - (2 Samuel 12:18) where a child born to David and Bathsheba dies on the 7th day, the day before circumcision which would have brought the child into a covenant relationship. David says that he will go to be with the child indicating the child has been automatically saved without a covenant requirement.

- b) What about the physical damage which hinders the person causing a restriction of free will ?

Solution - (John 9:1-7) where a man blind from birth is healed. Jesus did not bypass the free will but made up for the blindness. He breaks down the barriers for a person to do God's will but the free will of the person is not manipulated.

c) What about spiritual damage to free will ?

Solution - (Genesis 3:8) where after the fall God sought out Adam and Eve in the garden where they had hidden from him. God will seek out all men and give them the opportunity of salvation.

8. It is possible to harden your heart that it becomes impossible to believe or repent. Examples in Scripture:

- a) the Amorites and Canaanites of Joshua's day (Genesis 15:16)
- b) the Pharaoh of the Exodus (Exodus 7- 11)
- c) those who choose to worship the creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1:1-32)
- d) those who accept the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:8)
- e) the reaction of unbelievers at the Second Advent (Revelation 6:16).

9. The person who desires to know God will find Him (John 7:17).

10. If God is truly sovereign how can man have genuine free choice?

In eternity past, God foreknew every decision and event which would occur in all creation. He worked all things to work together to achieve His sovereign purpose. God uses His sovereign will as planner and creator, man uses his free will as a part of the creation.

a) Paul as a prisoner on a ship bound for Rome predicts, having received advice from the angel of God, that there will be no loss of life but the ship will become a wreck. The guarantee is a sovereign guarantee and therefore absolute. Paul however tells the soldiers that they must stay on the boat to be saved. They do and they are saved. Sovereign decrees by God therefore contain free will decisions by man (Acts 27).

b) The sovereign decree is that all things work together for good towards the goal of predestination and eventual glorification. We have a guarantee that we will be in heaven. Yet we continually make free will decisions in the process (Romans 8:28).

c) Daniel understood the time of "desolations" as seventy years as prophesied by Jeremiah and knew that it would end on time. He now seeks by supplication with sackcloth and ashes forgiveness for Israel's sin on the basis that no discipline is going to be removed without the sin having been forgiven (Daniel 9:2).

11. Free will can never be neutral - you are either obedient or disobedient to God (Isaiah 55:7-9).

SALVATION [See page 30 above]

GIFTS GIVEN AT SALVATION

Listed below are the 34 things God provides for every believer at the point of salvation.

1. In the eternal plan of God. (Sharing the destiny of Christ)

- a) Foreknown (Acts 2:23, Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2)
- b) Elect (Romans 8:33, Colossians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Titus 1:1)
- c) Predestined (Romans 8:29, 30, Ephesians 1:5, 11)
- d) Chosen (Matthew 22:14, 1 Peter 2:4)
- e) Called (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

2. Reconciled:

- a) By God (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, Colossians 1:20)
- b) To God (Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 2:14-17).

3. Redeemed (Romans 3:24, Colossians 1:14, 1 Peter 1:18).
4. Condemnation removed (John 3:18, 5:24, Romans 8:1).
5. Under Grace instead of judgment; God is satisfied with the death of His Son (Romans 3:24-26, 1 John 2:2).
6. All sins judged by the death of Christ (Romans 4:25, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 2:24).
7. Dead to old life - alive to God:
 - a) Crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20)
 - b) Dead with Christ (Romans 6:8, Colossians 3:3, 1 Peter 2:24)
 - c) Buried with him (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12)
 - d) Raised with Christ (Romans 6:4, Colossians 3:1).
8. Free from the law:
 - a) Dead (Romans 7:4)
 - b) Delivered (Romans 6:14, 7:6, 2 Corinthians 3:11, Galatians 3:25)
9. Regenerated (John 13:10, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:5)
 - a) Born again (John 3:7, 1 Peter 1:23)
 - b) Children of God (Galatians 3:26)
 - c) Sons of God (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18, 1 John 3:2)
 - d) A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 2:10).
10. Adopted (Romans 8:15, 8:23 (future) Ephesians 1:5).
11. Acceptable to God (Ephesians 1:6, 1 Peter 2:5)
 - a) Made righteous (Romans 3:22, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9)
 - b) Sanctified positionally (1 Corinthians 1:30, 6:11)
 - c) Perfected forever (Hebrews 10:14)
 - d) Made meet (qualified) (Colossians 1:12).
12. Justified (declared righteous) (Romans 3:24, 5:1, 5:9, 8:30, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:7).
13. Forgiven all trespasses (Ephesians 1:7, 4:32, Colossians 1:14, 2:13, 3:13).
14. Made nigh (Heavenly citizenship based on reconciliation) (Luke 10:20, Ephesians 2:13, 19).
15. Delivered from the kingdom of Satan (Colossians 1:13, 2:15).
16. Transferred into God's kingdom (Colossians 1:13).
17. On a secure foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11, 10:4, Ephesians 2:20).
18. A gift from God the Father to Christ (John 10:29, 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24).
19. Delivered from the power of the sin nature (Romans 2:29, Colossians 2:11).
20. Appointed priests unto God:
 - a) Holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5)
 - b) Royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6).
21. Under the care of God as a chosen generation and a peculiar people (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9).

22. Given access to God (Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 4:14, 16, 10:19, 20).
23. Within the "much more" care of God (Romans 5:9, 10)
- a) Objects of His love (Ephesians 2:4, 5:2)
 - b) Objects of His grace:
 - i) For salvation (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
 - ii) For keeping (1 Peter 1:5)
 - iii) For service (John 17:18)
 - iv) For instruction (Titus 2:12)
 - c) Objects of His power (Ephesians 1:19, Philippians 2:13)
 - d) Objects of His faithfulness (Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 13:5,6)
 - e) Objects of His peace (John 14:27)
 - f) Objects of His consolation (2 Thessalonians 2:16)
 - g) Objects of His intercession (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25).
24. God's inheritance (Possession) (Ephesians 1:18).
25. Beneficiaries of an inheritance as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17, Ephesians 1:14 Colossians 3:24, Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:4).
26. A new position (Ephesians 2:6)
- a) Partners with Christ in life (Colossians 3:4)
 - b) Partners with Christ in service (1 Corinthians 1:9)
 - c) Workers together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 6:1)
 - d) Ministers of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:6)
 - e) Ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)
 - f) Living epistles (2 Corinthians 3:3)
 - g) Ministers of God (2 Corinthians 6:4).
27. Recipients of eternal life (John 3:15, 10:28, 20:31, 1 John 5:11, 12).
28. Members of the family and household of God (Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 2:19).
29. Light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:4).
30. United to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
- a) In God (1 Thessalonians 1:1) of "God in you" (Ephesians 4:6)
 - b) In Christ (John 14:20 of "Christ in you" Colossians 1:27)
 - i) A member in His body (1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - ii) A branch in the vine (John 15:5)
 - iii) A stone in the building (Ephesians 2:21, 22, 1 Peter 2:5)
 - iv) A sheep in the flock (John 10:27-29)
 - v) A part of His bride (Ephesians 5:25)

- vi) A priest of the kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9)
- vii) A saint of the "new species" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

c) In the Spirit (Romans 8:9) of "the Spirit in you".

31. Recipients of the ministries of the Holy Spirit:

- a) Born of the Spirit (John 3:6)
- b) Baptized with the Spirit (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- c) Indwelt by the Spirit (John 7:39, Romans 5:5, 8:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, Galatians 4:6, 1 John 3:24)
- d) Sealed by the Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 4:30)
- e) Given spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11, 27-31, 13:1, 2).

32. Glorified (Romans 8:30).

33. Complete in Him (Colossians 2:10).

34. Possessors of every spiritual blessing provided in eternity past (Ephesians 1:3).

PARAPHRASE

“Reinforcing these reasons, it is also laid out clearly in the Scriptures, ‘behold I lay the foundation in Zion, the chief cornerstone, chosen, and honoured above all, and the ones believing on him will at no point ever be put to shame’. To you who are the believing ones, he is the honoured one forever, but to those who examine him and reject him, he is as the prophet said, ‘the stone which the builders (foolishly) rejected, which has (under God) become the key to the whole building.’ He is to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock that trips up the unwary.’ for they stumble over the word, but all this was foreseen by the Father and is within his plan. But you are, not like them, you are a chosen out people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God’s possession, in order that you might show forth the virtue of him who called you out of the darkness into his marvellous light. We were not a group in the past, but we are now the people of God, we were without mercy, but now we have God’s mercy and love forever.”

VERSES 11 - 17

“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 evil doers, 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 as unto governors, as 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 you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 as free, and not using your freedom as a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all men! Love the brotherhood! Fear God, honour the King!”

KEY WORDS

Beloved	agapetoi	beloved ones; reminding us that we are the recipients of God’s love.
Beseech	parakaleo	present active indicative, I keep on exhorting, be encouraging, pleading urging with you.
Strangers	paroikos	of another state, an alien in a land that you are not a citizen of.
Sojourners	parepidemos	a visitor making a brief stay in a place. (Kelly, in Reinecker, 1980, p 406)
Abstain	apecho	present, middle, infinitive of the verb, to pull away, hold oneself away from.
Fleshly lusts	sarkikos+epithumia	strong desires which are from the body alone, selfish acts.
War	strateuomai	present, middle, indicative, to keep on conducting a long campaign.
Soul	psyche	soul, higher side of man compared to the flesh.
Having	echo	present, active participle, that they might keep on having/holding.
Conversation	anastrophe	manner of life, behaviour pattern.
Honest	kalos	beauty, nobility, character with integrity.
Speak	katalaleo	present active indicative, keep on speaking out against.

Evildoers Shall behold	kakpoios epopteuo	evil doer, in the sense that they are worthy of court and the judge. present, active, participle, of the verb to look upon, observe carefully, as a spectator.
Glorify Visitation	doxazo episkope	aorist, active, subjunctive, to give glory to, to hold in high opinion. a way of saying the day of judgement, when God returns "visits" the earth to finalise judgement.
Submit	hupotasso	aorist, passive, imperative, a command, at every point in life, to place yourself under (God's) authority, to respond to his will, not your lusts.
Ordinance Supreme Sent	ktisis huperecho peupo	creations of men, institutions made by men, rather than by God. present, active, participle, meaning the one sent out above all others. present passive participle of the verb to send.
Vengeance Praise	ekdikesis epainos	legal punishment, avenging a wrong. commendation rather than a legal judgement.
Do Well Silence	agathopoieo phimoo	present, active, participle, of keeping on going good, right deeds. present, active, infinitive, to muzzle, to put to silence, to silence, to gag.
Ignorance Foolish	agnosia aphron	not knowing, not understanding. senseless, without reason to be.
Free Cloak	eleutheros epikalumma	living as freed men; in the ancient world to live fully and enjoy it. a garment that covers over everything.
Maliciousness Servants Honour	kakia doulos timaos	evil with malice. the bond slave, without any hope of freedom from service. aorist, active imperative, at every point where it is appropriate, give honour and respect to the rulers.
Love Fear	agapao phobeo	present, active imperative, keep on showing, at all times, loving care. present, middle imperative, make yourself fear filled, with awesomeness towards the one who has called you.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verse 11. Notice Peter's address to the believers in verse 11. "Dearly beloved", and so we are! Do you praise God for this? You are most dearly beloved of God. We must remember our position, and this is Peter's entreaty now. Peter now reminds us, by the use of the other two words he has previously used, of our position here on earth. We are strangers and pilgrims; we are here on a temporary basis, citizens of another country, with a job to do and then we are to move on back to where we belong. Heaven is our home, and Peter wants to keep that before the believers.

He now begins a series of commands to be obeyed by us all, if we would truly serve the Lord as his ambassadors. "Every command carries a promise at its heart. It is even possible to abstain from fleshly lusts, because God is able to keep." (Meyer, 1953, p 77).

Let us look at each command in order, for they are all to be taken seriously. We are a new creation, but we still have the Old Sin Nature, and its lusts **must be fought** daily. "Salvation is deliverance from the power of the lower nature, not from its presence. Not until we are taken into glory and changed to be like him (1 John 3:2) will we be set free in an absolute sense from the temptation of sin. In the meantime we are to turn a deaf ear to the demands and desires of our lower nature." (Mounce, 1982, p 30).

1. Abstain from fleshly lusts. These desires, 'war against the soul', and this is how temptations may be known. Whatever feels like a war within, is an indication of the battling Old Sin nature, and we must resist temptation, not explain it away. We will desire the best in Christ, but the old nature desires to satisfy its immediate lusts for pleasure without thought of what is right and correct for ambassadors of Christ. Lust is self focused; we are to be service focused, and anything that gets in the way of serving the Lord is sin! Each of us has a slightly different sin nature, with different temptations having different strengths for each of us. Whatever your weakness you are to identify it and resist its selfish desires.
2. Keep on having behaviour that is honourable and noble, with integrity towards all unbelievers. We cannot witness by word to those who despise us because of our bad life witness! No hypocrisy, Peter urges. Ensure we are worthy of a hearing before the lost.

Verse 12.

3. Keep on doing good, and noble works and so silence their criticism. Believers were called, "evildoers" by the pagan Romans amongst whom they lived. This was because they had forsaken the old gods. Peter says that such an accusation can only be resisted by works that speak of nobility, for this will confuse the critics and make it hard for them to condemn good people. Only by being worthy of a hearing can we contribute to the process of evangelisation of the lost.

Verse 13.

4. At every point in life try to obey the laws of the land. A criminal cannot witness of Christ, unless transformed first, for the unbeliever looks at them and sees a person who is evil!

Verse 14.

5. Be respectful to all rulers and leaders within the community in which you find yourself. If the custom is to stand for the playing of the national anthem, we should stand. We must show respect and be the best citizens, for only then do we have a real witness. We are to do all this, for the Lord's sake. Keep on doing good things, so that you might silence all criticism of the church.
6. Live as free men, under the spiritual laws of freedom, and so show to all the great blessing that there are for the believer, and the joy of the believers life style.
7. Give appropriate honour and respect to all people.
8. Keep on showing caring love to all your fellow believers.
9. Be in awesome respect of the power and majesty of the living God.
10. Give all respect to the chief ruler of your land.

These "ten words" are in no way the only commandments for believers (there are a further twenty plus in each of the following chapters, **Ephesians 6, Philippians 4, Colossians 3:12 - 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5**) but they are the ones Peter wants the believers of his day to be careful to follow as the storm clouds of persecution gather over the church. These are not to be seen as a return to legalism, rather as protocols, or "guidelines for survival", as they face the darkness to come.

In verse twelve Peter's advice recalls the Old Testament saint Daniel, who kept such a blameless life that his enemies had to go to extreme lengths to find fault with him, **Daniel 6:4-5**, just so is it to be with us. Reike refers to this verse as one which expresses a, "remarkable theory of missions". He goes on, "The gospel will be promulgated to the extent that the believers everywhere show such extraordinary patience, loyalty, in spite of the ill will of the non-Christian, that every observer will be astonished and converted." (Reike, 1964, page 94).

How would world evangelism go if we all did that as believers? I venture to suggest the world would be confronted overnight! What holds back the progress of many churches' evangelical effort? Only our individual and corporate disobedience to the words in this chapter of Peter and the others above! The "holy example of the primitive church" (Meyer, 1953, p 85), was the power that fuelled evangelism. The pagans were impressed by their lives and by the way they died, and that is the standard that Peter calls us to every day of our sojourn here.

Verse thirteen reminds us that we are to have one motive for our obedience, that is, "for the Lord's sake". We are to be obedient for it is the Lord's will and that settles the matter. **Romans 13:1-7**, is a parallel passage to this one, and both men were to pay the ultimate price for their faith under Roman law, but both did so with dignity, not abusing those who executed them. They, in this, followed the example of their Lord. There is no way around this principle, "loyal submission to civil rulers is plainly God's will". (Stibbs, 1959, p109).

While some find this a "difficult verse" (Kelly, 1969, p 108), that is only because they live in societies where interference in the affairs of the state by churches is common. We must, this writer believes, be careful to avoid all involvement in politics of any sort, and avoid any comment on politicians that might distract the unbeliever from the gospel message. We are here to share the gospel and nothing must come between that mission and the unbeliever. Be very sure if you are called to politics – it is a dirty business.

Verse sixteen reminds us of the Christian laws (Law of Liberty, Law of Love, Law of Supreme Sacrifice), and the reason for them. We are free, but that freedom is freedom to serve the living God. "Christians are free men, enjoying a freedom their neighbours in the world around them cannot know, but what ensures this freedom is precisely the fact that they are servants of God". (Kelly, 1969, p 111).

Remember again, Nero ruled at this time, and Peter is calling for respect for such a man! It does not matter how anti-morality, anti-marriage, anti-family and anti-God a ruler is, they are to be given honour and respect. "If from time to time we are unable to applaud the moral character, or approve the decisions of a national leader, we should still honour the office he holds". (Mounce, 1982, p 34).

“Respect or honour, are close synonyms. Deference does not necessarily connote acquiescence, agreement, or passivity, though it does rule out retaliation. Senior rightly observes, ‘1 Peter is encouraging neither suffering for sufferings sake nor an opium like religious passivity’. (Senior 1982, p 433.) Deference refers to the proper attitude that results in behaviour characterised by respect.” (Slaughter, 1995, pp 77, 78).

Only God is to be feared, with awesome respect. “God is to be feared, because he is the holy one, our creator and judge; the civil power is on a different plane, and while it calls for our loyal respect, this is defined by the more general non-religious term honour.” (Kelly, 1969, p 113).

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

Believer, we are to celebrate our status as “beloved ones”, “Agapetoi, while primarily denoting the writers love for his correspondents, also evokes the thought of the love which God has for them and the mutual charity which should characterise the Christian community.” (Kelly, 1969, p 103).

We are to praise God for this status of beloved ones, but then our worship is to overflow into practical action in deeds of care and love towards our brethren.

Then we are reminded of Peter’s two words to describe our position in relationship to the world itself, and our place within our own nation. “The first word paroikoi, describes those who have no rights or legal status in the place, where they are merely sojourners. The second word parepidemioi, emphasises that they are temporary residents only.” (Stibbs, 1959, p 107). How are we doing on this front? Do we live as strangers, or have we become too comfortable in our temporary place of residence?

Do not tire of doing well! This is a constant request from the apostolic writers. “Doing well shall not fail of it’s reward. Men will testify as of Isaac of old, ‘we saw plainly that the Lord was with thee’, and we said, ‘let there now be an oath betwixt us.” Genesis 26:28, (Lumby, 1893, p 87).

Do an audit of the last week believer. Have you spiritually done well? Have you done things that would be called kind, loving, thoughtful, or considerate? If not, why not? It is these fruits of the Holy Spirit by which we are to be known in the world, and which open the door to the gospel.

We are to be obedient to power in the state, be it moral or immoral; this is important to note, for as noted above, Nero was Emperor when these verses were written! The morality of the politician is irrelevant, we are still under this command to obey for the Lord’s sake. There is another passage to put alongside this and Romans 13, and that is Acts 5:27-42. With this passage alongside the other two we have a “double order”.

1. Obey all existing authorities and respect all in power for the Lord’s sake.
2. In spiritual matters respectfully obey God rather than men, and take whatever punishment is given to you for your obedience to the Lord. Consequences flowing from obedience to the Lord were to be taken without complaint or resentment, rather in the apostolic manner, to be taken with thanksgiving. Acts 5:40-42, 16:22-25.

[b] PASTORAL

Beware of political entanglement pastors! Many a ministry has been ruined because it tied itself in to a politician who promised godly policies, and then in immorality dragged down their supporter’s reputations. We are not here to change society(clean up the fish pond), but to save individuals (fishers for men and women); to snatch out of the fire those we can. **Jude 23**.

“God does not deal with society as a whole, but with individuals one by one, not with the abuses, but with the spirit out of which they arise; not with politics, but with principles. You will best save the world by saving the individuals who go to make it up.” (Meyer, 1953, p 82).

No distractions from the task at hand! As a pastor we are responsible for the training of the saints that they might do the job the Lord has called them to. Our people must hear God’s policy, not ours, nor the policy of some local politician who has enrolled our support to clean up the town! Every town and city needs cleaning up, but that is not the job, we are called to preach the word of the living God, and tell all who will hear the good news of salvation.

As pastors we are to be “blameless”, Titus 1:7, 1 Timothy 3. As the pressure comes upon the church we are to be even more careful of our reputation before the world. We are to be known as Daniel was. If someone is wanting to charge us with evil, they must be forced to lie about us to do it.

CONCLUSION

Holiness before the world and unto the Lord!

DOCTRINES

OLD SIN NATURE [See page 51-53 above]

LAWS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE LAW WHICH WE ARE NOT UNDER - THE MOSAIC LAW

Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Mosaic Law (Matthew 5:17). If the Holy Spirit has control over us we automatically fulfill the righteousness of the Law.

2. THE LAW OF LIBERTY

This law is directed towards oneself. Biblically speaking you have the right to do certain things that will not cause you personally to fail the Lord in any way (1 Corinthians 8:8).

3. THE LAW OF LOVE

This law takes other believers into consideration. In effect this law says that because of your love for the weaker brethren and in order not to offend or upset them you refrain from doing certain things which you have the liberty to do. You refrain not because they are wrong in themselves but rather you wish to help other believers rather than hinder them (1 Corinthians 8:9).

4. THE LAW OF EXPEDIENCY

This law concerns the unbeliever. It is expedient that your life tells the world of Christ. The unbeliever has set up standards of conduct for the Christian. Therefore you refrain from or do certain legitimate things - not because they are wrong but because they may offend an unbeliever and prevent him from seeing the real issue that CHRIST DIED FOR HIS SINS (1 Corinthians 9, 20-23).

5. THE LAW OF SUPREME SACRIFICE

This law is directed towards God. It involves the believer forsaking a completely legitimate function in life in order to more perfectly serve the Lord. Missionaries often function under this law when they live in primitive conditions on the mission field. This law can also operate under Australian conditions (Matthew 3:1-6).

6. PRINCIPLE:

As Christians we have liberty, but total freedom for ourselves may enslave others. We have to use our liberty in such a responsible manner that it does not infringe on the liberty of others. As Christians we must act responsibly (Ephesians 5:15).

WORKS: DIVINE GOOD AND HUMAN GOOD

1. Anything we can do in our own strength (human good) is unacceptable to God (Isaiah 64:6, Romans 8:8).
2. Only those things we do in the power of the Holy Spirit (divine good) are acceptable to God, since it is God Himself who produces the work in us (Ephesians 2:10).
3. When a believer produces human good he imitates an unbeliever (Galatians 5:19-21, 1 John 2:11, 3:4).
4. When a believer produces divine good he imitates Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2).
5. Human good is:
 - a) Identified as dead works (Hebrews 6:1)
 - b) Cannot save mankind (Titus 3:5)
 - c) Is condemned by God (1 Corinthians 3:11-16; Ecclesiastes 12:14)
 - d) Is the basis of indictment at the Last Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15)

- e) Has no place in the plan of God (2 Timothy 1:9)
 - f) Is destroyed at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).
6. Divine good is the basis of rewards (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).
7. God is satisfied with His own work in four general areas:
- a) **IN SALVATION**
God approves of what God has done in the form of Jesus Christ. God the Father is propitiated by the work of God the Son on the cross. To be saved is to believe or trust on God the Son (Acts 16:31). Belief has no human merit, all the merit is in the work of Jesus Christ. God does not approve of human good. (Isaiah 64:6).
 - b) **IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**
God approves of the works, done under the filling of the Holy Spirit. Spirituality depends on who and what the Spirit is. The way to the filling of the Holy Spirit is confession of sins (1 John 1:9). Confession has no human merit. The Holy Spirit also provides at least one spiritual gift to each believer at salvation (1 Corinthians 12:8-11).
 - c) **IN THE WORD OF GOD**
The word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21). It is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). The Holy Spirit makes the Word of God effective in our lives.
 - d) **IN ETERNITY**
In eternity human works are removed (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). God provides us with a new body (1 Corinthians 15:51-3). God provides us with an incorruptible inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-5). God provides everything for our eternal future (1 Thessalonians 4:17-18). God approves of His provision.

NATIONS

- 1. God has set the geographical and historical boundaries for nations (Acts 17:26, Genesis 10:25; Deuteronomy 32:8).
- 2. All nations and races are descended from Noah's three sons Ham, Shem and Japheth (Genesis 9:19).
- 3. The nations were dispersed after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:9).
- 4. Internationalism and one-worldism is therefore against the will of God (cf. Genesis 11:4,9). Satan is attempting to unite the world as a counterfeit to the Millennium, when Christ will reign as King.
- 5. Nations are established by God to protect the freedoms and rights of people so that they may serve God peacefully (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
- 6. The importance of free will - a government should not force people to accept or reject Christianity.
- 7. Freedoms in a nation are to be protected:
 - a) Externally by military forces
 - b) Internally by police forces and courts (Romans 13:4). Capital punishment is an integral part of law enforcement (Genesis 9:6).
- 8. The effectiveness of believers within a nation determines its blessing or cursing (Deuteronomy 11:26-28, Genesis 18:17-33, Matthew 5:13).
- 9. When nations become evil, God must destroy them. Examples include:
 - a) Amorites (Genesis 15:16, Deuteronomy 7:2)
 - b) Chaldea (Daniel 5).
- 10. Jews were forbidden to intermarry with other nations, so that the Jewish religion would not be defiled by heathen practices (Deuteronomy 7:1-3, Ezra 10:2,14)
 - a) Solomon's union with foreign women was evil (Nehemiah 13:23-27)
 - b) Abraham forbade Isaac to marry outside his people (Genesis 28:1)

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- c) Esau's marriage to Hittites brought grief (Genesis 26:34,35)
- d) Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian caused trouble (Numbers 12:1).

11. The threefold split of humanity appears in the book of Acts as examples of salvation:

- a) An Ethiopian (Hamitic) is saved in (Acts 10:1-48)
- b) Saul (Semitic) is saved in (Acts 9:1-16)
- c) Cornelius (Japhetic) is saved in (Acts 10:1-48)

AUTHORITY: BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

DEFINITION: Legal power delegated by God under the Laws of Divine Establishment for the protection of the free will (volition) of others. This authority exists in both the temporal and spiritual realms. There is authority within Marriage, the Family, and the State, and the Church.

In each area legitimate authority will always protect individuals from evil and ensure their freedom to serve God and fulfil the Lord's will for them is maintained.

STATE: BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF THE STATE

DEFINITION: The nation state is established by God in history to protect the freedom and lives of people to ensure they have a stable life within which they are free to serve Him, grow spiritually, evangelise others and teach His Word. Nations that encourage these things prosper in history, and nations that resist these things disappear from history.

GOVERNMENT: NATIONAL

1. God has delegated authority to mankind to judge evil.
2. In Genesis, the rule of law was by God (Genesis 4:7). Here Cain murdered Abel. God declared the punishment upon Cain.
3. After the Flood, God delegated responsibility for judgment to human governments. This expressly includes the command to execute capital punishment for murder, so that evil can be removed from the earth (Genesis 9:4-6). This has not changed throughout the Old Testament or the Church Age (Romans 13:4-6).
4. During the Millennium, Christ Himself will be King and Judge on earth.
5. Two limitations are put on government:
 - a) The government shall be national with linguistic, geographical and racial differences.
 - i) God had to disperse the human race after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9).
 - ii) Satan attempts to unite the world during the Tribulation (Revelation 13:16-18, 19:19-21).
 - iii) Only the Lord Jesus Christ can truly rule the world as King (Revelation 20:1-6).
 - b) They must make laws consistent with the Word of God. (Romans 13:1-7) God will ultimately judge all unrighteousness.
6. Three classic objections are raised to the question of capital punishment:
 - a) Capital punishment does not deter crime - Two fallacies :-
 - i) Capital punishment was never created to deter crime, but it is the retributive justice of God against evil.

ii) Also if it were properly administered it would deter. In the Old Testament capital punishment was never given unless there had been two eyewitnesses to the crime and was only the punishment for certain crimes. Conviction was not possible through circumstantial evidence as it had to be by direct witness. After the trial the executioners were the witnesses. The execution was public and the body had to be displayed until sundown indicating the wrath of God on guilty man.

b) The retributive justice theory which states that a society which has capital punishment is exacting its vengeance on the guilty. Two fallacies:-

i) Who is the one who owes the debt? There are three parties involved, the criminal, the victim and the State. If the criminal kills the victim he has broken the law of the State and therefore the crime is against the State, not the victim. Capital punishment therefore comes out of God's vengeance.

ii) Retributive justice would have a redemptive element if it were carried out correctly as it was in Israel.

c) It cannot be justly administered as the poor cannot engage as good a lawyer as the rich and are therefore more likely to get convicted. God knew that capital punishment could not be justly administered when He set it up, Jesus Christ being a prime example.

7. Although God has delegated the authority, He has not defined the form of government (e.g. monarchy, democracy).

8. Government is based on the fair balance between law and power. (Deuteronomy 16:18 -18:22) Power is exercised internally by police and externally by the military.

9. Law comes from one of four sources:

- a) verbally from God as to the nation Israel (theocracy)
- b) those nations based on Christian principles draw their law from the Bible
- c) there are nations who base their law on what the people demand (democracy)
- d) the law can be based on what an individual desires such as a dictator.

10. Governments should:

- a) safeguard the rights and freedoms of the individual (Deuteronomy 22:1-3)
- b) defend marriage and the family, including guarding against adultery and rape (Deuteronomy 24:5)
- c) encourage patriotism (Deuteronomy 19:13).

11. Christians should pray for governments (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

12. Rebellion is never condoned. However, Christians do have the right to passively disobey laws where they are obviously contradictory to the Word of God (Acts 5:29).

OBEDIENCE

1. Obedience is better than offerings (1 Samuel 15:22; Proverbs 21:3; 28:9). If we are not in God's will, any "worship" we offer is unacceptable.

2. Obedience is something you have to learn. The basic training in obedience has to start in childhood. As it says in (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) "Honour your father and your mother." (Proverbs 4:3,4; 22:6; 29:15-17; Hebrews 5:8)

3. Teaching your child obedience is an act of love (Proverbs 3:12; 19:18; 23:13-14).

4. We have to obey those who are in authority over us (Exodus 20:12; 22:28; Leviticus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:16; Romans 13:1-5; Ephesians 6:1-5; Colossians 3:18-22; Titus 3:1).

5. Those in authority have been put in that position by God (Romans 13:1).

6. Obedience to those in authority is obedience to God (Proverbs 24:21; Ephesians 6:7; Colossians 3:23-24; Romans 13:5).

7. Disobedience to those in authority is disobedience to God (Romans 1:30; 13:2).

8. But when we are ordered to do something that is against God's Will we have to disobey (Acts 4:19; 5:40-42).

9. The fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) is the only commandment with a promise (Proverbs 10:17; Ephesians 6:1-3). Social life in a society is only possible when the people in it have learned to obey.

10. If this commandment is ignored, if the authority of the family is denied or not exercised, society will quickly slide into anarchy (Isaiah 3:12; Proverbs 29:21; 30:21-23; Romans 1:30).

11. Jesus Christ was perfect in His obedience (Luke 2:51; Philippians 2:8). Examples of the Lord's perfect obedience to the Father's will:

a) The Lord's temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), where the Lord resisted the temptation in His humanity to use His divine power outside the Father's will (Philippians 2:5-8, Hebrews 10:7)

b) In the Garden of Gethsemane the Lord resisted all temptation to the contrary but set His face firmly to go through with the horror of the cross (Matthew 26:38-46, Mark 14:34-42, Luke 22:41-44)

c) During the provocations of the trials the Lord stood firm and resolute. Although He had the power to resist arrest, as shown briefly in (John 18:6), He voluntarily went with the troops, even chiding Peter for his sword play (Luke 22:49-51). Although abused (Matthew 26:67-68), struck (John 18:22), scourged (Matthew 27:26), mocked and beaten (Matthew 27:27-31), and finally crucified the Lord calmly accepted this all as part of the Father's Plan, resisting any temptation to rebel at the injustice, cruelty and callousness of those who perpetrated this evil. Rather He prayed for them, acknowledging to Pilate that all this was part of His role as Saviour (Luke 23:34, John 18:37)

d) When miracles were demanded by Herod Antipas (Luke 23:8-11) the Lord resisted any temptation to instantly judge that evil man and his court but saying nothing set His face to the cross on which He would bear even the sins of Herod Antipas (1John 2:2)

e) When He stumbled on the road to the cross He did not call on divine strength but Simon of Cyrene had to be pressed into service to carry the cross (Matthew 27:32, Luke 23:26)

f) When reviled by the crowds as He hung on the cross, taunted to do things which He could have done, He resisted all temptation to step down from the cross but stayed there to bear the sins of all (Matthew 27:39-44, Mark 15:29-32, Luke 23:35-39).

PARAPHRASE

“Dearly beloved ones, I keep on urging you, pleading with you, as citizens of heaven in a strange place, as only temporary resident here,(to live accordingly). Keep on holding yourself away, or back from any self centred pleasures(that would make the Lord ashamed of your actions). Behave in all ways, at all times, with honour and integrity in front of unbelievers. Some speak now against you as criminals, worthy of jail, but by your good works let them be silenced, so that(they might respond to the gospel and so then) they might praise God on the day of his return. At every point in daily life place yourself under the law, and in all you do respect the authority of the ruling powers, be they, empire wide, national, or local. This is the Lord's will and you obey this command for his sake, for it is his will that rulers punish evil men, (and so establish law and order, within which we can give the gospel out). Put to silence those ignorant and foolish people who attack us by your good deeds. Live in Christian freedom, but do not use this doctrine as a cloak for any malice filled activity, but live as the servants of the King of Kings. Give honour and respect to all people. Practically show loving care for all the brethren. Live in awesome fear of God. Honour and respect the ruler of the state.”

VERSES 18 - 25

“**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 thank worthy, for if a man for conscience towards 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 ye suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this 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’ (Isaiah 53 : 9 LXX), 23 who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judges righteously: 24 who his own self bore 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’ (Isaiah 53 : 4-6), but are now returned to the shepherd and bishop of your souls. ”**

KEY WORDS

Servants oiketes household slaves, often educated and given responsibility.

Subject	hupotasso	present middle participle, keep on placing yourself under authority, respond to all orders respectfully.
Masters	despotes	one with absolute authority.
Good	agathos	good and noble.
Gentle	epieikeia	gentle, fair and mild in their dealings. "Sweet reasonableness. The character of a man who is content to take less than his due. (Mastermann, 1912, p 112)
Froward	skolios	bent, crooked, harsh, not straight in their dealings, unpredictable.
Thank worthy	charis	admirable, enhancing the way you will be seen by others.
Conscience	suneidesis	conscience knowing what is wrong and right.
Endures	hupophero	present active indicative, keep on enduring, as you are, like an athlete working with endurance and grit pushing the weights in the gym.
Grief	lupe	pain and sorrow of deep grief.
Suffering	pascho	present active participle of the verb to suffer with endurance.
Wrongfully	adikos	without justice, unjustly.
Glory	kleos	reputation, prestige, glory, credit.
Buffeted	kolaphizo	present passive participle of the verb to be struck with a fist, to be beaten up. Used of the Lord in Matt 26:67, Mark 14:65).
Faults	hamartia	sins, faults, wrong doing.
Patiently	hupomeno	future active indicative, of the verb, to endure patiently testing times.
Acceptable	charis	admirable, as above
Called	kaleo	aorist, passive indicative, of the verb to be called to a task, we receive the call.
Suffered	pascho	aorist active indicative, Christ suffered with endurance to the end.
Example	hupogrammos	a model, line drawing, example, sketch, all so that a person might follow.
Steps	ichnos	in his footprints.
Guile	dolos	guile, malice, deceit, fraud, craftiness, pretending to be someone you are not.
Reviled	loidoreo	present passive participle of the verb to heap abuse on a person, to use vile and abusive language.
Reviled not again		did not return the abusive language in kind to the other person.
Committed	paradidomi	imperfect active indicative, delivered himself over.
Bore	anaphero	aorist active indicative, of the verb to bear up, or bear / take away, our sins.
Being dead	apoginomai	aorist middle participle, to get away from, to depart, to die.
Stripes	molops	wound caused by blows.
Healed	iaomai	aorist passive indicative, to receive healing, restored to health mind/body.
Going astray	planao	present middle participle of the word to wander away, go astray from a path.
Returned	epistrepho	aorist passive indicative of the verb to return to the right place.
Bishop	episkopos	guardian and overseer.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Peter begins a section that has parallels in Paul's writings in **Ephesians 6:5-9, Philemon, and Colossians 4:1-6**. These three passages together producing a glimpse into the early churches view of labour relations, and how both workers and managers should conduct themselves. The context, once again, is eternity, and the true role of the believer in time; namely, that we are ambassadors of the court of heaven, and have a role of witnessing to the Lord whatever our human job, which, whatever status is has or form it takes, must not get in the way of our witness.

Verse 18. Christianity was a religion of the people, with a significant following amongst the lower social classes, although we should not go too far on this point, for many wealthy people were saved and entered the church, and the local church became the only place in pagan society where all social groups mixed together. **John 7:48, Mark 12:37, 1 Corinthians 1:26, cf, Acts 13:7,12, 16:14-15, 17:34, Philippians 4:22, James 1:9 -11, 2:5-7**. There is an ambivalence towards wealth in the early church, for the wealthy as a whole were their oppressors, but there were many from the slave owning classes as members. Philemon being one notable example.

Unlike Paul, Peter does not address any words to Christian masters, a fact that several have commented on (Moffatt, 1963, p 125, Cranfield, 1958, p 63). Why is this? We can only speculate, for by the date of this letter Paul's letters were already well known. It is not that Peter felt it unlikely that the witness of the slaves would

win their masters, for he is aware of all witness as playing a part in evangelism (the principles below make it clear he was thinking about witness), it is more that he is concentrating on the issues faced by his churches, for, as he saw it, there were principles of faith being ignored.

Verses 19ff. Let us examine these principles that Peter identifies apply to the slaves of the Roman Empire.

1. Be in subjection - place yourselves under the authority of the boss/owner.
2. Be respectful with awesomeness towards them, so there is no hint of disrespect.
3. Have this attitude towards those who are good and those who are "two faced" and untrustworthy. Believers are to trust God in this matter.
4. This behaviour is worthy of honour, and enhances your reputation before the world.
5. Knowing what is unjust before God, and enduring it for the Lord's sake, brings glory and the "well done" of God.
6. Enduring wrongful pain and sorrow, and taking it to the Lord, is the "school of maturity", where we can learn more of the Lord and his suffering than in any other place in this life.
7. Do not suffer for your own wrongdoing! There is no glory in that.
8. Imitate the character of Christ; see any unjust suffering that comes your way as an opportunity to learn more of him, and become more like him as you place yourself totally in the Father's hands.

"These verses contain the fullest elaboration of the example of the Lord Jesus Christ for believers. The purpose of our call is to follow his steps." (Hiebert, 1982, pp 32, 33). This is not an easy thing, nor a path that is without pain. To follow the Lord may involve losing all things that we previously held dear.

In days when some preachers are speaking of the so called, "prosperity gospel", these words are a clarion call back to biblical truth. Of all those who followed the Lord in the first century, there are not many who ended their lives as wealthy men or women. Indeed, their view was that to die wealthy was to have lived ungodly, for they reasoned that the wealth the Lord had given was given to be used for the necessities of life, then to help his people, and to do his work.

"Submissive acceptance of treatment that is patently unfair is a fine and Christian thing precisely because the Lord himself behaved in that way and the Christian vocation is to imitate him". (Kelly, 1969, p 118).

Hiebert notes, regarding verse 21. "The Lord is our example, denoting a model to be copied by the novice. The example was not left merely to be admired, but to be followed line by line, feature by feature. . . The command to follow denotes a close and diligent following, the preposition (epi) takes it's force as marking direction. They must follow upon that line that his footsteps marked out." (Hiebert, 1982, p 34). The standard for Christian behaviour is not any-one other than the Lord Jesus Christ. All falling short of his standard of behaviour is sin!

This section is vital for our understanding of the early church's attitude towards Messianic prophecy. Peter quotes freely from Isaiah 53 in this passage, verses 22 - 25, being an expanded and re-arranged version of **Isaiah 53** in the order of verses 9, 7, 4, 5, 11, 12, then 6. Re-read Isaiah before you read this section and see how clearly Peter believes this has been fulfilled in the person and work of the Lord on the Cross.

The Lord resisted sin and would not give way to trickery, or reviling (**verse 22**); what the people saw, was what they got from the Lord, and so it should be with us. The only way to follow the Lord, Peter underlines in this verse, is to live a life characterised by absence of sin, guile, and reviling! If you follow him in truth, the truth will be, that you live a life which characterises the fruit of the Lord Spirit rather than these fruits of the Old Sin Nature. Control of the tongue is a major indicator of spiritual maturity. **James 3:2, Matthew 12:34-35**. When others unjustly verbally attack us, it is then that our true character emerges; for only then do we see if we follow Jesus under pressure or drop too easily into, "getting even", types of behaviours. Such a mind set is slavery to sin, and the power of that slavery is what the Lord came to break to pieces.

Verse 24 directly reminds us of the efficacious sacrifice of the Lord on the cross for ours sins. The price for sin has been paid perfectly. Through his work we are free from sin and able, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to live lives that follow the Lord's example of righteousness. If we do not live this way, it is only because we have failed to take advantage of the riches we have in Christ Jesus. His death was "not that of a heroic martyr dying for a rejected cause, it was redemptive and substitutionary in nature." (Hiebert, 1982, p 40)

To serve fallen people, we must remember we will be attacked by them, for they are "fallen" and until the Holy Spirit's quickening work begins in their lives they have nothing within them to even understand where we are coming from. Their hatred will be expressed in words and deeds, but that is not to be the thing that occupies our minds, any more than the insults of the crowd worried our Lord. He was here to save, and focused his mind on the work required to achieve that.

We are here to give the message of salvation, and must, through any undeserved suffering, or verbal attack, that comes not lose our way either. We are to follow his example of fortitude and focus, and not be side-tracked by attacks upon us.

Read through **Mark 13:13, Luke 21:17, John 15:18-25, Romans 1:26-32**, then go back and read **verses 16, 17**, for even knowing the nature of man, God provided for them all salvation, and we are to share the Gospel with them. In the hatred of men for us, we share in the sufferings of Christ, understanding a little more of the love of God for his world. **Romans 8:16-18, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Philippians 3:10, James 5:10, 1 Peter 4:13**.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

"It is the Christian's new awareness of God and of what is pleasing to Him, and his sense of his calling in Christ that should inspire and enable him to do this, even when it is difficult and painful to stick to it in practice because of harsh masters and unjust treatment." (Stibbs, 1959, p 113).

"Peter encourages uncomplaining persistence in submissive loyalty even when it involves the painful endurance of unjust treatment. . . . It is the patient uncomplaining submission to suffering when one has done well that is acceptable with God." (Stibbs, 1959, p 114).

The big question for us is will we think in terms of human viewpoint or divine viewpoint? The "human rights" viewpoint, that is the major one in our media, screams at us to, "stand up for our rights". The Lord tells us to serve him and let nothing come between us and our job, which is to walk as he walked and by word and deed show a world that desperately needs him, that he has the power to enable even the taking of injustice with patience. We are to have our eyes fixed on heaven, which is where our ambassadorship stems from, and have our day guided by the "matter" of heaven (God's plan of redemption) rather than our worries here.

Redemption, the Gospel of salvation, eternal life, the Holy Spirit empowered life; these are to be our themes and make up our message, not "human rights" and other worthy, but side-tracking subjects. This is the hard challenge for us. The tough choices are not good versus evil, but divine good versus human good; God's viewpoint, timing and plan, rather than our plans and issues, good though they be!

The abolition of slavery would come in it's time, but until that came and after it, the believers were to focus only on their job as the Lord's ambassadors, and witness to the world of God's saving and delivering power. This remains the imperative for us!

Verse 21 underlines this last principle; we are to imitate Christ! What is our response to the glory of his redemptive work? "Gratitude is the only appropriate response to the wonder of redemption." (Mounce, 1982, p 36). Is Mounce right here? Gratitude is all very well, but how is it to work out? Peter challenges us that it ought to work out in witnessing, and worship, and walking through daily life in a way that is both worshipful and enhances the witness to the world! Christ is our "model", or mentor, and that means we are to take everything about the Lord's life as our guide.

"The ultimate efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ depends on what it does in us". (Mastermann, 1912, p 116). "Redemption from sin is intended to have a practical effect in daily life; in order that we might live to righteousness. . . . As Theodoret said, 'a new and strange method of healing; the doctor suffered the cost, and the sick received the healing.'" (Hiebert, 1982, p 41, 42).

God always wants results/fruits/outputs! The parable of the talents is not taken seriously enough by most believers. **Matthew 25:13-34, John 15:1-8.** We are meant to be productive, or we will be disciplined in this life and lose reward in the next. Let us ensure that we do not get distracted by the attacks upon us by unjust men, but rather do the work of the gospel that is entrusted to us; that we may fix our eyes on the Lord alone, his 'well done', and his eternal rewards for our obedience! His opinion alone counts forever! "It is better far to have the approval of the Lord than the approbation of the world which crucified him". (Ironsides, 1984, p 37).

Verse 25 reminds us that we were all sheep heading in the wrong direction before Christ found us. Even as believers we have wandered away from the truth, and that second meaning is probably the main meaning that Peter wants us to get firmly in mind here. Here he uses the verb *epistrepho*, meaning to "return to the right place again", which would not be appropriate for our position as unbelievers. As his sheep the believers have wandered off into fields of their own choosing, but the fires of persecution are to bring them back to the true field of God's chosen place of service for them.

There they are to stay and not get distracted by any temptation or attack, for the Lord is the overseer (bishop) of their soul, and he knows best where they are to serve and why it is important. Suffering and attacks upon us are often baffling, and always upsetting; we are to take this to our shepherd, for he cares for our soul, but we are to keep working for him through our pain and hurt. "Understanding will have to wait until another day. Meanwhile we accept it with thanksgiving." Mounce, 1982, p 38).

[b] PASTORAL

"Self vindication is ever to be avoided on the part of the follower of Christ. He is called to imitate his master, who endured uncomplainingly the false accusation of sinners and lived his pure and holy life, as under the eye of the Father, content to leave it with Him to justify Him in due time, Isaiah 50:5-8). . . . As he left everything in the Father's hands so should we." (Ironsides, 1984, pp 34, 35).

Is this the mental attitude that our people get from our Bible preaching? Are we too influenced by our self-centred age that finds the claims of the individual to "justice" so powerful that this earlier view is ignored?

Today we speak of "natural ethics", and demand the abolition of slavery, and other forms of injustice to our fellow citizens. This is all good and noble, but Peter tells us there is an even nobler way! We are right to observe these things, but Peter and Paul challenge us to consider in some situations a higher standard. Kelly, calls it, "the ethics of the redeemed community" (Kelly, 1969, p 115), and challenges us to see that, in the apostles eyes the evil of slavery was a side track issue at that time in the Roman Empire, and that the job the Lord had called them to had priority over issues of personal freedom.

The church would go on to be the prime mover within Rome, and centuries later in England, with the abolition of slavery, but Peter indicates by these verses that to enter this area at this point would have been to side track the church from it's mission. The principle behind this is foundational.

First, and always, we are to focus on our ambassadorial and evangelical role upon the earth and serve the Lord where-ever we find ourselves without complaint, as the Lord gives us example on the cross. Only when the witnessing role is well established do we raise other issues, and then we must be sure that this is what the Lord is calling us to (a good example of this was Lord Shaftsbury in England who was the Christian who was the prime mover in the abolition of slavery).

Once again we are challenged as pastors regarding our involvement in the politics, and political/moral issues of our nations. Is the witnessing role completed, and do we have a strong sense of personal call from God for this "issue"? Can a social evil be eliminated without there being a side tracking from the gospel message to the lost, for that is our primary role? Let us keep the apostolic faith and not allow anything to side-track us from the path the Lord has called us to walk in our nations!

CONCLUSION

"It was the burning conviction of these early Christians that through their fellowship with Christ, they had entered into a relationship of brotherhood with one another in which the ordinary social distinctions, real enough in the daily round of life in the world, had lost all meaning. Galatians 3:28, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Colossians 3:11, Philemon 8 -18." (Kelly, 1969, p 115).

The brotherhood of all believers leads to caring love for other saints, and reminds us that we live in a hostile world, and that we owe them the gospel (Romans 1:13 -17), even if they treat us as they treated our Lord.

DOCTRINES

SUFFERING [See page 34 above]

“BROTHERHOOD” OF BELIEVERS

1. All believers are referred to as brothers (gk adelphos), the Greek word used indicating family relationship with both male and female included. As members of the same family who will rule throughout all eternity together it is of the greatest importance to have a special attitude towards our fellow believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9-10, Revelation 5:10).
2. This attitude should be one of agape love or caring for the ultimate well being of others (1Peter 2:17, 3:8, 1John 3:23, 4:12).
3. We are our brothers keepers, not by way of interference but by being active and alert for their good (Genesis 4:9 cf. James 5:20, 2 Thessalonians 3:15).
4. Because of family closeness there is a danger that one member may lead another astray, so discipline is required (1Corinthians 5:11).
5. In our family there must be a readiness to forgive (Matthew 18:21).
6. The world has its own brotherhood of evil and sin (John 15:19).
7. The soul and fruit of a person shows the family to which they belong (Matthew 12:33).
8. All of us were born into Adam's family (1 Corinthians 15:22).
9. We either stay there in sin or become a member of the Lord's family (John 8:42-44).

FATHERHOOD OF GOD

1. The Father over creation - all beings get their life and very existence from God (Ephesians 3:14, James 1:17).
2. The Father of Israel - Exodus 4:22 - Israel is my son - this is my firstborn. God has a special relationship with Israel.
3. Protecting and caring for the nation. However, not all Jews are saved.
4. The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
 - a) This indicates the roles within the Trinity - the Father God in control, and the obedient Son Of God who obeyed the Father's plan and purpose.
 - b) It also shows the intimate relationship of love and dependence between the earthly Jesus and His true Father in heaven.
5. The Father of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6-7).
 - a) Only in Christ do we become brothers (Galatians 3:27-29). This is the result of the Holy Spirit who baptizes us into the body of Christ and makes us a new creation in Him (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:5).
 - b) God is not the spiritual father of the unregenerate man, they are His creation but not His children (John 14:6). Before salvation we were sons of our sinful nature (John 8:42-47, Ephesians 2:19).

AMBASSADORSHIP [See page 81 above]

CONSECRATION

1. Consecration means full surrender of self to God (Romans 6:13).
2. This is the attitude of "denying self" and "not my will, but yours be done" (Matthew 16:24, 26:39, Galatians 2:20).
3. This is the only acceptable gift to God (Romans 12:1,2).
4. The consecration of the Temple is a picture of the believer's life: the Outer Court (the body), the Holy Place (the soul) and the Holy of Holies (spirit)
5. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and therefore must be set apart as a holy vessel (Romans 12:1-2 cf. 1 Kings 8:1-11)

SHEPHERD: CHRIST THE SHEPHERD

1. In the Bible, sheep represent believers - Matthew 25:33,34 - they are contrasted with goats (unbelievers).
2. Sheep are helpless, they need to be led, fed and protected.
3. Israel was called the sheep of his fold (Psalm 74:1, 79:13, 95:7, 100:3 Jeremiah 23:1).
4. The Lord himself is the true Shepherd (John 10:10-16).
5. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen as the shepherd in five different ways in 1Peter 2:21-25.
 - a) The suffering shepherd (v 21).
 - b) The sinless shepherd (v 22).
 - c) The submissive shepherd (v 23).
 - d) The substitutionary shepherd (v 24).
 - e) The seeking shepherd (v 25).
6. The Shepherd as Christ appears in three successive Psalms.
 - a) Psalm 22 - the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep (John 10:11). He is the Door (John 10:9).
 - b) Psalm 23 - the Lord is my shepherd - the great shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20).
 - c) Psalm 24 - the chief shepherd appears as the Man of Glory (1Peter 5:4).
 - d) These show the shepherd dying for His sheep, the resurrected shepherd tending and caring for His sheep and the future shepherd ruling over His sheep.

PARAPHRASE

“Workers, keep on placing yourselves daily under the authority of those you work for, respond to all orders respectfully. Obey this command, not only towards the fair and mild, but also towards those who are crooked and harsh, never straight in their dealings. This level of obedience is honourable, and will enhance the way Christians are seen by the world. When we suffer wrong unjustly we keep a good conscience towards God, and win honour before men. There is no glory or honour in being patient while suffering wrong when we deserve it due to some crime committed, but if we suffer wrong when we do not deserve it, it is admirable to God, and will be rewarded. This path of unjustified suffering, is the path we are called to walk, because Christ suffered for us, leaving us with the example to follow in his footsteps. He never sinned, neither was any trickery ever heard from his lips, when he was verbally abused, he never responded in kind, when he suffered unjustly he never responded by threats, but commuted his life to the one who judges fully, finally and justly. In his own body he took our sins upon the cross, in order that we, who were dead in our sins, should live no longer under sin’s power, but live in his power, a life characterised by righteousness. By his sufferings we were healed. We all have been like sheep wandering every way except the one we should be on, but now we have returned to the one who is the overseer and carer for our souls (eternal destiny).”

CHAPTER 3

VERSES 1 - 7

“Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may be won by the conversation of their 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 to their own husbands: 6 even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters you 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.”

KEY WORDS

Likewise	hosoiōs	likewise, in the same manner, referring back to probably, chapter 2 : 13.
Subjection	hupotasso	present middle participle of the verb, to respond with appropriate respect.
Own	idiois	strong possessive, one’s own.
Obey not	apeitheo	present active indicative of the verb, to keep on being disobedient
Conversation	anastrepho	manner of behaviour or conduct of life.
Won	kerdaino	future passive indicative of the verb, to get a win or receive future gain.
Beheld	epopteuo	aorist active participle of the verb, to look at, to observe.
Chaste	agnos	pure, clean and chaste (without the hint of sexual sin).
In fear	ev phobos	in the sphere of awesomeness and respectful fear.
Adorning	kosmeuo	to make beautiful by art, our word cosmetics is from this word.
Outward	exothēn	outward appearances.
Plaiting	emphleke	braiding of the hair; a fashion that took many hours work by slaves.
Wearing	perithesis	wound round and round the neck or hair. Costly and flashy style in view.
Putting on	endusis	putting on as a garment.
Apparel	himartia	outer clothing.
Hidden	kouptos	hidden.
Not corruptible	aphthartos	incorruptible, not liable to pass away in or over time.
Meek	praus	meek, not pushing self forward, gentle with others, having their interest first.
Quiet	esuchios	quiet, not pushing self forward, reserved.
Great price	poluteles	very valuable, costly even for the wealthy.
Trusting	elpizo	present active participle, of the verb, to hope, have confidence.
Adorned	kosmeuo	imperfect active indicative of the verb; they used to adorn themselves.
Obeyed	hupakouo	aorist active indicative of the verb; to listen to and obey.
Calling	kaleo	present active participle of the verb; calling.
Amazement	ptoesis	frightening, amazing, terrifying, excitement caused by real, strong fear.
Dwell	sunoikeyo	present active participle of the verb, to live together.
Knowledge	gnosis	understanding gained by learning: learning gained by listening!
Weaker	asthenesteros	physically weaker in body (with vessel).
Heirs	sugkleronomos	fellow heirs, heirs together.
Hindered	egkopto	present passive infinitive of the verb, being cut in on, hindered, as a runner in a race is cut off by another and so stopped from winning.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“The thought of wives submitting to husbands seems almost heretical to many people. Human rights occupy centre stage as a leading world issue. People are quick to defend their rights in every arena of life. . . . What did Peter mean when he wrote about a wife’s submission to her husband? . . . The behaviour of believers when they encounter unfair circumstances should reflect a spirit of deference (honour) in all relationships as they follow Christ’s example and anticipate future glory. The apostles instructions to wives in 1 Peter 3:1-6, must be read and understood against the backdrop of this controlling literary message.” (Slaughter, 1996, p 63, 64).

Peter’s words to the wives take up much more space than his words to husbands, and one commentator, Cranfield believes he knows why. Is he right? “The exhortation to wives is much longer than that to husbands, partly no doubt because women were more numerous than men in those early Christian communities, but chiefly because the position of a Christian wife was usually much more difficult than that of

a Christian husband, and the wives were, therefore in greater need of pastoral counsel and encouragement.” (Cranfield, 1958, p 69.)

Are these male commentators right? Stop and look at the context of these words. Re-read the last verses of chapter two (**vss18-24**), and read the whole section here (3:1-17). The issue before Peter is mental attitude and behaviour, and from the very specific things he questions the women about, it is clear that they, as a group have slipped into dangerous practises, given the coming persecutions, and need the greatest correction. Why was the place of Christian women “much more difficult”?

For men their social position had not changed as believers, but for women there was great change. In Christ they suddenly were treated as real people, as worthy in and of themselves, through Christ. Freedom when gained after a history of slavery can go to the head, and this appears to be what has happened here, just as also in churches that Paul spoke to of similar themes.

The apostles are not “grumpy old men” trying to maintain a social order where women are suppressed, rather they are trying to get these women to see how to use their freedom to do their divinely appointed job and win lost souls; the first one they have responsibility for is their husband! Both great apostles are focused on “looking unto Jesus”, and fulfilling the role we are left here to complete, not being distracted by the new freedom we have in Christ.

The first word is the Greek word, homoios, meaning, “in the same way”. The question is, in the same way as what? What is the preceding command that Peter is referring to? Peter has been focused on mental attitude and the working out of that attitude in life; this word is his trumpet call to remind us that the theme here is the same!

The subject is the mental attitude and actions associated with and related to the words of the previous chapter 2 verses 18 - 24, good, gentle, thank worthy, glory, patience, acceptable; what I have called “honour”, and what others call “deference”. It is the mental attitude of a spirit controlled believer who sees the Lord as their example, who sees ambassadorship as their life, evangelism of the lost as their role, and heaven as their home.

Such a person is not ever “fighting for their rights”, for they are focused on the well done of their Lord, knowing that he has all things in his hands, and his plan is perfect, even in the midst of unfairness. Ambassadors don't “fight for their rights” they refer all issues to their king, and focus on his tasking. Note carefully, the same word introduces verse seven. Peter makes clear that the same principles that apply to women here, apply to the husbands as well!!!

The word hupotasso, submission, “does not mean inferiority or superiority of person hood (including intelligence or spirituality) but the maintenance of divinely willed order.” (Gerhardt Delling, quoted in Slaughter, 1996, p 70). There is no master - slave relationship in marriage, and Peter (like Paul) uses hupotasso to underline the mental attitude of respect and deference, both for slaves and wives, not to emphasise the similarity of the two situations, but the universality of the Christian demand to honourable behaviour towards all!

“The voluntary subjection of Christian wives to their husbands constitutes a specific application of the apostles introductory words in 2:13 -17, to submit to every human institution and to honour everyone. By submitting to their husbands Christian wives exhibit behaviour that reflects the spirit of deference, which is essentially the spirit of Christ.” (Slaughter, 1996, 72).

Wives are commanded to have this mental attitude towards their own (idios) husbands, not anyone else's! The Greek word indicates a “strong possessive” (Slaughter, 1996, p 71), and , “seems to emphasise privateness and peculiarity to oneself in a relationship.” (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, 1973, p 370). The submission of women to men is not taught here. Women have the same obligation men have, to be respectful to all they meet, but submission (response of love and respect) is towards their own husband alone. No man has the right to demand submission to him of/by any woman!

As Paul observed, (1 Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5, Colossians 3) there was a human temptation for the women to leave their pagan husbands and seek men who were spiritually more in tune with their new life in Christ, and this temptation remains strong in all places where Christianity makes new inroads into a culture, or community. Sadly in many evangelical churches this temptation proves too strong and many Christian women (and men) leave their husbands (or wives) for other men or (women), and their reasons are apparently “spiritual”.

“Their duty was not to leave their heathen husbands, nor to provoke hostility by constant speaking of spiritual things, but to win them by the silent witness of a life lived for Christ.” (Mastermann, 1912, p 119). The service imperative of the blood bought believer, is to over-rule any of our self centred desires for a more pleasant life. We are here to serve the Lord not fulfil ourselves! It is a Christ centred life that Peter (and Paul and all the others) call us all to, it just so happens that the women needed the most “encouragement” here. We are to serve him where-ever we find ourselves, and the marriage we are in when we are saved, we are to stay in unless the unbeliever orders us out, or it becomes too dangerous to stay (**1 Corinthians 7:10-24**).

The word for winning to Christ in **verse 1** is a significant one. Peter uses the future passive indicative of the verb, *kerdaino*. He is indicating by the future, that the believers focus should be out in front of them, and they should be living in a way to achieve a future purpose; namely the salvation of their spouse, (also of family and friends circle).

The passive voice reminds us that the subject receives the action of the verb, indicating the work of the Holy Spirit upon the unbeliever. We do not “win” them, God does by his work through the Spirit, but we have a witness to give, or we have an example we set that leads them away from the Spirit’s work. The great sadness of evangelism today is that so many unbelievers are actively turned away from Christ by the poor witness of the lives of Christians they know.

The indicative mood is the mood of reality, reminding us of the reality of the eternal hope, the reality of the rewards of salvation, that are worth doing anything for, in order that the unbeliever might be saved. The meaning of the word itself tells us that the saved person, “wins, with great future gain”. The good news of the gospel message is eternal life; it is through our lives that they see this reality now!

In **verse two** Peter describes the life to be lived that will have maximum impact, and value, or use, for the Holy Spirit’s work. In a world filled with sexual lust, the unbeliever needs to see the Christian living without any hint of sexual sin (chaste), and with an awesomeness (fear and respect for God) that impresses them. How will that fear be manifested? By them seeing a believer who is living in the light of the reality of eternity, rather than being hungry and lusting after the things of time, as they, as unbelievers do!

Most commentators run off in major discussions about “subjection” but that is simply the mental attitude towards God and the husband, for the wife; the real subject here is the mental attitude that reflects an eternal life perspective rather than one that is totally focused on the things of time, that do not last!

Peter now turns to the thing that lasts least, but that the women are apparently spending/wasting good time on! Namely their ornate and expensive hair styles. Peter attacks a trend in these churches towards, “showy luxury” (Moffatt, 1963, p 130). The women were leading the way, and that is why these verses concentrate on them, but men also fall victim to this, ‘lust of the eyes’. **Mark 7:20-23, 1 John 2:15-17**. This passage from the first letter of John is particularly important, as it makes the same point Peter is here; the world does not last, and all that is associated with it does not last, only what is of God lasts, and only that is worthy of our time now!

Do not think that Peter is against washing the hair and combing it into an attractive style for the person; that is not attacked here. The styles that Peter attacks here, and Paul also, in **1 Timothy 2:9**, is a style of dressing and hair doing that would have taken a woman and her slaves up to six hours to complete, and involve the use of thousands of dollars worth of gold and other precious items. This was showy and flashy arrogance, and it exists today with those who dress to draw attention to themselves, and to show just how much money, power and sexuality they have! Such dressing indicates a heart that is set on the things of time rather than they things of eternity, and it must change if that person is to play their part in the Lord’s work.

The two key words of **verses three and four** are, “outwards” compared to “hidden”. Our treasure is to be hid in heaven, **Matthew 6:21, Mark 10:21, Luke 12:15-34, James 5:1-6**. If it is on earth then it decays, but if we have eternal reward through service for our Lord, that treasure lasts forever, as we also live forever. As people with eternal life, our hearts ought to be set on the things of eternity as our priority.

The woman with the correct mental attitude is described in verse four. In contrast the showy and wealthy women who are flaunting their wealth and sexuality, the godly woman is characterised by a meek and quiet spirit. Be careful here to get the Greek meaning of the words used; this is not a description of a bland, badly dressed and quiet as a mouse woman.

This is a truly lovely, and strongly spiritual woman to whom others would be attracted due to the strength of her transformed nature. Meekness is not mousiness, it is the spirit that lacks arrogance, and self centeredness, but is focused on it's role upon the earth; the service of the living God. The word for quietness does not mean she sits back and lets everyone else do the talking. It means people hang on her every word, for they know she speaks from the wisdom deep within her soul, and she only speaks when she has something significant to say.

Verses five and six, remind the women that if they imitate the mental attitude of verse four, then they will be standing in the "godly line" of great women of the past, the leading representative of which is Sarah. "The biblical principle of true pedigree is based on imitation. **Matthew 5:45, John 8:39, and Romans 9:6-9.**" (Kelly, 1969, p 131).

All through Scripture we have the choices of mankind spelt out; there are always two ways set before all generations, Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau. In Sarah's case we have her playing both parts; for the early years of her life she is Sarai (the contentious one), aggressive and barren, but she becomes through confronting the grace of God, Sarah (princess), a respectful, responsive, loving and now fertile woman who has the son she longed for in her aggression.

The message is clear; contentiousness is barren (literally fruit-less), respect and response is fruitful and blessed. Peter's point is related to aggression compared to respect and loving response; don't get side tracked from the spiritual principles here into a discussion of childlessness! Peter's concern is not with increasing the number of physical children on the earth, but in increasing the impact of evangelism, that there might be more unbelievers led to Christ, having the door of faith explained to them by believers whose lives live up to the profession of their lips.

Women in Peter's day, by their involvement in the daily life of a society, often had more opportunities for this "life style evangelism", than did men, who often had most hours of their day taken up with paid work that did not give much time for sharing anything except work related issues. The daily struggle of men's work meant that they returned to their homes quite exhausted, and therefore very open to a change in attitude of their wives that would be most impressive to them.

Even today "burned out" people, male and female, respond well to love and respectful support from a spouse, and the door for the gospel is opened by such a response. Even with modern changes in work patterns and hours the principles that Peter lays out here have 100% relevance today, both within the home and in the community for effective evangelism of the lost.

The woman Peter describes is, like Sarah, quietly doing good, and is not living in fear of any man, worry, or thing, but respect for God, and loving respect for her husband. The AV of verse six has, "they are not afraid with any amazement". What does Peter mean here? He wants them to see that the faith and obedience of Sarah removed any of her fears for where her life was going; she relaxed and got on with being a godly woman, leaving her life in God's hands.

David Stern is strong here, "this is a call to give up neurotic anxiety. The anxious feelings may not go away, but one can gain a right perspective on them, not by suppressing them or denying their existence, but by acknowledging them while at the same time experiencing that God's peace (shalom), a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22), is stronger; as is God's power, love and self control, (1 Timothy 1:7). Seek God's rulership instead of dwelling on anxious thoughts and worries (Matthew 6:25,26,33). The basic fear is of death, but Y'shua has abolished death (2 Timothy 1:10), and set believers free from this fear (Hebrews 2:15). (Stern, 1992, p 750).

Verse seven is the husband's turn to receive Peter's attention, although, as we have seen, the principles of verses 2-6, apply to us all. The verse begins with the Greek word, homoios, meaning, 'in the same manner'. Don't miss Peter's point in the use of this word, as most commentators do! All that applies to the women applies to the men also, plus a little more! The next principle of this verse is Christian equality. Both the man and woman are "heirs of the grace of life". We share an eternal reward and the status of royal family of God, as we have already seen earlier. Jewish legalism, and the Greek Gnosticism of Peter's day had a "lopsided contempt for women". (Reicke, 1964, p 103).

While women were respected as "child bearers" they were not looked upon as spiritual equals by most men. The Lord and the church he founded changes all that. It would have been tempting for these people to carry over their views of women into their new life in the church, and this is why Peter has to specifically lay these

principles out. The men are to live with their wives, both physically and sexually, in a manner characterised by spiritual “knowledge” (gnosis), which means with understanding of where their wives are coming from.

Husbands are to listen to their wives, and first understand their concerns and the different way they see the world and their problems. Men and women think differently, and Peter urges the men to take time and put in effort to understand these differences. He is a married man and you can bet that he applied this, or else he would not have dared say these things! His wife will be reading this first.

His congregation were watching him, and so we know this is a principle that was “dangerous” to state unless applied. All modern marital counselling starts with this principle, and as believers we must apply this or Peter says, we will not only have marriages in crisis but a prayer life in tatters. Prayer is hindered only by sin, and Peter tells us here that the sin of abuse in a marriage is a very serious one in God’s sight. God hates the behaviours of violent, bullying men, and God will not hear the prayers of a man who abuses his wife in any way!

The “weaker vessel” is Peter’s way of saying, ‘do not hurt the woman’! A wife is to be protected not abused physically. Any man who physically hits or otherwise abuses his wife, in her body is in violation of God’s holy word and comes under a severe condemnation here. To hurt your wife, physically or sexually is to have your entire spiritual life “cut off”. Note the meaning of the word that Peter uses to describe the cutting off of the effectiveness of the man’s prayers. All his efforts in prayer will be to no avail if he is abusive to his wife in any way.

“This is a portentous warning. A man who does not respect his wife might try to retreat into prayer, but he will be unable to have a good spiritual life so long as he does not love, understand, and honour his wife.” (Stern, 1992, p 750). The wife who fails to obey the principles of verses 2 - 6 faces a barren life without spiritual usefulness and with no results in either evangelism or the joy of the fruit of the Spirit, but the man who disobeys verse 7, loses his entire spiritual power, and has no relationship with his Lord until he loves his wife again!

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

“Silent evangelism is a biblical principle. Situations develop where nothing but godly and chaste behaviour can convince a spouse of the reality of the Christian faith. A man determined to disobey God cannot be won by harping on what he already knows but has decided to ignore.” (Mounce, 1982, p 41.) The husband knows what the wife believes, all the tears and nagging in his presence will not tell him anything more, but behaviour that shows what the Lord does with a life might just, under the Holy Spirit’s powerful convicting ministry open the door of salvation that nagging always closes.

Let all wives examine their hearts before God in regard to this principle, for if they are to have witness with their husband or family their lives must be filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit or else their efforts will be in vain. But let us ALL apply this principle to life, for only people who look and act as Christ’s character is, can truly witness for him without bringing his name into disgrace.

Peter challenges us constantly in his letter to adopt the “Eternal life perspective”. To see things in terms of eternity rather than time; to look to heavenly rewards rather than the lusts for the things that are of time alone. Peter gets right down to basics here, and it is uncomfortable. He asks the women, how much time do you spend each day on your grooming and “beautifying”, in contrast to the time you spend with God in prayer and in the study of his Word? Our actions and attitudes determine what we really value, and finally they will work out for all to see. What do people identify as our values when they look at our daily actions? Do they see people who think of time only, or do they see people whose hearts are set on eternal matters?

“Here the individual awareness that God’s eye is upon him, and his sense of what is valued in God’s sight, should determine how he acts.” (Stibbs, 1959, p 122, 123.) Christ centred not self centred; service not life-style fulfilment is the call of the Christian. As we noted above, this does not mean we wear a hair shirt and look and smell bad! We are to be clean, appropriately dressed for all occasions, and ready to serve without giving offence by our bad dress and hair, or by our bad behaviours.

Life style evangelism has become a “dirty word” in many circles because it was reduced to, living the truth, with out speaking the truth; which is certainly not Peter’s point here. The Christian wife is to speak of Christ, but only after her life witness has earned her the right to share about what the Lord has done for her. This

principle applies generally in society. Most unbelievers are more impressed by a transformed life, than by words. They will read our tracts, but only after they have watched our tracks, and seen that our Saviour is worth following! What tracks are we making in life? Are we living a life that is worthy of following? If we are not, we should be careful about giving the gospel, for the smart unbeliever will judge our message by our life; if they don't like that, they won't want our Saviour, who they see produces "that"!

Verse six encourages us to ask the question, have we banished anxiety and fear, or are we living as if "it all depends on us"? It doesn't! Verse six reminds both the women and the men that God does not want us being anxious about anything. **Philippians 4:6, Matthew 6 :25 -34, Luke 10:40-42, 12:29-34, 1 Peter 5:7.** Our lives are to be filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and peace of mind is one of the primary fruits. This is Peter's call to the women to "adorn themselves" with the fruit of the Spirit, and for all of us this call is applicable. Be filled with the Holy Spirit believer, or be useless to the Lord in time!

"God will not hear prayers from a home where the man bullies and overbears the woman". (Moffatt, 1963, p 134). "True prayer can only arise out of true home life". (Mastermann, 1912, p 123). "Selfishness in the relationship between husband and wife, any form of exploitation of the other person, is a certain way of spoiling the spiritual life." (Cranfield, 1958, p 73). Let this warning regarding the spiritual life of married men be taken seriously by them all, or they will not be able to be used by God in time.

[b] PASTORAL

"It is much easier to stand amid a crowded assembly calling Christians to entire consecration than on the following morning, to bring those lofty principles to bear on the small details of the breakfast table, when the radiant light of the transfiguration has been exchanged for the grey of an autumn day break, and the excitement of the crowds for the spiritual presence of the wife and child." (Meyer, 1953, p 106).

Peter demands application into life of all these principles, as pastor-teachers we must also. These scriptural principles in the verses we have read must be applied in the churches daily life before the unbeliever or we will fall short of God's standard, and fail in our ministry to the lost. Christian husbands and wives should be known within their communities as the ones who demonstrate the ability to listen to each other and behave with respect and love always towards each other.

These principles must be heard strongly from our pulpits every time we speak. The living presence of the Holy Spirit within us must be demonstrated by the fruit of the Spirit within our marriages and then into our community. If the marriage of believers is not right their witness to their world will not be either.

DOCTRINES

ATTITUDE [See page 61 above]

MARRIAGE

1. Man and angels have personality but only men and animals have "nephesh" and experience physical death. Angels do not die because they are spirits.
2. Marriage requires both personality and life, therefore it is only applicable to man. There is no marriage in the angelic realm (Matthew 22:30).
3. Definition:- the personal relationship between a male and female member of the human race which typifies the saving relationship between Christ and believers.
4. God's instruction - "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish and the fowl and every living thing". This shows that man should subdue and have dominion over the animal kingdom.
5. If God was a solitary personality there would be no divine example of relationships, however with the three personalities in the Godhead relationships are demonstrated. He is a personal God and we can therefore have a relationship with him.
6. Marriage typifies the relationship between Christ and the church:
 - a) in the form of grace and faith (Ephesians 5:22), the word submit meaning to fall into line to the law of God which the carnal mind cannot do (Romans 8:7; 10:3).
 - b) you submit yourself by an act of freewill.

- c) a family can strain marriage relationships if they are not submissive (Romans 13:1,5).
7. Grace is typified by the male and faith by the female. If this pattern is not adhered to it results in misery and suffering.
8. Grace and the man:
- a) the man is in the role of an initiator
 - b) the man provides information to which the woman can respond but must not coerce her free will
 - c) the man has to show his character to the woman
 - d) the man has to be patient, a form of grace.
9. Faith and the woman:
- a) the woman is in the role of a responder
 - b) the woman makes the choice of her free will
 - c) she is the one who uses faith
 - d) the woman needs time to grow.
10. Glory revealed:
- a) The glory of God is shown in the man in the form of a changed life through regeneration.
 - b) The glory of the man is shown in the woman by changes in the woman.
11. Compatibility:
- a) The important area of compatibility is that in the spiritual realm as one can be psychologically compatible with many people.
 - b) Spiritual compatibility is indicated by the phrase "one flesh" and is a picture of the union of Christ and the church.
12. Satan will attempt to blur the differences between man and woman and cause role reversals. The degree to which this occurs reflects the level of decadence in a society.
13. Legitimate reasons for the termination of marriage:
- a) the death of one of the partners
 - b) the desertion of a believer by an unbelieving spouse where one of the two partners has become a Christian after marriage (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)
 - c) inappropriate marriage partners such as close relations as specified in (Leviticus 18)
 - d) adultery or fornication as this causes the destruction of the one flesh principle by forming another one flesh (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).

REWARDS AND CROWNS [See page 42 above]

PARAPHRASE

"In the same spirit of respect towards all authorities for Christ's sake, Christian wives must also have a spirit of respectful responsiveness towards their own husbands. The reason for this, is in order that those who have rejected the gospel, might have the door of salvation opened by the behaviour of their believing wives. As they look closely at your behaviour they will then see your lives are characterised by chastity, respect and godliness. Let your true outward beauty (adorning) be that of your spiritual inner power, not your costly hair styles, clothes and jewellery. What is really valuable eternally is the Holy Spirit controlled life, characterised by a gentleness that puts eternal things first, cares for others, and is quiet and thoughtful rather than loud

and full of empty talking. It was this sort of character that was praised in the past ages, and this is the sort of character that is demonstrated in the later life of Sarah, who was not ashamed to call her husband Abraham, her lord. You are in this godly line of women if you have the mental attitude they had, and do what they did. Like them keep on doing good things, and do not give way to anxiety, or worry about anything, (for you are in the Lord's hands). In the same spirit of respectful response, husbands are to live with their wives in knowledge; this means that they are to listen to their lives, and truly understand them. They are to treat them with love and care as physically weaker vessels, (and not hurt them in any way). She is a fellow heir of all spiritual blessing for all eternity; (she is your equal in God's sight). If she is abused in any way by you as her husband, your prayers will not be heard; (your spiritual life will be cut off)."

VERSES 8 - 17

"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 contrawise blessing. Knowing that ye are hereunto 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 pursue 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.' (Psalm 34:12 -16). 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.' (Matthew 5:10, Isaiah 8:12, 13.) and be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, 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."

KEY WORDS

Finally	to de telos	finally, in the sense that there is a new point here, not just summary of previous.
Compassion	sumpathes	sharing of feeling, full compassion.
One minded	homophron	like minded, "inner unity of spirit over a matter that makes schism unthinkable. (Beare, quoted in Reinecker, 1984, p 411).
Loving	philadelphos	full of brotherly love.
Pitiful	eusplagchnos	compassionate tenderness.
Courteous	philophrones	friendly, kindly, no malice, with brotherly concern.
Rendering	apodidomi	present active participle of the verb; to keep on giving back.
Railing	loipodia	verbal abuse of the nastiest kind.
Contrawise	to enantion	on the contrary.
Blessing	eulogia	blessing, as the favour of God, the prosperity that God gives, = shalom
Inherit	kleronomeo	aorist active subjunctive of the verb; to inherit a legacy unexpectedly
Love	thelo	present active participle of the verb; to passionately love, with all the heart.
Refrain	pausato	aorist active imperative of the verb; let him cause to stop.
Guile	dolos	trickery, deceit.
Eschew	ekklino	aorist active imperative of the verb; let him turn away from
Do good	poieo	aorist active imperative of the verb; let him do good things.
Seek peace	zeteo	aorist active imperative of the verb; let him seek "eirene" peace and prosperity.
Pursue it	dioko	aorist active imperative of the verb; let him persist in the effort after peace, like a hunter pursues his prey.
Do evil	poieo + kakos	present active participle of the verb; keeps on doing evil things.
Harm	akeo	future active participle of the verb; lit, who is going to harm you?
Followers	mimetes	imitator.
Suffer	pascho	present active optative of the verb; if you suffer, it's not really likely, you are not now.
Happy	makarios	state of blessedness.
Afraid	phobeomai	aorist passive subjunctive of the verb; do not receive a spirit of fear.
Troubled	parasso	aorist passive subjunctive of the verb; do not receive a spirit of trembling, disturbing of your soul, shaking.
Terror	phobos	fear.
Sanctify	hagiazo	aorist active imperative of the verb; let him venerate and adore the Lord, set himself apart for the Lord, and therefore have no fear/thought for men.
Ready	etoimos	prepared and ready.
Meekness	prautes	complete lack of arrogance, a spirit of humility that puts the interests and needs of the other person ahead of oneself.

Fear	phobos	used in the secondary sense here, of the awesome responsibility involved in all evangelistic work.
Having	echo	present active participle of the verb; keeping on having.
Speak against	katalaleo	present passive indicative of the verb; you are receiving their continuing evil speaking.
Ashamed	kataischuno	aorist passive subjunctive of the verb; that they may receive shame.
Falsely accuse	epereazo	present active participle of the verb; threaten, abuse, insult, mistreat.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“The Christian experience is one of incalculable indebtedness to the love of God, and those who are conscious of a debt they cannot ever repay cannot help but be humble.” (Cranfield, 1958, p 77). “We need to resist the temptation to pass over this truth too quickly. Verses that teach the absolute necessity of love are as true as those that teach that Christ died for our sins. . . . Humility is a balanced view of man’s relative significance over against God himself and the entire created order.” (Mounce, 1982, p 47, 48).

Peter has drawn our attention throughout this letter to the need for a different mental attitude towards the world by all believers. We were saved out of this world and still keep a lot of it’s attitudes to things, life itself, and others. Peter reminds us again and again that our whole thinking must change towards everything. Here he identifies the need to change attitude towards our fellow believers.

Verses 8-9. There are a number of direct orders here in verses 8 - 9.

1. **Be of one mind.** To be of one mind means to avoid any behaviour that would create an argument leading to a church split, or violence of any kind. Mindless unity is not called for, it is to be a unity of the mind, based on well thought through positions, rooted and grounded in apostolic teaching.
2. **Show compassion.** Compassion is rooted in the mental attitude that sees others as Christ sees them. The heart that shows compassion, shows it because they see the others needs and shortcomings, and feels sorrow for the lack in the life of the other rather than arrogantly despising them.
3. **Love as brethren.** This fruit of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated in life. The word used is philadelphos, the word for brotherly love; the caring practical love for those within the same family. It looks for a practical thing it can do for the much loved brother or sister. It is the reminder that we are in the same family as these fellow believers, and we are being watched by our heavenly father, who looks to us to behave as blood bought brethren.
4. **Be tender hearted to each other.** The Greek word here is a great one; eusplagnos, which literally means, “good intestines”. It catches what the Greeks meant by the word. It refers to deep feelings in the stomach, the emotional feelings towards one we love that we can literally “feel deep within”. This is the level of the deep tenderness we should feel for our brethren.
5. **Be courteous.** The word here, almost another synonym, brings further encouragement to love in practical ways our fellow believers. Act in such a way that others looking on would know you are friends.
6. **Do not render evil for evil.** This instruction reminds us that believers are not perfect, and at times a young or disobedient believer will verbally attack us, and practice, even ‘evil’ against us. What is to be our response? It is not to be in accordance with the Mosaic Law (Exodus 21:23,24, Leviticus 24:19-22), which gave the right to all Jews to demand justice and reparation for every blow or insult. Peter is saying to all believers that we are NOT TO DEMAND our rights under the old law of lex taliones, but to place ourselves under the higher spiritual laws, the Law of Love, the Law of Supreme Sacrifice. We are now under the “Law of Christ”, Galatians 6:2, and the demands of that law are the ones Peter makes here.
7. **Do not give verbal abuse for verbal abuse** (railing). When we are verbally abused, or lied about, we are not to respond in kind and lash back. We are to treat them as Christ has by showing a love and care that shames the sinning brother rather than copies them.
8. **Give rather receive blessing.** The Lord’s words come back to us here. “Ye have heard that it has been said, (Leviticus 19:17,18, Deuteronomy 23:6), ‘thou shalt love thine neighbour and hate thine enemy’. But I say unto you, ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you; (in order that) ye may be

the children of your Father which is in heaven, . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,." Matthew 5:43-48. Luke 6:27- 36. These commands are clearly our Lord God's standard of behaviour.

They are the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ to us all. If we would be his disciples we are to obey, and if we would be called his friends, then we are to be following these commands daily. **John 15:9-17, 1 John 3:11-24**. If we do not have lives that are characterised by love then we do not have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are to be people whose lives are a constant blessing to those we mix with. If our lives are not characterised by blessing we are not fruitful in spiritual things, and if we are not fruitful, we are either not his at all, or we are his but standing in the place of judgement. **John 15:1-8**. The reason for Peter commanding these eight things above, is that we have received blessing and are obliged to the Saviour to give to others what we received from him. If we fail to show these things we fail our Saviour!

We are to beware of the evil of hatred towards those for whom Christ died. We are called to a ministry of reconciliation, not to execute justice or judgement upon those who do us wrong. We are called to transform lives by the love of Christ, not clean up our city by demands for changes to laws, or behaviours. The only change that matters is the change that the gospel's power brings into lives. Nothing is to distract us from the gospel message. The Bible is clear about our responsibility when we are wronged; "Vengeance is mine says the Lord, I will repay". **Romans 12:19, Psalm 94:1, Deuteronomy 32:35, Luke 6:35-36, Matthew 5:38-48**. We are not ever to seek vengeance or retribution, but rather salvation of the evil and the lost.

Verses ten and eleven (quoted from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament of **Psalm 34:12-16**) reminds these Jewish believers of the promises of the Old Testament that told them of the blessing that was upon those who showed love and mercy. Also refer to the following verses; **Deuteronomy 32:45-47, Proverbs 3:1-7, Proverbs 4:20-23**. If such a promise was attached to the Mosaic Law how much more blessing is there for those who go beyond it to follow the Law of Christ? **Romans 10:5-11, 1 Timothy 4:7-11, 6:6, Revelation 22:14**.

Verses 10-12. The next few verses contain further commands of Christian life.

9. **Desire with all your heart to live life as Christ commands** us. Peter uses a strong verb in verse ten; the Greek verb *thelo*, referred to a strong desire that focused the mind totally on it's object. 'If you are really serious about seeking life, then seek it in Christ's standard of love', Peter says, and let him demonstrate that by turning away from all behaviours associated with evil. Jesus said, "I have come to give you life and to give it to you more abundantly", John 10:10. This is the promise that burns through Peter's words in this section of the letter. If we would know life in it's fullness we will know it only through a life transformed by the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The translation Peter gives of the verses from Psalm 34, is a very free one, as you will see if you read the passage. This does not give us liberty to so quote from scripture, but Peter had this liberty under the apostolic commission he held. As we read these verses we read the Holy Spirit's words to us taking the Psalmists words and adding to them in a new and powerful way to make the bridge complete between the Mosaic system and the Lord's commandments to us.
10. We are to **stop (pausato) any evil behaviours**.
11. We are to **stop any verbal trickery**, or hypocrisy (guile) in our speech.
12. We are literally to "**turn away from**" (*ekklino*), **all evil** and,
13. We are, rather to do **good things to others**. Christianity is not about negatives; it is about replacement of evil and sin with good. Life change is being called for in the verb, "turn away from", and then all the other verbs. The aorist tense tells us that at every point in time that we have opportunity we are to (active voice) do these things (imperative mood, a command).
14. We are to **seek peace**. We are to actively pursue it like a hunter pursues his prey. This double command underlines the commitment to the ministry of reconciliation we must have. We are to be as focused as a hunter is. Anything short of this sort of focus is not good enough.

Another reason why we should do these things is now given in verse twelve, and in verse thirteen a principle is given that echoes back to Romans chapter eight. God is against the evil doers, and he is for those who do

good. The Lord's standards do not change, and these principles are backed by his character! In this life we are either standing with the creator and saviour of the universe, or we are on the side of the enemy of truth. If we are with the Lord, we will be hated by the enemy, but we need have no fear of what they might do to us, for even if they kill us, all they achieve is our entry into eternity in glory. **Acts 7:55-60.**

Verses 13 – 14. The only ones who attack those who do good, are those who serve Satan. Their hatred of us is a badge of honour, for so they hated our Lord, and so we can leave their fate and our own life, in God's hands. **Mark 13:13, Luke 21:17, John 15:18-25.**

Verse fourteen advances the comforting encouragement that Peter gives in the presence of those who are attacking the church. The passage that this reminds us of is **Matthew 5:10-12**, and Peter may be quoting, or referring to the Lord's words here. It is the optative tense of the verb to suffer (also verse 17), which means, 'maybe they will but also maybe they won't suffer'; it is not a settled thing at this point.

Verse 15. When something is uncertain, what are we to do? The first thing is, we are not to be anxious. The second thing is to be prepared at all times for what the Lord warned us of, but prepare without worry. The beatitudes of Matthew Chapter Five are a continuation of the Old Testament promises of blessing for those who keep the Law of God. Let us celebrate this continuity, as we recognize discontinuity also.

The Lord's point, and Peter's here, is that our lives are to be characterised by obedience to the Word of God irrespective of the future for us. If suffering comes then we are ready and through our obedience can be blessed in the midst of any situation. The two things we are not to receive along with the suffering, are a spirit of fear, and a spirit of trembling. The anticipation of troubles coming will often put people into a "tail spin" of fear and trembling. An old proverb says, 'a brave man dies once, but a coward dies every day'. Too often we live in anticipation of bad things happening to us.

The challenge of this verse is to live every day in confidence; maybe suffering will come, but if it does we are in our Lord's hands, and we are safe with him. Once again Peter challenges us with the daily battle for the mind. Will we today win the victory over anticipated fears and terrors?

Verse fifteen goes the next step to advance the believers preparation for any suffering that might come; Peter recalls them to the importance of having Christ seated on the throne of their hearts. The verse has a reference to **Isaiah 8:13**, and refers to JHWH in the text, indicating the New Testament truth, that Jesus is JHWH. Venerate, adore and worship the Lord in your hearts, set yourself apart for his service and leave the consequences of that choice with Him! Be ready also to give a good "apologia" for your faith. The word apologia means a logical reason for your belief, told in such a way that the philosopher would see why you believe; it is a reasoned explanation.

Notice how Peter refers to our faith; it is the source of our confidence (elpis). In a dangerous world the unbeliever needs the "good news"(gospel) message that shows them that they can have confidence in the midst of evil and uncertainty. This confidence is to be expressed through our evangelism (telling the truth of our confidence) with meekness and fear. Why does he use these words? Meekness is a favourite word for Peter, as it was for the Lord. It reminds us of several things; firstly there is to be no arrogance, no spirit where we put the hearer down and insult them. Secondly our evangelistic activity is to be a Christ centred thing, so that the unbeliever does not "see" us, but the one who gives us the confidence. We are also to do evangelism in "fear".

Verse 16-17. What does this mean? He has just told us that we do not have a spirit of fear. It is the secondary use of fear here, in the sense of awesomeness. The awesome responsibility of giving the news about the Lord must make us quiet and focused on our task. Be it a magistrate or neighbour we must be ready at all times to give a reasoned account of our faith and confidence; we ought to have a script ready he says, and one that will give the thoughtful man pause to think.

When we are continually under verbally abusive attack (the feeling here in verse 16), how do we keep going in the spirit of love? Peter calls for steadfastness in life and witness. Keep on having a good conscience, by doing right things! Don't falter and fall into bad actions or returning evil for evil. Shames the enemy by your goodness, then you earn the right to speak. Sustained godliness is called for.

If we must suffer, then be sure that the unbeliever cannot accuse you truthfully of doing evil. If we fall even once and do a bad thing we spoil our witness and the unbeliever looks on and says, "I told you so, those Christians are no good". This is behind Peter's words. We must not let our Lord down and be charged before the courts, or our neighbours with any evil that robs us of the chance to give the gospel to them.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

When the unbeliever looks in on the church and observes closely how Christians behave with each other, do they see, friends working together in mutual respect and practical love? Peter makes it clear that they should!

Are we as focused on our ministry as a hunter is on securing his prey? Are we this focused on living a life that opens the door with the unbelievers who are observing us? The fruits of the Holy Spirit are the “door openers” for the gospel message; if they are not present in our life, then the unbeliever will probably not believe us that we have something to offer. They will be right, at that point!

“When disasters strike the man of faith, they cannot touch the integrity of his personality or injure him in the ultimate sense”. (Kelly, 1969, p 140). Are we standing like Stephen or playing the coward as Peter did in the courtyard of Caiaphas? Peter recalled this time of cowardice and was now strengthened and determined, and he wants us to put away the cowardice of our own past and stand for truth in absolute eternal security.

The challenge of verse fourteen needs to be taken on board today. Do we live in the palace of the King in our soul, where the Lord is on the throne, or do we live in the ‘panic palace’ of sin, doubt and fear.

“The best way to be rid of craven fears, is to have ones heart filled with the right fears of Christ.” (Cranfield, 1958, p 82). Occupation of the mind with the Lord Jesus Christ will protect the soul from fear and prepare the soul for any suffering that will ever come; only the walking of the soul with the King of kings will give calmness when facing great pressures, for he is the one on the throne of the heavens.

How ready are you believer to give an “apologia”, a reasoned response to those who ask of your faith? This is more than an emotional testimony it is a philosophically coherent explanation of why it is not reasonable and powerful to believe in the Lord. If you don’t have such a script that expresses your “confidence” get one! Peter’s second message is under this one; if you don’t have confidence, get it first, and get it soon, before you are asked, or troubles come!

“So I advice all believers, live a Messianic life, know the truth, speak in love and humility, discern who is open, and trust the Lord to work in people’s hearts, including yours.” (Stern, 1992, p 754). Are we ready to give the gospel, and do we know the basic points of the good news well enough to make sense of them to the unbeliever, and have the message not jar with our life witness? Consistency believer, consistency!

[b] PASTORAL

“Do not try to feel love, but will to love. Tell the dear master that you are willing to love, or willing to be made willing to love, but that he must create the grace of love within your breast.” (Meyer, 1953, p 110)

For the church to be one-minded depends upon the prior teaching of the pastor. Are we teaching the apostolic faith in such a way that our flock can gather around the word of God with one mind? Failure to teach systematically leads to many opinions, and dogmatic ignorance! This is the spirit that Peter wishes to avoid, and as pastors it is in our hands to avoid this by our systematic and regular teaching.

The church membership is meant to be trained for the enduring of suffering in such a way as to be a witness to the unbelievers in the midst of their greatest attacks upon the Christians. “Faith, as E J Carnell repeatedly insisted, is the resting of the mind in the sufficiency of the evidence.” (Mounce, 1982, p53). “Inward holiness, outward readiness to indicate to everyone their grounds of hope with meekness and fear, together with a good conscience, would in the long run make the heathen blush at their insulting and threatening calumnies against the holiness which they accused of criminality.” (Williams, 1965, p 166 - 167).

Any misconduct or inconsistent behaviours could spoil their reply to the unbeliever who seeks a reason for their faith and confidence. We are to train our people so that they are ready to reply at all times. This is another of the standards by which we can judge the effectiveness of a ministry. Are the people who comprise that congregation always in readiness to give the gospel?

“It may seem strange to some that God could will suffering. It is perhaps more accurate to say that God wills to bring good out of suffering.” (Mounce, 1982, p 54). The believer’s suffering is to be taken with the Lord

firmly on the throne of their heart, so that within it they are blessed and through it they maintain and expand their witness. This can only happen if we as pastors have done our job and these things are known at a more than simply academic level.

DOCTRINES

LAWS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT [See page 89 above]

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT [See page 24 above]

ETERNAL SECURITY [See page 31 above]

GOSPEL OF SALVATION [See page 69 above]

EVANGELISM [See page 68-69 above]

JUSTIFICATION

1. Justification means "vindication", therefore it is the judicial act of God whereby he imputes His righteousness to the new believer at the point of salvation, thereby justifying him (2 Corinthians 5:21).
2. Salvation justification occurs at the moment of faith in Christ (Romans 3:28, 5:1, Galatians 3:24).
3. Salvation justification is based on the principle of grace (Romans 3:24, Titus 3:7).
4. Therefore salvation justification does not occur through the Mosaic Law (Romans 3:20, 28, Galatians 2:16).
5. Salvation justification is the imputation of divine righteousness to the one believing in Christ (Genesis 15:6, Romans 3:22, 4:4, 5, 16, 8:30-32).
6. The work of justification was accomplished by Christ on the cross (Romans 5:8, 9).
7. Because the work for our justification was accomplished on the cross, Christ was resurrected to relate justification to victory (Romans 4:25).
8. Post salvation or Christian life justification is the production of maturity (James 2:21-25).

PARAPHRASE

"Summing all this up, and making some final points here, be attentive to these things! Be of one mind, having an inner spirit of unity that makes factions unthinkable, having thoughtfulness and compassion for each other, loving the brethren as your brothers and sisters in the Lord. Be tender in your dealings with them, be filled up with courtesy towards all, not giving back insult for insult, or evil deed for evil deed done to you. On the contrary, give back blessing for any evil received. As you do this good thing, be firmly remembering that this is the life to which you are called, and that you are inheritors of (God's great) blessings. As the scriptures have said before, 'if a person really loves life, and wants to enjoy it, then let them hold back their tongue from speaking evil, and their lips from speaking trickery and deceit, and rather do good things. Let them turn away from any appearance of evil, and let them (if they are serious about life) seek with all their heart the path of the peace-maker, and blessing giver'. Let them pursue such a life like a hunter pursues his prey. 'For the eyes of the Lord our God, are seeking out those who live this way(to bless them even more). His ears are always attentive to their prayers. However the face of God keeps on turning away from those who persist in doing evil'. Ask yourself, who is the person who will seek to harm me if I do good? (It can only be the enemy, Satan). And so, if we are to suffer (under his attacks) because of our godly lives and relationship with God (righteousness), then we can be happy in the midst of such suffering, for we have the promises of God's holy Word to claim. Promises like, 'do not be afraid of their terrors, nor let your heart receive any spirit of fear and trembling due to their attacks', rather, be always ready to give the good news to every man who asks you why you are so confident in the midst of such troubles. Give your reasoned explanation of the gospel with a spirit of humility and with a sense of the awesomeness of the responsibility that the Lord has given you

to tell the lost about their Saviour. Do this with a good conscience, (for if you have done wrong you ruin your witness). When they speak evil of you, as if you are evil doers, make them ashamed, because of your good behaviours in Christ, so that they see that you are falsely accused, (and so you open the door for the gospel to be preached to them). If we must suffer, then let it be for the good things we do, rather than for any bad thing we have fallen into.”

VERSES 18 - 22

“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 sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 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 towards 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”

KEY WORDS

Suffered	Pascho	aorist active indicative of the verb; to at the point of the cross suffered.
Bring	Prosago	aorist active subjunctive of the verb; to lead, bring alongside, introduce, to provide access for a person into a court or throne room.
Longsuffering	Makrothumia	literally, “big heartedness”, a slowly burning fuse, waiting for good not evil.
Waited	Apekdechomai	imperfect middle indicative of the verb; eagerly wait with expectancy.
Preparing	Kataskeuazo	present passive participle of the verb; being built, and made ready over time.
Saved by	Diasozo	aorist passive indicative of the verb; to receive saving through (water).
Figure	Antitupos	exact copy as of a stamp from an original.
Save	Sozo	present active indicative of the verb; to save or deliver.
Authorities	Exousia	powers, authorities.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Lord’s victory was won on earth but announced in all the realms of the creation, to all living creatures, and Peter in this passage reminds us of the victory message, and where, and to whom it was announced. We have already seen that we are to be confident in the face of the attacks of men, and in these verses Peter makes it clear that we are also to be confident in the presence of the demonic forces that are a part of Satan’s group, for they have been dealt with by the Lord, in the same way as he has dealt with our other problems.

Verse eighteen gives us the gospel message, and all details of our life must be under our Lord’s control so that this message can be given to the unbeliever. Nothing must distract in our life, from the giving of this message. Note the key points of the gospel message that Peter draws our attention to by his use of words.

The word, ‘once’ is startling in it’s power. Peter is strong here; Christ died, “once for all”. This is the “good news”, the payment for sin has been made fully and finally. Note the points he makes:

1. He died once for sins, unlike the priests of the old covenant continually offering sacrifices.
2. He died for all, and the gospel is to go out to all. We owe it to all to tell them this good news.
3. He suffered, the just for the unjust, so that we might be declared justified.
4. He did all this to bring us to God as those covered by his sacrifice, and now acceptable in his sight
5. He died in his flesh, and we can “die” to the troubles associated with our bodies also thru him.
6. He was made alive through the Holy Spirit’s power, and so are we.
7. Because of all this we can have a new spiritual destiny in and through his work.

Verse 19-20. Peter has been reminding the believers of the need to maintain their witness and speak evangelistically in the midst of their suffering, and the example to follow is that of the Lord himself. After his victory on the cross he went to speak to the fallen angels and announce that he had won. We are to also speak the truth to all powers we meet. We are to announce the same message that the Lord did, that he has won!

This is a difficult passage for some commentators, especially for those who reject the Genesis account. Kelly notes, "the key must be sought in the myth of the sin and condemnation of the rebellious angels of Genesis 6:1-4." (Kelly, 1969, p 153). He is wrong in his reference to "myth", but he is right in his reference to the passage, for it is here that we find out to whom the Lord announced his victory.

The fallen angels who were locked up awaiting judgement were the first to be told that their doom was sure, for the Lord had completed the task that their master the devil had tried to stop happening. (Refer BTB Angelic Conflict). This verse is meant to be an encouragement for afflicted believers, so ask yourself, 'how can this be an encouragement?' and you will see his purpose in mentioning this otherwise quite obscure point.

The first thing to note is that the announcement was not the offer of salvation to these fallen angels (demons), but the victory proclamation that told them their doom was settled. "Christ's proclamation to the imprisoned angels was not the offer of a second chance but the announcement of his complete and final victory over the power of sin and Satan. **Colossians 2:15, Philippians 2:10,11.**" (Mounce, 1982, p 57).

What then is Peter's point in this reference? His point is that victory is won. It has been proclaimed by the victor to the very enemy forces, whose whole being has been opposed to his plan. He could not announce victory to these demons unless it was certain, or else they could have objected and replied to him, but they could not for it was true! Peter's message to those of his day and to us is, hold to the truth of the certainty of Christ's victory under any present pressure!

Verse twenty reminds us that God may be "slow" to judge and end evil, as far as we are concerned, but he has a plan and it will work out. The so called, "problem of evil" is a big one for many, but viewed in terms of the Plan of God it is not the problem it first appears to be. God has not destroyed evil yet. The word "yet" is the key word when we discuss the evils of daily life. The plan's end is assured; Christ will sit forever on the victors throne, and all those who opposed God's plan will be judged. **Revelation 20:11-15.**

This verse also reminds us that few were saved in the days of Noah, and that numbers are not the issue with God. Free volition is the issue, as it relates to the angelic conflict, not the number of people who respond. The real issue for the fallen angels is that they are condemned because they rejected God, and their condemnation is made more sure because an inferior creature, human beings, can respond to the truth and be saved! They could have responded to God also, and we demonstrate to them that they are responsible, and culpable for their rejection. This is why they hate us so strongly! Our salvation reminds them of their damnation! We demonstrate that they were wrong in rejecting the love and plan of God.

Everything in time is about obedience or disobedience. As Peter has pointed out throughout this letter, we are to continue to be the children of obedience, and to recognise that the children of disobedience will continue to hate us as they hate the Lord himself. Their hatred, and malice must not worry or distract us from our task, which remains to spread the gospel to all who will hear.

Verse 21. Baptism may have been a theme here also, as the reference to water and being saved through the waters, may be an allusion to the ritual of believers baptism; certainly many commentators believe it to apply. Noah is referred to as the one who represents, "anti-typical baptism, or analogous baptism". (Reicke, 1962, p 113).

Many make a lot of this very brief mention of baptism, but miss the main point that Peter makes, which is, that the ritual without the inner reality is meaningless. Ritual does not save, and ritual does not provide security when pressures are faced; only the reality of a living faith, based on the reality of relationship with the risen Christ will give the Holy Spirit power to enable the believer to dynamically face troubles. The pressures of daily life are only able to be faced by those with a "good conscience". This is well defined by Hiebert as, "a conscience purified by the blood of Christ and assured of personal acceptance with God". (Hiebert, 1982, p 156).

We live as believers in the resurrection power of the risen Lord of glory. It is the resurrection that is our guarantee of salvation and power to live facing pressures now. This section ends with a reminder of where

the Lord is now, and the relationship of all the angels (fallen and elect) to him. He is seated in the place of power now, he does not need to wait until the end of time to take his royal throne, he sits now in glory. He is superior to all the angelic powers now and, in him, so are we!

Verse 22. Note the words of verse twenty two carefully, for most believers today miss their power and glory. He is superior to all powers, and that means all demons are under his authority, even Satan has power only at his permission. What does this mean when we face pressures of a Satanic origin? It means that the Lord has allowed it for his glory! Any pressure situation is allowed by the Lord to give us further opportunity to praise and glorify him in time! All testing is to be seen through the throne-room of the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

“Christ’s sovereignty over all spiritual forces is a precious assurance to afflicted believers.” (Hiebert, 1982, p 157) Do we live daily in the reality of this victory that he has won so thoroughly, or do we live as if it is still an uncertain thing? Peter’s point is, it is certain, and it is sure, for he is the King! Live in the midst of pressures as victors over them, even while they still exist. See your troubles in the light of Christ’s full and final victory, and be confident and assured in your proclamation of the truth.

He is enthroned now; he is not waiting until the end, as victory is won now! Any pressure situation is allowed by him, is under his over-ruling will, and is part of his plan to bring glory to him; our role is to seek the way the Lord wants us to “play” the test so that we can enjoy the glory of the pressure, and praise him from the midst of the fire.

[b] PASTORAL

The angelic conflict is a very important subject for believers to understand. We must seek to teach as much as is revealed in Scripture. It is a difficult subject, but the context of our very existence is tied up with the angelic conflict. The battle of the fallen angels with God before this creation was made is one of the reasons behind this present creation. In this area of study we have incomplete information, not because God does not want us to know, but because we have limited ability to understand the realities of what happened before space and time were made! But what is revealed we must teach so that the believers might have confidence in the midst of even the worst Satanic trials.

Read, **Acts 2:27, 31, Romans 10:6-8, Ephesians 4:8-10.** “The best thing is to realise that we encounter here a mystery, which is still a secret from us, and reverently accept the hint - for a hint is all that is given to us - and thank God that the reach of God’s saving activity is not to be limited by our human desires to get things neat and tidy in pigeon holes of our own choosing”. (Cranfield, 1958, p 86).

“Few, as contrasted to the many who perished is an encouragement to Peter’s readers who were rejected minorities in their own communities”. (Hiebert, 1982, p 154). We often mistake the majority opinion for the truth! In the Lord’s viewpoint the truth is where He is, and what His plan stands for, who-ever believes it. The Scriptures teach that there are always only a few who get truly with the truth and live it. We must get used to being in the minority, but never tire of standing for the truth and telling the majority the truth that Jesus is indeed Lord.

DOCTRINES

ANGELIC CONFLICT [See page 43 above]

JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

1. There are three types of judgement for believers in the Church Age:

- a) Judgement of Sins:- The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross substituted the payment of all man's sins. The penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23). There is therefore no judgement for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). The substitutionary death is given in 2 Corinthians 5:19-2 1, Galatians 3:13.

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b) Judgement of Self:- We are told that if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged. Failure to do so brings discipline. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11:31, 32, 2 Corinthians 2:5-7, Hebrews 12:7, 1 John 1:9)

c) Judgement Seat of Christ:- This is the evaluation of the production of believers for the purpose of reward (2Corinthians 5:10).

2. The Judgement Seat of Christ is a time of reward. Our human works (wood, hay, stubble) will be burned, our works in the power of the Spirit (gold, silver, precious stones) will be rewarded (1 Corinthians 3:11-16).

3. At the Judgement Seat of Christ the believer can be denied reward but can never lose his salvation (2 Timothy 2:12-13).

4. Backslidden believers have no reward at the Judgement Seat of Christ (Hebrews 6:7-12).

5. The Judgement Seat of Christ is illustrated by the famous athletic games in the ancient world (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

6. Rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ is based on grace (James 2:12, 13).

7. Since we will be judged by Christ, we are not to judge each other (Matthew 7:1-2).

JUDGEMENT: GREAT WHITE THRONE

1. The judgement of the Great White Throne is the last judgement. (Revelation 20:11, 15)

2. Only the unsaved are judged at the last judgement as there is no judgement for Christians. (Romans 8:1)

3. The last judgement occurs at the end of the Millennium. (Revelation 20:7-15)

4. The unsaved are judged according to their works from the Books of Works. (Revelation 20:12)

5. The judgement is to show that the Human works of man cannot satisfy the justice of God. God is totally fair and shows that he is only satisfied by "The Good Work" - the death of Christ on the Cross.

6. Having shown the unsaved they have failed to satisfy the holiness of God, the condemned are cast into the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:15)

FAITH [See page 35 above]

HOPE [See page 77 above]

PARAPHRASE

"Because indeed, Christ has once suffered for full payment for our sins, the only truly just one for all those who are unjust, in order that he might bring us into fellowship with God. He was put to death in his earthly body, but made alive again by the power of the Holy Spirit, in whose power he went to the imprisoned demons and announced to them his victory (and their certain doom). These are the demons who were disobedient to the plan of God during the days of Noah. In those days we see God's long suffering towards fallen mankind, (for the Lord waited to see if any would respond to the gospel Noah preached, but they didn't). Noah preached while he built the Ark, but in the end only eight souls were saved and that through the waters. In a similar analogy today our baptism also speaks of our moment of salvation, (it does not mean we never have sin in our body again), but it stands for our new relationship with God in Christ, (we are assured that we are purified by his blood, and stand, in Him, in a place of total acceptance with the Father). The Lord himself is seated on his throne in heaven, in the place of power as the God-man, all angelic beings now being subject to his rulership."

CHAPTER 4

VERSES 1 - 7

" Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought

the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelling, banquettings 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. 7 But the end of all things is at hands: be ye therefore, sober, and watch unto prayer.”

KEY WORDS

Forasmuch	oun	therefore, this introduces the main lesson to be drawn from 3:18-22.
Suffered	pascho	aorist active participle, genitive absolute.
Same	auton	the emphatic pronoun underlining identity with the person referred to.
Mind	ennoia	mind; the thinking pattern of the mind, principle, counsel, resolve.
Arm yourselves	oplizo	aorist middle imperative, to arm with weapons, put on armour.
Ceased	pauomai	perfect middle indicative, has died to, finished with, results going on forever.
That	eis to	introduces the purpose clause, in order that.
No longer	meketi	no more, no longer, strongly!
Lusts	epithumia	strongest word for overwhelmingly powerful lusts and desires.
Live	bioo	aorist active infinitive or the verb to live as a biological entity (in a sphere of life).
Will	thelemati	dative case(of advantage) of the word meaning, will or rule by which we live.
Rest	epiloipos	remaining time (chronos). Emphasis that it is flying by and will soon be gone.
Time past	parerchomai	perfect active participle, the past has “passed by”, it is gone forever.
Suffice	arketos	more than sufficient, more than enough, too much.
Wrought	katergazomai	perfect middle infinitive, produced a work, accomplished it (and it’s over).
Will	boulema	wish, will of the person at the time.
Walked	poreuomai	perfect middle participle, of the verb to walk, to go, Hebrew sense of it’s use means to live a certain way, to walk after a plan or purpose.
Lasciviousness	aselgeia	unrestrained living, no rules just lusts of the moment.
lusts	epithumia	strong desires, passions ruling.
Excess of wine	oinophlugia	habitually getting drunk.
Revellings	komos	drinking / drug parties that went all night with yelling and noise of celebrating.
Banquettings	potos	drinking parties, where getting drunk was the objective.
Abominable	athemitos	unrighteous, ungodly, lawless, taking no rules but ones own.
Idolatries	eidololatria	worship of idols in the pagan temples, association here is with sexual “worship”.
Wherein	an ho	in which thing, in which manner of life (verse 3).
Think strange	xenizo	present passive participle, to think it strange, be astonished at the change in the believers behaviours, also become upset at the change, as if insulted.
Run not	suntrecho	present active participle, running together in a race as part of the same team.
Excess	asotia	wasteful, dissipated, riotous living.
Riot	anachusis	pouring forth, overflowing, outpouring.
Speaking evil	blasphemeo	present active participle, to speak evil, defame, speak badly to run their reputation down, as if they have betrayed their faith/life.
Give account	apodidomi	future active indicative of the verb to pay back, (logon) give account for investment.
Ready	etoimos	ready, in readiness, feeling here, that “at any time” action may be required.
Judge	krino	aorist active infinitive, to judge.
Quick	zao	present active participle of the verb to live; living ones alive at the time.
For for	eis touto gar	for to this end.
Preached	euaggelizomai	aorist passive indicative, proclaim the good news of the gospel.
Judged	krino	aorist passive subjunctive, in order that they might receive judgement.
According to God	kata theon	according to God’s likeness, in the eyes of God, in his likeness.
At hand	eggizo	perfect active indicative, to come near, to be at hand; finality of it.
Sober	sophroneo	aorist active imperative, at all times, be sound of mind; self control, moderate, cool head as a veteran soldier is under pressure.

Watch

nepho

aorist active imperative, at all times be keeping a mind clear of anything that will control you (other than God's Holy Spirit).

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Romans 12:1-2. "I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Verse 1-5. Of verse one Moffatt says, "there is therefore the noise of war in this verse. To arms!" (Moffatt, 1963, p 132). Like Paul, in the passage above Peter is calling all believers to be prepared for any "active service" that may come our way. A helpful way of seeing these verses before us is to see them as the orders given by a commanding officer to troops in the last stage of their training, readying them for the noise of battle that is coming.

The reference to the fallen angels in the last verses of chapter three is now drawn upon. Peter is saying, because of the Lord's victory announcement let us be clear headed and pay attention to the battle, for the enemy truly hates us and is out to get us side tracked any way they can! We could call this chapter, "keeping your head (thinking) safe in the midst of demonic attack". Let us see these "Daily Orders", for they are similar to many lists of Paul's "Daily Orders".

The same mind that Christ had as he confronted sin, is to be our mind towards sin. He rejected it and set himself to the cross to deal with it. It's power is over, sin has been judged. Why do we still "play with" sin in our lives? The only reason can be that we have "lost our mind". Peter says here, "Get control of your mind again!"

The Christian Soldiers, "Daily Orders". (Also read **Ephesians 6:10 - 18**)

1. **Arm yourself.** - The reason for doing all these things is given first; "because of the sufferings of Christ, which were in his earthly body, we ought to have a different attitude towards our earthly life, and it's temporal vehicle (the flesh of our body), than we had before we were saved. The Lord's sacrifice for us must transform every part of our life, and every mental attitude to everything in time and space. This is illustrated by the command given here, "TO ARMS!" When a person becomes a soldier their old values and attitudes must change; they are no longer living as civilians but as soldiers, responsible to their commanding officer only, with no interest in the things of this world at all. Under his orders they must be ready to give up their lives at any second. 2 Timothy 2:1-7, 4:5-8.
2. **Have done with sin.** - If the Lord has died for us in his flesh, we are to die to our fleshly lusts; sin is to be resisted and rejected in both our mind and body. The result of being transformed by Christ, is that the sins of your old nature are "done with", they are dead to you! The challenge is daily to "put to death" the old desires, to daily reject the claims of sin over our time. Time spent thinking of sin is time wasted and defiled, and we are responsible to our commanding officer for the use of our time, in HIS army.
3. **Stop wasting your very short life in fleshly things that don't last.** - Time is flying by, get busy or lose your opportunity to serve the Lord. All we have is the "time remaining" of our lives, the past is already gone, be it for good or ill! Peter is really trying to frighten the foolish amongst his flock here! Look at how your life has flown! See how quickly it will all be gone, and use each day with hunger for the service of the living God. All that is of time decays, all that is of eternity lasts forever. In all we do, let us be mindful of this principle and use our brief time here for things of eternal value.
4. **Don't follow the way of life of unbelievers;** it is dead and gone. - How tempting it is to look at the "successful lives" of unbelievers and long for their wealth and physical prosperity. Peter warns us to get our eyes off the lives of those who are not saved; he goes even further saying NOTHING about them is to be followed. All that the world calls "success" is empty; it does not last. Treat it as a "dead thing" and shun it as the orthodox Jew of Peter's day would shun a corpse, lest they became unclean. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.
5. **Don't walk with them; you are no longer in their race!** - Winning with them in their race has no significance at all. What point is there to train to run in a race where the prize has no relevance to you? To win with the world is to lose with God! Why play their game when you are called to a different one?

We would think an athlete stupid, if he or she went to the wrong event, in the wrong stadium, and competed in a sport that was not theirs; just so the Christian who “competes” in the world for rewards that are earthly rather than the heavenly rewards. Our commanding officer is the one who rewards us, the rewards of the rulers of this world are of no real consequence! Philippians 3:7, 8, Hebrews 10:35.

6. **Reject living in a way characterised by lack of control.** “No rules” is the motto of many in our day, as it was in Peter’s day. Peter reminds us that this is not our motto, and we must live lives that are as far away from such a motto as is possible. At all times we are to be under the control of our Lord’s commands, and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Believers are not to be under the command/control of anything other than the Word of God, nor under any power, other than the Holy Spirit. Holiness of life is the sign of that control, without holiness we cannot please God, and without a holy life there is no evidence of the Spirit’s control!

Reject strong desires that are wrong. - Strong desire to do wrong is no excuse to do wrong. We are to have character and resist strong temptations, not fall over into them!

Reject getting drunk at any time. - Drunkenness is a sin. It is a sin that some of us have a genetic propensity towards due to our inherited Old Sin Nature (if our human father was an alcoholic, this will probably be an issue for us). Such a propensity simply means it is an area of weakness for our Old Sin Nature, and we are RESPONSIBLE to set our guard against this area in our own life. No excuses, take any action needed to be obedient here; just do it!

Reject invitations to all night noisy drinking parties. - Say “NO!” to all such invitations; there is no witnessing opportunity at such places, for those attending are seeking sin not salvation. Don’t waste your time, nor put yourself into a place of temptation, rather speak to your contacts who are feeling bad about going and witness to them!

Reject all social activity that centres on drinking. - Peter goes even further than the party scene. If any social activity centres around drinking or drugs have nothing to do with it at all!

Reject all sexual sins. - There is no compromise here. Some people are not tempted in this area, but many are, and there is, like with alcoholism, no excuses allowed for giving in to sexual sin. You cannot give the gospel in or through your adultery. ALL sexual sins are to be dealt with; pornography, mental attitude lusts as well as all forms of sexual relationship outside God’s plan, of right man, right woman.

7. **Be prepared for verbal attack** from those who will not understand the changes you make. - Don’t expect those who favour the enemy to like you! Don’t be stupid believer! Many believers are baffled at the hatred of the world for them, they should not be, it is “normal”. They hated the Lord and they will hate you if you stand with the Lord! Relax and get on with the job the commanding officer has for you to do. You are a soldier, and so arm yourself! The enemy hates you, so what! Be a soldier and stop expecting dumb things - like for the enemy to like you!

8. **Leave judgement / vindication with God** who will judge all of these people, alive or dead they will not escape his judgement. Verse six has been called, “the most difficult text in the Bible” (Mastermann, 1912, p 143). The confusion comes because of the later church practice of “prayers for the dead”, which was and is a pagan thing that has no place in Christianity. If this text is taken in it’s context, it will not become a pretext for such things! Peter’s point is that God will judge the pagans for their rejection of him, and we are to leave their fate to the justice of God. None will escape it, either living or dead.

As Stern observes, “Yeshua the Messiah is the one who stands ready to judge the quick and the dead (KJV). This is why he was proclaimed to those who have since died (literally to the dead ones); namely it was so that, even though physically they would receive the judgement common to all men, death, nevertheless they might live by the Spirit in the way God has provided. That is, as a result of trusting in Yeshua, they might, by the power of Ruach haKodesh, live holy lives of joy before death; and also, after death, they might have the joy of eternal life with God, also by the Ruach ha Kodesh. This passage, like 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, provides believers with comfort over friends who have

died, as well as an answer to pagans mocking them for exchanging worldly enjoyment merely for the grave (v v 3-4)." (Stern, 1992, p 755).

Remember, the gospel has been preached for over thirty years by the time this is written. Many have died, after hearing and rejecting the good news, as well as those who heard and believed at the time. All are held responsible by the Lord, and will be judged according to what they have done with the good news of the person and work of Christ. That is the criteria. **John 3:16 -36**.

9. **Even the dead have heard the gospel message;** everyone is informed in this matter, some to rejoicing (believers who have died), others to weeping (unbelievers who have died). The good news is "out", the only question is what will mankind on the earth now do with it? Their response is based on the information they receive by the words and life of believers; that is our responsibility, right now, every day!
10. **Live in the power of the Holy Spirit.** - Without the Holy Spirit we are "none of his". Romans 8:9. Christianity is a supernatural faith, and without supernatural power within it is impossible to live the Christ like life to which we are called. The daily command is, "be filled with (empowered by) the Holy Spirit". **Ephesians 5:18, Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31, 9:17, 13:9**.
11. **Keep a clear head at all times,** - be self controlled and in a state of readiness for action at all times. The mental attitude of the soldier and athlete is called for. We are on active service, in status "Alpha", at "Red Alert"; and that means the enemy may attack at any time and we must be ready to follow our orders unto death at all times. This level of focus is the standard for us, all falling short is sin in our commander's eyes.
12. **Keep in touch with your commanding officer at all times through constant prayer.** - Prayer without ceasing, Paul said in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**. We are to be in constant touch with Head Quarters, and that means constant prayer. When this fellowship is broken by sin, we are to quickly confess (1 John 1 : 9) and get back into living fellowship with the Lord, for our safety and security and efficiency in the battle depends upon our communications with him, and his with us.

Verse four reminds us that just being different in a society that values "community" is seen by many as a real problem. "Christians were held to be a queer group of kill joys. Their very presence was resented by their profligate neighbours. This dramatic difference in moral standards led with increasing frequency to active persecution." (Mounce, 1982, p 64). Do not think it a "strange thing" that men hate you, recognise your role as a soldier and take your place of service in the Lord's ranks. **Mark 13:13, Luke 19:14, 21:17, John 15 :18 - 25, 17:14**. Our role is to by serving the Lord through the proclamation of the gospel, with a godly life to back it, and to do good to those who hate us, even unto death. **Matthew 5:43 -44, Luke 6:22-27, 1 John 3:13**.

Peter is calling us to a realistic assessment of what our faith means, and what it involves by way of sacrifice and service. He stresses mental attitude because that is what wins long wars not gimmicks. We are engaged in a long war against sin and it's prince. The victory has been won on the cross, but the enemy is still at large and can do damage, even though he can no longer "win" finally. This is the soldier's mental attitude to which we are called. Satan is not bound, and all the prayers of well meaning folks will not bind him. He roars like a lion still and like lions in the hunt, seeks out the weak and sickly to attack, **1 Peter 5:8**. He is a defeated foe, but the Lord leaves him here until the end, to accomplish the Lord's purposes in accordance with his plan, and timing. We are to know his destiny, our own, and what it is we are to do, and what is foolishness!

Verse seven challenges us to an, end times viewpoint of present time! We are to see every day as if it is our last, every day as possibly the last chance to share the truth with another, every day as the one where the Lord wraps this part of world history up and moves on to the next. "The Christian is ever to keep the end in view. He is to live not for the passing moment but as one who knows that the end of all things, that is, all things of this present order, is at hand." (Ironsides, 1984, p 49).

To do this involves two things in Peter's mind; things which sum up the "daily Orders" above. The first is to be alert to the eternal realities, with a mind that is clear of anything that will distract or befuddle it. The second is to be men and women of prayer, constantly in touch with the Lord our Saviour. "They were not to allow their minds to become befuddled or dazed by drink or drowsiness. They should keep themselves awake and alert, with all their faculties under control in order to be able to give themselves to prayer." (Stibbs, 1959, p 154).

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

“When Christians undergo suffering for conscience sake, there is a real virtue in it, a blessing from God (3:14). It enables them to participate more fully in the Spirit (4:14).” (Moffatt, 1963, p 146). Suffering is not to be seen as a “strange thing”, be it from the natural world, or from people, or demonic forces who attack us. We are on active service after the Lord’s great victory of the Cross and Resurrection.

Our job is to proclaim that victory in the presence of the spiritually defeated enemy, who the Lord has left upon the earth until the end of all things. We are called to know our place, our role, the demons place, their role, and the nature of the Lord’s victory, and where history is going, and be assured of the destiny of the enemy forces. As soldiers with this knowledge we are secure and can serve with the confident mental attitude that Peter calls for here. Let us ensure we are that confident! We have no excuse, for the Lord has given us all the facts – but we must study the Word to know all the facts.

“Earthly life becomes divided for the Christian into the time past, before his conversion, and the rest of his time in the flesh, after his conversion.” (Stibbs, 1959, p 149). We need to recall where we have been saved from, and where we are going, and then orient ourselves to the task to fulfil here and now, and do it! Have we received the “Daily Orders” of these verses? Are we obedient to them?

The eternal life perspective is the one we have seen in the first three chapters of the letter. Now Peter brings in another viewpoint we are to have; the “end times” viewpoint, where all things are seen as if each day is the last of this age!

Peter’s point with each concept is to focus the mind each day and not let them drift by. We are soldiers, not drifters! Let us behave like trained and disciplined soldiers, not having anything in common with drifters.

[b] PASTORAL

“To live now for the will of God is to forestall heaven. . . . The lusts of men are many and varied, the will of God is one and eternal.” (Mastermann, 1912, p 132). Is this the message the people hear daily from our pulpit? If they do not we are in error and need to stand corrected.

“We live in a world and pay occasional visits into the unseen and eternal; those early Christians lived in the unseen and eternal, and paid periodic necessary visits into the world. We conform to this world, they were transformed by the daily renewing of their minds.” (Meyer, 1953, p 138). The “Daily Orders” of this section are a standard for us to assess our own work by and to check out our ministries within the church. How are we doing when we measure our success against these things?

CONCLUSION

The urgency that Peter gets into these verses is the urgency we need in our preaching, and the world needs to see it in our lives and hear from our lips.

DOCTRINES

OLD SIN NATURE [See page 51-53 above]

MARRIAGE [See page 105 above]

PLAN OF GOD [See page 75 above]

DRINKING ALCOHOL

1. Drinking of alcohol in moderation is acceptable scripturally. For example: for medicinal reasons, or where customary with meals (1 Timothy 5:23, John 2:1-11).
2. Drunkenness is always condemned as a sin and foolishness in the Bible (Proverbs 20:1, 23:20, Isaiah 5:11-22, 28:7-8, Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 5:11).

3. Drinking of alcohol is to be avoided in certain positions of leadership:

- a) Kings (rulers, government leaders) (Proverbs 31:4-5)
- b) Pastors (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- c) Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8).

4. Drinking of alcohol proved disastrous for certain persons:

- a) Noah (Genesis 9:21)
- b) Nabal (1 Samuel 25:36-37)
- c) Ephraim (Isaiah 28:1)
- d) Lot (Genesis 19:32-36).

5. Alcoholism forms a part of the pattern of national disaster, contributing to economic and military defeat, and the destruction of the nation (Joel 1:4-6, Isaiah 28, Jeremiah 13:12-17).

6. Adverse effects of excessive drinking of alcohol:

- a) Leads to impulsive, abusive and irresponsible behaviour
- b) Destroys brain tissue and disease
- c) Results in delirium tremens (D.T.'s) which cause confusion, anxiety, terror and delusions.

7. Believers should not drink alcohol in any circumstances where it may cause others ("weaker" believers or unbelievers) to stumble, or where it will hinder ministry. Our freedom must never be the cause of offence or harm of any sort!

PARAPHRASE

"Therefore, on the basis of these things we have seen, let us see together their significance and application. As the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us, (once for all absolutely) in his body, so we also need to put on our mental armour; that is, think in our mind in exactly the same way as he did, in relation to the things of this world (the body). The one who suffers in their flesh (in the way the Lord did), has finished with sin (they reject it as 'of the body', a temptation to a thing which does not last and therefore has no significance or meaning, and should have no power over us). The result of that mental attitude is that the person lives their remaining brief life according to the will of God, rather than the many lusts of the body. For our past life (as unbelievers) should be enough to satisfy us as to the results of sin! In those days we produced all the works that sin was capable of producing, we walked as pagans. Just like the other Gentiles, we practised unrestrained living, lives given over to strong passions, habitually getting drunk, going to noisy drinking parties, setting out to get ourselves to a place where we were under the influence of drink or drugs, ending up doing awful and immoral sexual acts, and calling it our religion! Think about this. Is it any wonder that those you used to party with hate you, and think it strange, and are insulted and offended by your change of life (that convicts and rebukes them). They speak evil about you for this reason, but relax in God's justice in these matters, for he will judge all those who oppose his plan, whether they have died already or are still alive, none will escape his judgement. For this reason, (so that all mankind who has ever lived), will know the truth, the good news of Christ's victory over sin and death, was preached even to those who had already died, (so they might know their fate is as sure as that of the fallen angels we have already seen above). The dead have not escaped judgement, they will receive the same judgement as those already alive in their flesh, that they, in their spirit might know the truth and stand before their God. The end of all things is at hand, (this phase of world history could end at any time), so you therefore ought to be people known by two things. Firstly you ought to be people who are always Holy Spirit controlled, and as such people constantly in prayer to your commanding officer, receiving his daily orders for your life at all times."

VERSES 8 - 11

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins (Proverbs 10:12). 9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging. 10 As every man has 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 that God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever Amen.”

KEY WORDS

Above Have	pro panton Echo	before all things, above all else. present active participle, keep on having and holding this mental attitude.
Fervent	Ektenes	strenuous intense; as of a soldier in long hard combat, or athlete training.
Charity	Agape	the love that gives consideration to the others needs first, and meets them.
Cover	Kalupto	present active indicative of the verb, to cover or veil so it cannot be seen.
Multitude Sins Hospitality	Plethos Hamartia Philoxenos	a great number of [sins]. sins seen as all acts falling short of the standards of God. entertaining and providing for the needs of people who were strangers before.
Grudging	Goggusmos	murmuring, complaining, grumbling, even when it is justified by the “guests” bad behaviour or outstaying their welcome.
As Every man Received	Kathos Ekastos ambano	according as. each individual one is responsible to do this, no exclusions. aorist active indicative, as at each point in time, especially in view, the moment of time when Christ was met in the life, you received his grace.
Gift	Charisma	gift in the sense of thing received, here the grace, mercy and love of God.
Minister	Diakoneo	present active participle, of the verb, to wait on tables and serve others.
Stewards Manifold Speak	Oikonomoi Poikilos Laleo	those responsible for administering their masters estate, or business. many coloured, variegated, of all different sorts and types. present active indicative, as anyone keeps on speaking habitually, let it be as,
Oracles Ability Giveth	Logia Ischus choregeo	the words spoken, their meanings. strength and mighty power within that emerges under pressures. present, active, indicative, to keep on supplying the chorus of a Greek play, lots of money was involved, hence the meaning of to supply what is needed in abundance. Such people did this to gain a reputation and therefore they left nothing undone, or done in a miserly way, they gave more than was needed so that they were known for wealth and their commitment to the arts. This is the mental attitude that Peter wants of us.
Glorified	doxazo	present, passive, subjunctive, of the verb to bring praise, honour and glory so that all would burst into loud praise over the thing done; the subjunctive mood indicates purpose.
Praise Dominion	doxa kratos	glory mighty power.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Verse 8. Love conquers all! So many say in our own day, but is it right and correct? Peter says it is correct in the area he is talking about, which remember, is the area of our witnessing role as members of the Lord’s staff from heaven, standing for him upon the earth. For Paul love stands as the “key stone”, fruit of the Holy Spirit, holding all the others together. **1 Corinthians 13:1-14:1.** The Lord made love the central virtue around which others “spin” also. **Matthew 5:44-46, 18:22, 19:19, 22:37-39, Mark 12:29-34, Luke 6:27-38, 7:47, John 13:34, 35, 14:15-24, 15:9-17.** There are over two hundred (200+) references to love being important for the believer in the Epistles of the New Testament. We cannot ignore this verse, for it is the central teaching of Christianity; **BY** this shall all men **KNOW** you are my disciples, **IF** you **LOVE** one another!

How does love cover a multitude of sins? Remember the context as you read this. The context is our service, not our salvation. Peter is not teaching a form of works salvation here, he is teaching us something about the function of the church in it’s witness before the world. We will all sin, and do and say dumb things at times, but if we have love, these foolish acts and words will be, in effect, “veiled”; others won’t see them, they will see our love and still hear our words.

Many unbelievers reject the gospel, saying, 'those Christians, they are all hypocrites'. Sadly, this is true many times. The believers are living lives that negate their testimony. They hand out tracts about Jesus, but the tracks they make in the world are bad ones! People look at our lives, and if they see we live a lie, they spot that, but if they see love shining through, they will overlook, or not even see our sins, for this world is hungry for real love.

Unbelievers have had their full of promiscuous sex and all forms of false love, but they desire above all else genuine love, and will respond when they see it. Young believers also need to see and feel the genuine love of a fellow believer for them. Sadly many young believers leave churches because they are turned away by some hate or envy filled believer; love will cover many sins, and stop them poisoning the minds of others. Love will also heal the wounds that petty sins cause.

Nothing "veils" our sins from God, for our sins are both fully seen and fully taken away by the blood of Jesus; but before men, our sins can be "veiled", and they still see Christ in our lives through our love, for He is LOVE, and this is the message the unbeliever needs to hear and see. For troubled and distressed believers, they too need to see and feel our love for them, for Christ loves them, and we are to love our brethren also, just as we are loved.

A few years after Peter wrote this verse John would write even more strongly about this in his letters. **1 John 3:11-23, 4:7- 5:3**. Love is the test for genuine faith. Love must always, "work out", in life. If fruit does not work "out" of the vine, so it is visible, then it is not fruit! There is no such thing as "invisible love"; love by definition must be expressed, or it is simply neurotic infatuation. Peter is calling all believers to genuine love.

Verse 9. The most practical demonstration of love between Christians in the ancient world was in the area of hospitality, the place where you were to put yourself out to assist a travelling fellow believer. Hospitality meant opened your home to a person with whom you may have nothing in common other than his/her love for the Lord. It could be burdensome at times, but it was a practical indication of what **WAS REALLY IN YOUR HEART**. Peter's call is to a life of love without hypocrisy and without grumbling about it. To love and grumble at the same time is **NOT** to love at all! The Greek word for grumble here is the one used to translate the Hebrew word "meribah".

Peter is likely referring to this time in Israel's history where they showed what was in their heart by their "grumbling", and were judged by the Lord. Peter calls us all to a life of genuine love, and blessing from God, but in using this word he reminds us that the alternative is the judgement and discipline of the Lord upon our lives. **Hebrews 3:7 - 4:13, Exodus 15:23-26, 16:2-8, Exodus 17:1-7, Numbers 14:1-35**. These passages are recorded for a warning to all generations of believers; we are not to moan!

Verse 10. The principle of verse ten is well known and often quoted. 'As you have received, so give', is easy to say, but Peter demands application in practical service to others in the local church. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be used to benefit others not to enjoy for ourselves! If a believer sees their gifting as sources of personal pleasure first, they have lost the point of them! All gifts are given to be used. **Matthew 25:13-40**. What you don't use you lose! **John 15:1-17**.

We have received the 'greatness of God's grace'; 'grace by the truckload', we might even say! To those who have received much, much is required! This is a specific command of our Lord, and Peter quotes the Lord here. We must obey this or be "off side" with our Master! **Matthew 10:8, Luke 12:41-48**. Note it is Peter's question that leads to this parable. **John 1:16**. All that we receive from the Lord is to be used to bless others, never narcissistically bless ourselves!

Verse 11. This is a powerful word about our speech, as the earlier ones have been about our heart and our behaviour. Note again Peter's order in his commands; first the mental attitude of love (open your hearts to each other), then the use of the homes God has provided for them, (open your homes to each other), then he moves into the area of general behaviour (open your wallets and diaries - use of your money and talents and time, to assist your brethren). Finally he says be clear, thoughtful, and wise in the use of your words.

Peter refers to the oracles of the ancient world. There were two sorts of oracles in the ancient world; there were the words of the pagan gods (demons - **Psalm 96:5**) spoken through the demon possessed priests of pagan shrines, and then the words spoken by the prophets of the true God.

Every time we speak in public before men we must remember we stand for the Lord and our words should be the words of the Lord we represent. If a believer cannot speak the words of God, they should not be speaking so much!

Next Peter mentions service for others. The word for service is diakoneo, the word for the deacon, and meaning to wait on tables as a waiter, and serve the food for others. Peter's point is clear; if you are called to serve the Lord in the practical service, even of serving tables, then you are to do it "as unto the Lord", and in such a way that those seeing you will give praise to God. All work is to be done to bring glory to the Lord. The focus of all our activities is to bring glory to the Lord who brought us. The service we do is to be "empowered" service, with the Holy Spirit being our power enabling us to serve the Lord under pressure.

The Lord provides all the power we need to do his work. The word Peter selects to describe the way the Lord provides is the word for the benefactor of the Greek theatre, the one who provided thousands of dollars to meet the costs associated with putting on a drama. The person doing this had to be very wealthy. Peter's point is, that the Lord God is mighty to save and powerful in his provision for his saints, and there is no lack of anything required to do the job, to play our part in the great drama of time and eternity.

Peter's final blessing in this verse is interesting. To the Lord is the, "glory and might for ever and ever, amen". To the Lord is the glory forever, and he has the mighty power that will be acknowledged forever. He ends with the "amen". It is not just, "so be it", but a very strong statement in itself. "It is not a wish, but rather a strong affirmation, placing a seal of approval on what has just been said". (Hiebert, 1982, p 252, 253). "The word is not the expression of a wish (so be it), but the assertion of a fact (it is so)". (Mastermann, 1912, p 151).

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

Note the order of the commands again:

1. **Set your heart right** with the fruit of the Spirit - LOVE one another in heart and deed. Open your hearts in love to one another.
2. **Open your homes**, in proportion to which you have opened your heart to fellow believers.
3. **Open your wallets** and provide for needs of others as you can. Be as generous with others as God has been with you.
4. **Open your diaries**, and make time to help your brethren, using the gifts God has provided.
5. **Open your mouth**, only when you can speak, as it were, the words of God in a godly way, with a view to having the impact on lives that an oracle would have.

"Love forgives, avoids giving occasion for sin, is quick to discern some generous construction to put upon the fault, or to quote some consideration to weigh in the opposite scale, and it rebukes with great tenderness". (Meyer, 1953, p 145). Does love guide our actions? Do we show it at every opportunity? If not, let us check our selves out, for without love we are empty of the work of the Holy Spirit!

In verse nine, "the addition (of the words), without grumbling has a sharp tang of realism about it. Then as now guests could overstay, or otherwise abuse their hosts welcome." (Kelly, 1969, p 179). How well do we measure up here? Do we look out for other believers, open our homes, and open our wallets to help those overseas with the necessities of life?

This is the standard the Lord sets for us, and so let us respond to need with open hearts not a fortress mentality protecting our "things". What God has given is to be given away to support others. What we have is not "ours", it belongs to the Lord, as we do!

Do an audit of your words today. How much of what you have said to others could be said to be "oracles of God"? How much serious material passed your lips today, and how much fluffy stuff or garbage? This is a matter for which we are accountable before the Lord our God.

Is every action in captivity to Christ? **2 Corinthians 10:5**. All we do is to bring glory to the Lord. Can we praise the Lord as we serve in practical issues? This is the daily challenge, to look at all tasks and find a way to bring glory to the Lord through them, and to utilise the Lord's mighty power to ensure this happens. If it does not, we are at fault, for he has provided mighty power to us, through the Holy Spirit to ensure we are always well supplied.

[b] PASTORAL

"Love refuses deliberately to drag out the sins it encounters so as to expose them to the gaze of all; it prefers to refrain from and discourage all needless talk about them". (Hiebert, 1982, p 247). Audit your pastorate on this matter of love pastor! The theme of love is to saturate every message, or we are off the track. How well have you done recently on this?

"The Christian, by his conversation was cut off from the social life in which he had lived. For all such the apostle wished to secure a warm welcome into the hearts and homes of their fellow Christians. The strength of the early church lay in the koinonia into which each new member was welcomed. The loss of this sense of fellowship in the church today is the dire and humbling legacy of religious discord and social intolerance." (Mastermann, 1912, p 147). While this is true, Peter would be more blunt; it is the result of sin and lack of spiritual life and growth; for all who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be filled with love and will show it to all.

No believer is ever to have to depend on unbelievers if a believer is present and can meet their needs. We have a responsibility to assist our brethren in foreign lands who may be short of money, food, clothes or study material. We may not be able to show hospitality in our homes, but we can provide for their needs from afar. Care for one another is the task we are always called to.

CONCLUSION

All aspects of life are to be under the control by the Holy Spirit empowered believer, in such a manner, as to bring glory and praise and honour to the Lord in all we think, do and say.

DOCTRINES

LOVE [See page 36 above]

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT [See page 24 above]

STEWARDSHIP

1. There are a number of promises related to good stewardship (Luke 6:38, Acts 20:35, 2 Corinthians 9:6, Hebrews 6:10, 13:16).
2. We are to distribute to the saints: (Romans 12:13)
 - a) Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - b) Simply (Romans 12:8)
 - c) To the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)
 - d) Faithfully (1 Corinthians 4:2, Luke 21:1-4)
3. Stewardship in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 112:9; Proverbs 11:24,25; Ecclesiastes 11:1; Malachi 3:10).
4. Stewardship for the rich is given in (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

GLORY

1. Glory is used for the essence of God (Romans 3:23; Ephesians 1:17; Deuteronomy 5:24).

2. Glory is used in the scriptures for maturity (Ephesians 3:21; 1 Peter 1:8).
3. In a perfect marriage, the woman is the Glory of the man (1 Corinthians 11:7).
4. The grace of God is also described as Glory (Ephesians 1:6), and riches of Glory (Ephesians 1:18; 3:16; Philippians 4:19).
5. Heaven and eternal life are described as Glory (1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:10; 1 Peter 5:10).
6. Human glamour is also described as Glory (1 Peter 1:24; Philippians 3:19).
7. Glory is used to describe the wonders of the universe (1 Corinthians 15:40,41).
8. Glory is used to describe the resurrection body of the believer (1 Corinthians 15:43; 2 Thessalonians 2:14).
9. Glory for a woman is her long hair (1 Corinthians 11:15) as it shows her femininity.

PARAPHRASE

“Before all other things in importance, keep on having the mental attitude of committed intense loving concern for others in the church family. This sort of loving concern for others will draw a veil over other sins you may have committed, (that otherwise might get in the way in giving the gospel). Practise habitually showing hospitality towards other visiting believers, and do it without being resentful and complaining about them, (even if they overstay their welcome at times). As each of you have received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so minister using your gifts to the benefit of all in the church family. Be good stewards/servants of this great variety of gifts you have received from the grace of God. If you are to speak in your service, then speak as the very spoken words of God. If any serve through the practical service at tables, then let them serve with the ability and power that God gives. The purpose of all service for the Lord is that through all things done and said, the Lord might receive glory and honour and praise. To him be the glory, the praise, and the ruling mighty power unto the end of the ages.”

VERSES 12 - 19

“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 you, for the spirit of glory and of God rests 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 of a murderer or as a thief, or an evil doer or a busy body 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 judgement 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? (Proverbs 11:31). 19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their soul to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator”.

KEY WORDS

Beloved	agapetoi	loved ones; that is our position in Christ Jesus.
Strange	xenizo	present , passive, imperative, do not keep on receiving the thought that this is strange, unexpected.
Fiery	purosos	burning, fiery, refining, purifying.
Trial	perirasmos	trial, ordeal to prove the nature of a thing/person.
Rejoice	chairo	present active imperative, keep on rejoicing.
Partakers	koinoneo	present, active indicative, to keep on sharing in.
Sufferings	pathema	serious sufferings.
Exceeding	agalliaomai	present, middle , participle, to be exuberantly happy.
Reproached	oneidizo	present , passive, indicative, to receive reviling, insulting words.
Happy	makarios	blessedly happy.
Rests	anapauo	present , middle , indicative, rests, refreshes.
Evil spoken of	blasphemeo	spoken of as evil when really good.
Glorified	doxazo	spoken of bringing glory to his name.
Busybody	allotriepiskopos	one who looks into the lives of others to agitate, or cause mischief.
Ashamed	aischunomai	present passive indicative, to be put to shame.
Glorify	doxazo	present active imperative, the order to give glory to.
Behalf	mereti touto	in respect of this.
Begin	archomai	present middle imperative, must begin (it is ordered).

Obey not	apeitheo	present active participle or the verb to be disobedient.
Scarcely	molis	with difficulty.
Appear	phainomai	future, middle indicative of the verb to appear.
Wherefore	hoste	For all these reasons (sums up the whole paragraph).
Suffer	pascho	present active participle of the verb to the ones who keep on suffering.
Commit	paratithemi	present, middle imperative of the verb, to deliver over to, to entrust for safe keeping.
Well doing	agathopoiia	active well doing.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“The high standards of Christianity made society uneasy. By aspiring to the teaching of Christ believers had inadvertently become the conscience of society. Mankind has always been troubled by its conscience, and persecution has been the normal response. **Matthew 5:11, 1 John 3:13.**” (Mounce, 1982, p 73).

Verse 12. If we are to receive a “fiery trial” in our own lives we are to have the mental attitude expressed here in these verses. Don’t be baffled or surprised by hatred or persecution from unbelievers, as if it is unnatural. The persecution of the saved by those who are determined to be lost is the story of history. Did not Cain murder Abel, Ishmael persecute Isaac, Esau hate Jacob, the authorities hate the Lord himself? This has been Peter’s theme throughout this letter; the hatred of the unbeliever towards the believer is to be expected, and we are to relax in the midst of any pressures that their hatred brings, for we are in the Lord’s hands, and under his loving care. If we are to die under attacks from evil men we can die like Stephen seeing our Lord in the midst of the attack. **Acts 7:55-60.**

We are not to be baffled, questioning, worried, upset or moaning (verse 9), rather we are to be rejoicing when pressure situations come to us. Peter reminds them that they will be rejoicing with joy that overflows all boundaries when the Lord returns, so why not get started now! We are on the winning side. This is another great theme of the letter; if we are serving the one who wins in eternity, let us live like winners now! Rejoice now and rejoice even more later!

Paul has many parallel passages to this one, and it may be that Peter is echoing Paul’s sentiments; they are certainly shared by him. **Philippians 1:18, 2:16-18, 28, 3:1-3, 4:4, Colossians 1:24-26, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16.** This is the apostolic faith; it is a dynamic and powerful faith that smiles in the face of adversity, for it is always looking for the glory of God in the midst, and the path the Lord has provided through the troubles.

Verse 13. Suffering is viewed by the early church as a “gift” given by the Lord to his most mature and choicest saints, in order that they might grow spiritually even more. **Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:24-26.** In suffering we have a chance to enter into something of the sufferings of our Lord. In a manner of speaking we share the sufferings of Christ. That is the thought at the start of verse thirteen.

As the doctrinal study of the subject in the Bible Topic Book makes clear, suffering is not a “bad” thing in this world, for it is the necessary result of the fall of man, but is used by the Lord to bring glory to himself as the saint walks through the suffering empowered by the Holy Spirit and looking to Jesus, the one who set the example of walking through the veil of tears in the spirit of peace and glory. Peter is giving all believers a promise here; reiterating the promise that the Lord is with them to the end of the age, **Matthew 28:20**, but even more is in view, for Peter takes us to the end of the age in his language.

If a believer is called to walk the path of suffering, then he or she is called to be like Christ in it, and by placing ourselves under such a spirit of obedience, even unto death, we will know, in the midst of it, the glory of the Lord in our spirit, as Stephen did, but also much more! Peter says that at his final return to the earth for his saints, we will receive even more glory. The doctrine of “Crowns” covers part of this also, but there is far more in these verses than even this. Suffering is not to be feared, flinched away from or rejected, for there is glory in it, if it comes in God’s will for the saint.

“Do not only brace for afflictions, but rejoice in them, sharing the fellowship of the Messiah’s sufferings (Colossians 1:24, Ephesians 3:1-7). For just as the Sh’khiyah (God’s manifest glory Hebrews 1:2-3) glory, once rested on the temple in Jerusalem, now the spirit of the Sh’khiyah is resting upon you, since your body is a temple for the Ruach Ha Kodesh who lives inside you (1 Corinthians 6:19). The Sh’khiyah was revealed as his, Yeshua’s Sh’khiyah at his first coming (John 1:14-15,); it is the same as ‘the glory to be revealed’ (John 5:1ff), at his Second Coming (Titus 2:12).” (Stern, 1992, p 756).

The early Israelites could see the Sh'khinah glory from afar, but could not approach lest they died, but we, we are the ones who in suffering have the presence of the Sh'khinah of God with us in power, and later when the Lord appears we are there in the winners circle with our Lord sharing his glory, as we shared his sufferings. This victors crown is not won by any save those who share the sufferings of Christ. Can you see why Peter was not concerned if he, or others, had to suffer for their Lord, for it meant they had the opportunity to win great glory now and forever. Peter here is like the great military leader who does not shrink away from combat but urges his faithful troops on, knowing that it is only in the worst of battles that the greatest of medals are given out for "courage under fire". It is to this we may be called, and it is for this that the Sh'khinah of God rests upon us.

Verse 14. This reminds us that we are never alone in suffering, when it is for the Lord's sake. **Daniel 3:25.** In the worst fiery trial, the three Israelites were joined by the Lord himself, and Peter's promise here is, so will we be! Can anything separate us from the loving presence of the one who died for us that we might live? No! Never! We do not follow a Saviour who leaves us in the midst of trials to suffer alone. His firm promise is that he is with us, and will never leave us alone. **Romans 8:26-39.**

Evil doers attacked our Lord, calling him an evil doer, John 18:30, and so they will to us. Like our Lord we must make sure their lies are not true! They called him a blasphemer, but were themselves guilty of the very thing; so it will be until the end when he returns. Peter urges us to turn their blasphemy into glory by the way we take the suffering they dish out to us. By taking the suffering, "as unto the Lord", we transform the attacks of the evil one into glory for the Lord, and glory for ourselves as we stand in Christ Jesus.

What never glorifies God is for believers to suffer in the courts and jails for genuine crimes against their neighbours. We are called to love our neighbours, and full love shares the gospel message, it does not lead to evil. Note what Peter specifically mentions as sins /crimes that believers have clearly been guilty of, or are in present danger of committing.

Verse 15. There are four categories of crime mentioned here, none of which are believers ever to be associated with. The first is murder. Sadly many believers through the centuries have responded to verbal and physical attacks upon them not by turning the other cheek, but by killing those who abused them! Peter, the one who drew his sword on the night of the Lord's arrest has learnt the lesson God had for him that night. Have we heard the words of our Lord? **Matthew 26:51-56, Luke 22:49-51.**

The second thing is theft. All too many of us have stolen money, things that were not ours, and the reputations of others by the lies we may have told. We are not to be known as thieves by the world or they will not hear our message, for if it has not delivered us from such evil practises, what is the good news for the lost?

The third category of things is "evil doing", and covers all things associated with evil. Remember that evil is defined as satanic attacks on the things that God hold's sacred. Anything that attacks, or violates the four so called "divine institutions" is evil:

1. All violation of the free will of human beings is evil doing.
2. All violation of marriage is evil doing. Adultery and all forms of promiscuity, pornography, or other perversions (child abuse, etc), is evil doing.
3. All attacks on the sacredness of the family is evil doing. Child abuse comes into all three categories as one of the great evils.
4. All attacks upon the integrity of the nation state are evil, for God has established the nations as his way to limit evil and enhance opportunities to spread the gospel, reversing the curse of the tower of Babel.

Believers are not to be known for attacking these four divine institutions; we are to be known as people who respect them and uphold them at all times.

Verse 16. This indicates that as the result of the attacks of the mob some believers will be led to judgement, and standing before the judges of ones own society can be a source of shame for a good citizen. Peter says, if you find yourself in this position, do not be ashamed if you are there for a good thing. Whatever the charges against us as believers, we are to make sure no crime is amongst them, except by the lies of our accusers.

Verse 17. This verse notes the logical fact about judgement. "If God's judgement is ordained to start with his chosen people, it is certainly not going to stop with them". (Kelly, 1969, p 193). Note a very sober principle in this verse. When the Lord judges he begins with his own people, and purifies them first by the suffering he allows them to undergo. But if he allows this to occur, will he stop there? Peter brings our minds back to the plan of God again. He reminds us that the suffering of the church is part of a plan and it is leading somewhere, and that is to the end of all things and the judgement of the whole world system. Keeping our heads safe from anxiety and despair as we undergo suffering, involves being focused on the plan of God, that does not end with our pain or death, but ends with his glory and our glory with him.

Also note in verse seventeen, that the unbelievers are referred to as, disobeying not disbelieving. "The gospel makes its demands on the will of man. It does not call for his opinion. The truth of the gospel is not at issue. People either reject the truth or obey the truth. They do not decide on its truthfulness." (Mounce, 1982, p 77). Note this carefully. The unbeliever is condemned by their own actions, they disobeyed the clear instruction of the living God, and for such a crime they are truly lost.

Note also that as far as the church was concerned, it was always, "five minutes to midnight". (F F Bruce, quoted in Hiebert, 1982, p 245.) The return of the Lord was expected at any moment, and they lived with that reality, and had each day purified and focused by it. **Matthew 24:36, Romans 13:12, 1 Corinthians 7:29, Philippians 4:5, Hebrews 10:25, James 5:8, 9, Revelation 1:3, 22:20, 2 Peter 3:8-9.**

In these verses we have the, "methodology for suffering saints" (Meyer, 1953, p 162). It may be summarised by the following three points.

1. Be sure you **keep in the current will of God** for your life.
2. **Be sure to not lose focus**, but keep on doing the good things you can in service for the Lord.
3. When facing each day, **commit your soul to the safe keeping of the Lord.**

Verse 18. This verse has had some "stumbles" with many commentators. It does not teach that it is "hard" for God to save us, and that some might not make it because it is too hard for God to help them! It simply underlines Peter's point from verse seventeen that those who disobey the Lord who died for them are in a very perilous place. Salvation was obtained, "with difficulty", it cost the Lord tremendous suffering, and the price paid was terrible, but it was total and complete. Given that price paid, Peter asks, where will the unbeliever stand? Upon what ground will they try to establish their right to enter heaven on their own account? If the Lord on the cross is the standard, what can they do to win their own salvation? The answer is nothing! There is only one way that man may be saved and that is through the work of Christ; no-one else can do anything like this, and it is this that was required to win our salvation!

Verse 19. Here we have Peter's expectation spelt out. He is not expecting them to die, but if they must his words will keep them mentally safe, if they apply them! "Martyrdom is not envisaged, for he expects them to go on living normal lives and to be energetic in practical charity. God is a reliable depository who can be trusted. His faithfulness is the basic motive for Christian hope in the New Testament." (Kelly, 1969, p 195).

We are not to seek out a dramatic confrontation with the evil powers, we are to do the work that the Lord puts before us. If we are to suffer and/or die however, we are to accept it with rejoicing! He is our faithful creator, and the one who made us, has provided all things needed for us, in all things he leads us into!

If we must face and go through the 'fiery trials', then we are to go through them in the power of the Holy Spirit and grow spiritually, and witness in his power, right until our last breath is breathed. "There is no standing still in things spiritual. He who does not advance goes backwards." (Lumby, 1893, p 195). God is faithful, he never 'forgets' us! We need to know and claim the promises of God. **Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 10:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:24, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 2 Timothy 2:13, Deuteronomy 7:9, Isaiah 49:7,15.**

This is not resigning ourselves to our fate or any form of despair, rather it is the dynamic trust in the power of the Lord to keep us unto death. "Christian resignation differs from fatalism in that it recognises a beneficent will behind all the changes and chances of mortal life." (Mastermann, 1912, p 157).

APPLICATION

[a] **PERSONAL**

“To share Christ’s shame is a glorious privilege, to have his fellowship, though it be in the midst of flames, is to have fullness of joy and to partake of his humiliation in this world is the pledge of participation in his glory in the world to come. . . . Peter’s motive is not to warn believers, but to encourage believers to endure steadfastly; so that believers are reminded, that terrible though their ordeal is, they are at least facing a less severe ordeal than the disobedient will have to face.” (Cranfield, 1959, p 102, 105).

“To suffer for Christ is to be blessed, because God’s glorious spirit comes to rest upon all who endure reproach for him.” (Mounce, 1982, p 75). Medals are only won on the battlefield, never on the parade ground. The church teaching sessions and prayer meetings are the parade ground only; we are trained there to go out and do the work of evangelism and be prepared daily to suffer reproach for his sake. **Luke 6:22-23, 1 Timothy 4:10, Colossians 1:24**. The whole theme of this letter might be titled, the “fiery trial mental attitude”, for that is what Peter wants from us, a dynamic mental attitude that faces troubles as opportunities for glory!

In verse seventeen and eighteen we are encouraged to keep our focus on the Lord who bought us, and to remember that we are kept by him. We are to, “trust yourselves to God, continue to do right and all will be well; however severe this ordeal may be, it is nothing compared to the fate of outsiders.” (Moffatt, 1963, p 160).

Do we remember who has called us, and do we praise him enough and often for who he is? Our response determines how he is able to act in blessing towards us, and that is why we are so often living beneath the level He desires for us. We are meant to be living in “Faith-Rest” – in praise and worship and trust in the one who died for us. He is our faithful creator, and He is the one who made us, and he has provided all things needed for us, in all things he leads us into! Let us praise his holy name! He can be trusted and He will deliver us.

[b] PASTORAL

“Yet we may know something of his other sufferings, when He was tempted, when he foresaw the doom of men and wept; when he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself when he surrendered himself to do and suffer the holy will of God. . . . Would it be right for him to sink fainting beneath his cross, whilst we are carried to heaven on beds of down. Shall he go through seas of anguish and we pass round them by a safer and easier path?” (Meyer, 1953, p 155 - 156).

Are our people prepared for suffering should it come upon our people? If we are training believers we are training them for combat in the angelic conflict and that means there will be casualties. Are the people ready to suffer casualties for the Lord in his work? If our flock does not have the mental attitude expressed here then we do not have the mind of Christ, and we have failed in our job as pastors. Let us train for this spiritual combat; let us encourage our people to always have the mental attitude that takes suffering for the Lord’s sake in his way.

The battle for the believer is a daily battle for a dynamic and apostolic mental attitude. It is a mental attitude that sets itself the task of doing the work that the Lord has set us without dramatics. That means we seek nothing that is not the Lord’s will for us. “Committing oneself to God is not passive submission. It involves active well doing, There is no place for a martyrdom mentality. Suffer in silence but get on with the job of living an active life of good deeds. Christians should be known for what they do.” (Mounce, 1982, p 78).

CONCLUSION

We are called to a “Christ like life”, nothing short of that will do in the Lord’s service. Let us set our hearts and minds to the task of being obedient to him and to be trusting in him for all things, focused on the plan of God not the attacks of disobedient men.

DOCTRINES

SUFFERING [See page 34 above]

REWARDS AND CROWNS [See page 42 above]

NATIONS (NATIONALISM) [See page 90 above]

PARAPHRASE

“Loved ones in Christ, do not think it strange or unexpected that you may endure fiery refining and purifying trials of your faith. Do not think that some strange thing has happened to you, (this is “normal” in the devil’s world). (Instead of confusion and fear) keep on rejoicing, both now,(in the midst of it), and later at the Lord’s glorious appearing, for then you will exult and rejoice with real exuberance. If you are verbally abused because you are believers, blessed are you, because (in the midst of it all) the Holy Spirit is with you! On the part of the evil ones the Lord is blasphemed, but on your side the Lord is exulted (by your response to their attacks). But be sure, that none of you suffers judgement as a murderer, as a thief, as an evil doer, or an agitator and mischief maker. If you are judged as a Christian, then do not be ashamed, but rather let the Lord work his glory through this. Because the time for this judgement is begun and the church will suffer first. But if it starts with us and we suffer, what will happen to those who live in disobedience to the gospel message? If the righteous ones with great difficulty are saved, what will happen to the ungodly? Where will they stand? For all these reasons, those of us who are to suffer according to the will of God, let them commit their souls to the loving, faithful creator of all things, and demonstrate that commitment by doing good things (in love).”

CHAPTER 5

VERSES 1 - 4

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 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 examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

KEY WORDS

Elders	presbuteros	pastoral leadership, involving care for the flock of God, shepherd or steward.
Exhort	parakaleo	present, active, indicative, I keep on urging, pleading, encouraging.
Witness	martus	witness to the true nature of a thing or person.
Sufferings	pathema	sufferings which involve the whole person.
Partaker	koinonos	partner, one sharing in the load, true partnership as in a business.
Revealed	apokalupto	present, passive, infinitive, to be revealed, a process that we will receive.
Feed	poimaino	aorist, active, imperative, of the order, at every point where it is right and necessary, the pastors are to shepherd/care for/lead/protect the flock.
Oversight	episkopeo	present, active, participle, to exercise care, authority under another, so as to receive a good report from them (responsibility to another is understood)
Constraint	anagkastos	not in a way that indicates you are being forced, or compelled to obey.
Willingly	ekousios	voluntarily, willingly, with the keenness of a volunteer, eager to please.
Filthy lucre	aischroperdos	eagerness for money at any price, no matter what shame is involved in the getting of it. Lust for money without moral scruples about how it is got.
Ready mind	prothumos	With passionate enthusiasm, total zeal for the task before you.
Being lords	katakuriueo	present, active, participle, of the verb to exercise lordship, to domineer, and take total control over others.
Heritage	kleros	the Lord’s possession, his “lot”, his charge, what he owns.
Examples	tupos	pattern, example; someone who can be followed as an example of Christ.
Appear	phaneromai	aorist, passive, participle, of the verb to appear. Certainty of his return is here.
Receive	komizo	future, middle, indicative, expressing certainty in the future that we will receive.
Crown	stephanos	victors crown of the athlete or conquering general.
Fadeth	amarantinos	unfading by it’s very nature.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

We are partakers of the glory of the Lord, and Peter wants us excited about the position we have and the opportunities it will provide for this life and the next. As an introduction to this passage read **Psalms 73:16-28**. The spirit of the Psalmist is caught and expressed by Peter in these verses. "Catch the glory", he says to us, and then we will be stabilized in all that this life on the battlefield of space-time can throw at us.

Paul expresses the same things before Peter wrote his letter in, **Romans 8:16-18**. Also refer to, **2 Corinthians 5:1-8, Philippians 1:19-23, Colossians 3:1-4**. Later he would reflect on this subject further in **2 Timothy 4:6-8**, just as John would towards the end of the century in his first letter, **1 John 3:1-3, and Revelation 1:9**. This is why we have included First Peter with the Second Letter as "last words".

Verse 1. Peter claims no superiority in verse one, he is not a "lordly elder", nor any such thing as a "monarchical bishop", as would later develop; indeed his very language, as we will see, opposes such a concept in its entirety. Peter calls on the pastor teachers of the local churches, as a fellow pastor - teacher (to use Paul's term from **Ephesians 4:11**). Eldership was well established in the early church from the beginning because it was a Jewish concept for rulership of the local synagogues.

The specifically Christian criteria for appointment of elders was laid down by Paul in the Pastorals, **1 Timothy 3:1-15, Titus 1:5-9**, but the characteristics here and in other places in the Prison, and other letters, simply highlight the importance of spiritual, Holy Spirit empowered and fruit filled characters to take the leadership. Elders of local synagogues had a similar list of character traits to qualify for appointment, and it was vital that the elders of the church were even more spiritually strong than their Jewish brethren who had not accepted the Messiahship of Jesus.

Verses 2-4. The key characteristic of eldership was care for the flock, as a steward of God's assets, not your own. Peter talks a great deal about "ownership" here, and underlines that the one who "owns" the church, and every local congregation of it, is the one who won the glory by shedding his blood for it! The eldership is directly responsible to the Lord for their conduct in their governance of the local church.

The first point is, there are no "superior elders", all are "fellow elders", of equal status before the Lord, whose "under-shepherds" they are. There is only one celebrity, only one Lord in Christianity, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who won the glory through his sufferings. This has been Peter's other main point in the letter; we share in the Lord's sufferings, and we also share in his glory through them, and we do this by living in his power and under his authority. Everything is to centre on HIM. We are proclaimers of his message of salvation, and this message is a witness (Greek word = *martus*) to his suffering and to his glory. The "good news" is about his suffering in our place, perfect and complete to pay the price for our sin, and his glory, which we share through our faith in him.

We have a fellowship of glory with him, but before that we may have a fellowship of suffering for his message. Throughout this letter, Peter has mentioned that suffering is likely to occur in the Lord's service, but that it is a necessary part of the glory, and we are to "catch the glory", and praise him, in the midst of any suffering that comes our way. In light of his glory we can glory ourselves in all things! **Philippians 4:4**.

In light of the Lord's suffering and his glory, Peter moves to the same order for the pastors of the local churches as he was given by the Lord after his resurrection. Feed the flock of God! **John 21:15-17, Acts 20:28-32**. It is an aorist imperative order. This underlines that there will be times when teaching the living Word of God, will not occur, but at every point in time (aorist) when it is possible, the pastors of the flock of God are to feed them with spiritual food; the wisdom that comes from the Word of God, and the care that flows from a heart transformed by the sufferings of Christ.

It is the word that Peter selects to use here that is interesting. It is the middle order from John 21 that Peter uses to stand for the total passage. It may be best translated, "shepherd my sheep", but it involves the concept of feeding, but so much more also. Peter draws attention to the pastoral role of the local minister/elder; they are to lovingly care for the flock of God, and that involves protection, encouragement, feeding and setting the example of moral leadership. It is a call to, caring courage under fire!

It involves a number of things to work out practically, but first a mental attitude. Peter calls us to have in mind several things (verses 2 - 4):

1. As pastors we are all "fellow-elders", equals before God, tried by suffering, focused and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and with a heart for service, and an expectation of glory within to drive us.
2. We are to "shepherd the flock; loving, self sacrificial service is in view here.

3. We are to feed the flock; they must not starve when they are with us.
4. They are God's flock, not ours. We have the care and responsibility, but we answer to the Lord himself for our work with the flock he has given us.
5. We are to exercise oversight, so as to receive a good report from the Lord, and we are to be focused, as we serve Him, on His well done not anything else. Matthew 25:21-23.
6. We are to serve in a free way, under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, not from any other "constraint". No compulsion is to drive us except the desire coming from within from love for our Lord.
7. We are to be as keen as a volunteer, and with all the passion that this involves.
8. Lust for money, power, authority, position, or reputation, are not to be a part of our lives at all. Such lust for power is illustrated by Diotrephes. 3 John 9-10.
9. We are to be filled with passion, ready to serve, with total zeal for the task to which we are called.
10. Not lording it over the flock, as monarchs or dictators.
11. Being patterns, role models that others can follow in holy and joy filled living.
12. Being focused on winning the crown of glory, that is the eternal reward for the pastor who serve well. This involves being prepared to wear the crown of suffering in time with glory in our hearts, for they are fixed on eternal realities, where our true reward will be received.

Compare this list with those of the Timothy and Titus passages. Note how Peter's concern is for a **mental attitude** which if present fulfills all of Paul's concerns also. Paul's lists are primarily relevant for new Pastors being appointed in new churches, where-as Peter's list complements this and may be added to Paul's, especially where the church is facing pressures, and has been established for a while.

Lazy pastors, power or money hungry pastors, are strongly rebuked here, and are reminded that the Lord's expectation of them is serious, and the consequences of failure or success (as the Lord determines it), are eternal. The Lord is the Chief Shepherd, he is the one to whom we must give account, and it is his well done that we are to focus on.

His return is sure, and he comes to give rewards to the saved and execute judgment upon the lost. Let us ensure, Peter says here, that we are on the receiving end of rewards not judgment.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

"Sufferings are not only a qualification for shepherdship but for glory, . . . No cross, no crown!" (Meyer, 1953, p 164). Beware the mental attitude in this life that concentrates on rewards, and the things that wealth can buy in this world, for that does not last, and will not protect the soul from the losses that may come under persecution. Only a heaven directed soul will survive the pressures of persecution, and only a heaven looking soul will win the crown of life!

The word 'martus' denotes one who testifies rather than an eye witness, and it is frequently applied in the New Testament (**Luke 24:48, Acts 1: 8, 22:15**) to people who proclaim, and so bear witness to Jesus." (Kelly, 1969, p 198). We are all left here to be witnesses of the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot witness to this truth unless it is true in our life! Do we seek the temporary crowns that this world has to offer, or do we seek the eternal rewards that the Lord gives to those who set him first, and value only the work that he has for them.

"In periods of persecution there was a real danger in accepting office, for officials enjoyed an unpleasant prominence, which led to them often being singled out (for attention) by State authorities. Hence some were indisposed to take office at all." (Moffatt, 1963, p 163). Peter's point is clear; we are to accept whatever it is

that the Lord has, as our destiny in our brief life, and we are to serve him to the full extent of our Holy Spirit empowered abilities.

[b] PASTORAL

Peter keeps on exhorting about the theme, "catch the glory", he keeps on saying this in many ways through the letter to the flock, and chiefly to the shepherds of the flock. This is certainly our challenge as pastors today. The two fold impetus behind this call is, the suffering and the glory of the Lord. They are to be kept together in Peter's view; for the sufferings intensify, or add to, the glory of the Lord. The Lord is the, "Lord of Glory", who came in the glory of the Father, **Luke 2:9-14**, and who will come again in his own glory; glory that will be even greater than that in which he came to earth first, **Luke 9:26-32, 21:27, Matthew 16:27**.

It was this daily expectation that enlivened the early church, and the power of it fired their service for the Lord of Glory, who they expected to see daily. In the very communion service, the wine was taken with the words, "until he comes" 1 Corinthians 11:26. Do we give this impression to our people today? Can they "catch the fire": can they see and "catch the glory", and be transformed by the reality of the Lord's coming? If not, we are off the track, and need to return to the true path.

"Whatever authority the elders have springs from lives of godliness and subjection to the Lord. They are to be examples to the flock, those whom the sheep of Christ may safely follow." (Ironsides, 1984, p 57). Peter could be saying as we would today in an advertisement, 'No spiritually blind or stupid shepherds need apply!' A truly stupid person is one who does not think of the end of his life. Many live as if they will not die and give account; what fools they are, and what useless lives we live if we forget how we will end. "Instead of driving and bullying the faithful, the presbyters are to prove a pattern to the flock, their best influence will be through personal example." (Moffatt, 1963, p 164).

It is the end of the race that determines who wins, not any other part of it! Do not let any one rob you of your prize, Paul says, Colossians 2:18. How do others rob us of our rewards? They rob us by distracting us from the reality of the race, by getting us to slacken our pace, or go off the track. We are to be like the runners of the Olympics, and run to win! **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**. Peter's words echo Paul's in verse 27. "But I keep control of myself, bringing my body under subjection, lest in any way at all, that having preached to others I might find myself disqualified." How tragic for the pastor who preaches one thing and lives another, for he loses all reward! This is Peter's message to pastors; get focused again on the end of the race, and run to win, and train the flock to have the same mental attitude as this!

"This pastoral responsibility of the under shepherd can only be rightly understood in relation to Christ's pastoral responsibility as the chief shepherd. It is a sharing in this work and our shepherding is altogether dependent upon His." (Cranfield, 1958, p 110). He has placed us in this position of great responsibility and it is responsibility unto HIM.

Let every pastor examine his heart and ensure that he lives this responsibility daily and examines himself daily that his work stands the test of time, and the test of eternity. **Psalms 26:2, 1 Corinthians 11:27-33, 2 Corinthians 13:5-10**. The words of St Bernard are powerful here. "Had I some of that blood that poured forth on the cross, how carefully would I carry it! And ought I not to be as careful of those souls that it was shed for?" (Quoted in Mastermann, 1912, p 160).

"But they are God's flock, For the flock is precious to Christ and should be precious to his shepherds. To let them perish for want of tending is treachery to the master who has sent men to his work". (Lumby, 1893, p 204) This strong emphasis is mine as well as Lumby's. There is work to be done, and in any church where this emphasis is not felt by the people, I believe that the pastor has failed in his duty to GOD! This is our role, and all falling short of this is sin on our behalf as the Lord's under-shepherds.

There must be, clearly from this passage, a strong Second Advent emphasis in our preaching. The Lord's coming again is the purifying hope(**1 John 3:1-3, 1 Corinthians 13:12, James 1:22-25**) for us all, flock and shepherds. He is coming again, therefore what manner of pastors should we be? Let this empower our thinking every day. Let us daily, catch the fire, catch the glory of it, and so serve him with a focus that will protect and encourage our flock in the midst of the worst that the enemy can throw at us. **Colossians 3:3-4, 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12, 1 John 3:1-3, Revelation 1:7,8, 20:11-15**.

As believers and as pastors we share the glory of our Lord, and as pastors we have the opportunity to add glory to glory, by winning the Crown of Glory. "It denotes victory. It is not so much a glorious wreath

(Goodspeed), as it is a wreath that consists of glory. Our crowning reward will be to share in the disclosure of divine glory in the age to come." (Mounce, 1982, p 84).

We are to strive to gain mastery, **1 Corinthians 9:25**, and so win the crowns that are to be given at the great throne of the Risen Lord. We may then, like the twenty four elders, have the great opportunity to cast our crowns at the Lord's feet to celebrate his glory. **Revelation 4:10-11**. All rewards in heaven are opportunities for greater worship of HIM who gave his all for us; should we not be striving for this reward in order that we may praise him even more! Catch the fire pastor! Let the Spirit move in you! Catch the glory!

DOCTRINES

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

1. There is no evidence in the scriptures for denominations.
2. Where denominations have formed there has been a tendency for apostasy and degeneration.
3. God the Holy Spirit has given at least one spiritual gift to all believers in the church.
4. The correct use of these gifts will cause the efficient function of the body of Christ (church). People should not be fill roles if they do not have the appropriate gift, or if they fail to meet the qualifications listed in Scripture.
5. Each local church should be independent, with its own leadership (pastor/elders), administration (deacons) and all other members functioning in their spiritual gifts.

PASTORS/ELDERS

1. Acts 20:17,28 shows that the elder/pastor/bishop/overseer are the same. Each word simply emphasizes a different role.
2. Greek words used of the pastoral role and responsibility:
 - a) Presbuteros (elder) - the authority in the church (cf. the elders were the wise judges who sat at the gates of ancient cities) (Acts 20:17)
 - b) Poimenos didaskalos (pastor-teacher) - the shepherd, to feed the flock and protect them (Jeremiah 3:15)
 - c) Episkopos (bishop/overseer) - the leader/overseer of the church (Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7)
 - d) Diakonos (servant/minister) - the servant in humility.
3. It is therefore concluded that an elder is a pastor holding the office of bishop, overseer or shepherd in the Church. They deal with spiritual matters within the church, shepherding, feeding and protecting the flock.
4. An elder should have the spiritual gift of Pastor/Teacher or Evangelist.
5. Function:
 - a) To rule (1Tim 3:4,5; 1 Tim 5:17) - the pastor/elders in a church are the authority in the church, under God.
 - b) To guard the body of revealed truth from error and perversion (Titus 1:9).
 - c) To oversee the Church as a shepherd of his flock (Acts 20:28; John 21:16; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 - d) Elders are given to the church by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28).
 - e) Great stress is laid upon their due appointment (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
 - f) At first they were ordained by an apostle. (Acts 14:23)
 - g) Later Church guidance was required in such appointments. (Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:1-7)
6. Qualifications: (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1)
 - a) blameless - you will be blamed for many things - make sure they are not true. You must deal with sin in your life.

- b) be the husband of one wife or a one-woman man (ie faithful, not lusting after other women) - v 11 He may have been legitimately divorced according to scripture.
- c) be vigilant - clear headed or cool
- d) be sober - has self control
- e) be of good behaviour - orderly and well co ordinated, respectable
- f) be hospitable - always ready to invite people into your home
- g) be keen to teach - keen to share the Word of God with them.
- h) not given to wine - he should not be addicted to alcohol.
- i) not be a striker - he must not be a hot head
- j) must not be greedy of filthy lucre - he must not be greedy for money
- k) must not be a contentious arguer
- l) must not be covetous
- m) if married, his wife and children must be dignified and under control
- n) not a new convert. Train candidates for ministry as deacons, in Sunday Schools and youth groups before appointing them
- o) he must have a good witness to the unbelieving world.

7. The appointment of pastors is described in (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).

8. The gift of pastor-teacher is given to men only - it is not the role of the woman to teach or exercise authority over men in the church (1 Timothy 2:12, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

9. Pastoral authority is not a cause for boasting, it is based on service with all humility (John 13:5 -17 2 Corinthians 10:8, Galatians 6:3-5). The pastor's authority is to teach the Word of God so that all will see the truth clearly.

10. Age is not a barrier (1 Timothy 4:9-12).

11. If the pastor does not fulfill his responsibilities:

- a) He is to be warned, then rebuked by the elders if he continues (Titus 2:15, 2 Corinthians 13:10, 2 Timothy 4:2).
- b) The Lord will discipline him (1 Timothy 6:3-5, James 5:19-20).

12. The reward of the pastor - Hebrews 6:10, 1 Peter 5:4.

13. Key verses for the pastoral role - 1 Peter 5:4, Ephesians 3:7-13, 1 Timothy 2:24-26, 3:1-9, Colossians 1:23-29, Titus 1:6-9, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 6:10.

DEACONS

1. The Greek word (DIAKONOS or DIAKONEO) means "servant". The function of the deacons is to serve in the church so that the elders are free to deal with spiritual matters Acts 6:1-7

2. Deacons are the administrators of the Church, including such functions as secretary, treasurer.

3. A deacon should have the gift of administration, helps or service.

4. Qualifications: (1 Timothy 3)

- a) be honest regarding money
- b) be morally pure as they are dealing with people who have lost their husbands
- c) be spiritual and walking with the Lord

- d) be wise - full of doctrine
- e) be endorsed by the eldership (the apostles laid their hands on them to give them authority)
- f) be grave - they must be serious, mature and dignified
- g) not be double tongued or two faced - what they say must be what they mean
- h) not be given to wine, not a drinker who sits over his drinks. He does not need to be a tee totaller
- i) not be greedy for money because the deacon is the person who deals with money
- j) hold doctrine in purity, thus being a conservative as far as doctrine is concerned
- k) have a pure conscience or a tender conscience, a person who feels sin deeply
- l) be proved. He should be proved in other areas before he becomes a deacon- v 10
- m) be a faithful worker in the church if he is to be considered as a deacon
- n) be the husband of one wife or a one-woman man (ie faithful, not lusting after other women) - v 11 He may have been legitimately divorced according to scripture
- o) if married, have a wife who was dignified, not a gossip, since the deacon may share sensitive matters with his wife.

REWARDS AND CROWNS [See page 42 above]

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRIES [See page 47-51 above]

PARAPHRASE

“To the pastors that are in all the local churches; remember I am also an under-shepherd, just like you are, and (like you all called to be) a witness daily, testifying of the sufferings of Christ, and also the glory (of his victory over sin), that will be revealed (at his second advent). I keep on urging and pleading with you to be the under-shepherds (that you are called to be), at every appropriate time, protecting, encouraging, and feeding the flock that belongs(not to you, but) to God,(but has been given to you to exercise loving care over). Take the responsibility of this charge(from God), not as if you are being forced to obey, but like an enthusiastic volunteer, eager to please (the one who called you to this). Do not serve by reason of any motivation related to the money, position, or power that you might receive, but with total zeal for the task before you. Do not be like dictators over what is really God’s possession(not yours to lord it over), but keep on being the sort of examples of lives that others could follow safely (and win reward themselves). (I say all this, so that) when (that certain day comes and) the Chief Shepherd returns for us, you will receive the (eternal life reward of the) crown of glory, that will shine to the glory of God forever and ever.”

VERSES 5 - 9

“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, but giveth grace to the humble (Leviticus 19:32, Proverbs 3:34, also see Isaiah 57:15, Psalm 138:6). 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exult you in due time: (Psalm 75, Proverbs 15:33, Jeremiah 45:5). 7 casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you (Psalm 55:22). 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world .”

KEY WORDS

Likewise hosoiios in the same manner as the under-shepherds have been given their

Submit	hupotassomai	orders. aorist, passive, imperative, at every point where it is relevant, they are to respond respectfully to the pastors authority, under the Lord.
Subject	hupotassomai	present, passive, imperative, keep on being(passive voice = receiving from the Holy Spirit the ability to) respectfully responsive to each other.
Clothed	egkomboomai	aorist, middle, imperative, of a strong military/slavery verb, to fasten firmly to yourself, by a knot, clasp or bow. Slave's apron or soldier's equipment. Given the other military words, it is the powerful obedient humility of the trained soldier that is in view in these verses rather than the slave image.
Humility Resists	tapeinophrosune antitasso	humble thinking, not thinking yourself "above" any task or duty. present, middle, indicative or the verb, to line up an army in battle order against an enemy. To set up against, to resist and defeat an enemy.
Proud	huperephanos	the ones thinking "above" themselves; unjustified high opinion of themselves.
Humble	tapeinos	the mental attitude of the person who knows their place and role in a group and takes their role without complaining, without seeing it as a "put down".
Giveth Grace Humble	didomi charis tapeinoo	present, active, indicative, God 'keeps on giving' grace. 'all that God is free to do for us in Christ Jesus'. aorist passive imperative; at all relevant points in life, apply "humble" thinking to the situation you face.
Mighty Exult	krataios upsoo	strong, mighty, all powerful as of God and ruler of all! aorist active subjunctive; that he might (possibility) lift you up, make you high, in the military sense, a "field promotion" where you are made a higher rank in front of the whole army. Great honour and reward is in view, for greater service.
Due time	kairos	timeliness is in view here; understood that this will occur at God's "right time".
Casting	epippipto	aorist, active, participle; to violently throw, wrestling/military term to "body slam" an opponent/enemy to the ground, to knock the wind out of them.
Care Careth	perimna melo	any distracting worry or anxiety. present, active indicative; he keeps on having an active interest/care for you.
Be Sober Vigilant	nepho gregoreo	aorist active imperative; be at all times self controlled. aorist, active, imperative; at all times, stay awake, alert, ready for action.
Adversary Devil	antidikos diabolos	legal term for opposing lawyer who is making his case against us. slanderer, the liar from the beginning, John 8:44.
Roaring	opuomai	present, middle participle; keeps on roaring, howling like a beast.
Walketh	peripateo	present, active, indicative; keeps on walking to and fro.
Seeking	zeteo	present, active, participle; keeps on seeking.
Devour	katapino	aorist, active, infinitive; at any point he will swallow down, eat up.
Resist	anthistemi	aorist, active, imperative; at every point, stand up against, oppose, resist!
Steadfast	stereos	like a compact military formation, unbreakable, firm, solid against attacks.
Knowing	eido	perfect, active, participle; knowing(with results that go on forever).
Afflictions	pathema	sufferings.
Accomplished	epiteleo	present, middle, infinitive; the same suffering will be fulfilled (as a duty).

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

This is what we could call, a Holy Spirit directed "collage passage", made up, as it is, of a number of specific Old Testament quotes with allusions to many more. Peter draws on his spiritual heritage here to underline some principles that have been the essence of spiritual life since the beginning of God's dealings with Israel. The continuity of God's plan is also emphasized by these references. God has always saved by grace through faith; the object of faith has always been the Lord Jesus Christ, either by type, in the sacrificial system, or in reality on the Cross.

Spiritual growth has always been the same way also; by God's gracious provision of his Word, and by the faith of the believer in it. It has always been, TRUST AND OBEY! In the Old Testament the saved remnant of the nation were always spoken of as belonging to the Lord, and it is the Lord's ownership of the believer that is in view here. He owns us, having paid the blood price for our redemption, and that means he "owns" our

problems also. From the time we become believers in the Lord we cease to have personal problems, for they are now his! To hold onto anything as “ours” is a manifestation of pride, and that is the enemy of the spiritual life.

Before we start to look closely at Verse 5, refer to **Ephesians 5: 8-21, James 4:6-10**, for parallel passages in the New Testament, to see the other places where this theme is underlined for us. Submission to proper authority and then recognition that all problems we have are the Lords, are two essential behaviours we need to learn before we can relax and grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. This verse follows on from and sums up the earlier theme of proper subjection, or subordination, from chapter 2, verses 13, 18, and chapter 3, verses 1, 5.

“The duly appointed teachers are to be accepted as powers ordained of God, and their rule and guidance followed with submission.” (Lumby, 1897, p 213). The Lord himself set the example of humility, the teacher of us all was submissive to the father’s will before he asks us to submit to his. **John 13:4, Luke 12:37, also refer to Proverbs 3:34**. The path of glory is the path of humility; it may be defined as having a proper attitude to God and to the tasks he has set for us to do. The Lord calls us to have a complete lack of arrogance; there is no room for those who have been set free by another to lord it over each other! Our salvation should lead to a spirit of thankfulness and obedient service in a spirit of teamwork. Anything short of this standard is sin!

Verse 5. First there is submission to the authority of the eldership in all spiritual things. Secondly there is mutual submission to each other. Paul makes this point also in the Ephesians passage, both alluding to the Lord’s command, for believers to have caring, “other centered”, agape, love one for the other, **John 15:12-14, 17**. So we are without excuse in this area, and we are to test ourselves against the Lord’s standard, for it is he we must satisfy.

Verse 6. Peter’s order to, “clothe ourselves with humility”, echoes Paul’s words in, **Colossians 3:8-16, and Ephesians 6:10-17**. The very words used have a military flavour to them. There are many military words and concepts in this section, and Peter uses the soldier’s life to illustrate the mental attitude and behaviours required of the believer. We are to fasten firmly humility into our behaviour patterns. It is to be the starting point for the use of other “equipment” in the spiritual warfare we are to fight, in the same way as the Roman soldier’s belt was the item onto which all else was fastened.

In **Isaiah 57:16-17**, the Lord is pictured as putting on his armour for the Second Advent, and it may be this picture that was in both Peter and Paul’s mind when they wrote these passages. Like the Lord we are to be ready to fight the spiritual battles we are called to, and the first piece of armour is the one upon which everything else hangs. For Peter this is the mental attitude of humility; the readiness to do anything, considering nothing beneath oneself, every task a privilege for the service of the Lord who gave his all for you. Refer also to, **Isaiah 6:10, and Psalm 132:9** for other illustrations in the Old Testament of this clothing metaphor.

The principle of God’s resistance to those who are driven by pride is well attested by scripture. The Lord is against those who try to stand on their own merits, and who consider all things except “kingship” beneath their dignity. This pride centered life is devil-like rather than God-like. Refer also to, **Proverbs 29:23, Isaiah 2:10, 11, 57:15, Jeremiah 13:18, 44:10, 11, Daniel 5:22 - 29, and Micah 6:8**. The last verse is important to quote at this point, as it directly comments on this principle. ‘He has showed you man, what is good. And what is it that the Lord requires of you? But to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.’ This is biblical faith in action, and this is what Peter tells us is required to please God and survive the times of persecution that are coming to the church!

Before reading verse 6, read **James 4: 6-10**. It is pride that holds back many people from doing useful service for the Lord. As Augustine said, “that which first overcame man is the last thing he overcomes.” (quoted in Meyer, 1953, p 169). If we lift ourselves up we get what our power can achieve: if we depend on God, we get what his mighty power can perform! How foolish for believers to play politics for roles within the church, lie and cheat, and maneuver for positions that are the Lord’s to give. We need the mental attitude that Peter is describing, whereby we seek the role the Lord has for us, and we seek it by prayer and acts of service waiting for the Lord to “lift us up”.

Verse 7. The authors of this study have learned this lesson in the very work of the Evangelical Bible College of Western Australia, which was established in and through believing prayer. Without money or physical assets a small group did this; they gathered and prayed humbly before the Lord asking HIM to open up opportunities, and within five short years the Lord had opened up opportunities for his

service in five continents. We have never had any politics in our leadership groups, and each has focused upon the Lord's work that they were to do, and they have done it "as unto the Lord". The work of EBCWA has been a joy for thirty plus years as a result. No inter-personal conflict for over thirty years due to the single fact of humility in our service; we seek the Lord's will alone. Don't rob yourself of this joy my brother or sister, for it surpasses all else.

This is what Peter is encouraging all believers to do in all the situations of service they face. Place yourself on the receiving end of his grace, Peter urges, and he will lift you up. God is in the business of lifting up the humble! He is also in the business of putting down the proud and arrogant. This is his character, and he cannot do any other thing, so position yourself in the place where the Lord can pick you up! That place is the place of humility and dependence upon him, with a readiness of mind to do anything he directs without complaint.

Note Peter's confidence here. The Lord will lift you up because he has the power to. You are recipients of his "mighty power", for he is ruler of all. A believer asked a pastor many years ago, "surely God is not interested in the little things of our life?" The pastor wisely answered, "Madam, in God's sight, what is big in your life?" Let us remember this, there is nothing "big" in God's sight amongst our problems or issues, all is small when compared to his "mighty power". Let us take the place of humility and depend upon this power.

The conditional clause (subjunctive mood of the verb to exult, meaning, maybe he will, maybe he wont, it depends on something, a choice made), introduces the choice we must make. If we decide to humble ourselves (it is an order, imperative mood), we will be lifted up, but we may be disobedient believers in this matter! By his use of the word for power, Peter underlined the point, that any problems here are related to the believer's positioning of themself, not the power of God. If we apply humble thinking to every issue we face in life, ready to follow the Lord as he directs, then he will act on our behalf. He will exult us, in due time. Position yourself in the place of humble obedience and receive his hand up into the service he wants you to accomplish.

Let us look at these two concepts. To be exulted in this context, with the word that Peter uses, indicates great honour. In today's armed forces they still have this concept. It refers to a "field promotion", which is given to a soldier for great bravery on the field of battle, for obedient service, placing his life at risk for others, under fire. In reward he is given a medal, but even more, a promotion to higher rank, to serve at a higher level in the forces. This is done publicly in a formal parade before the whole assembled army. This is the concept Peter wants us to grasp. The Lord honours those who serve him in humility, trusting his power, rather than their own, by providing both eternal rewards, and greater opportunities for service in time as well.

When does this honouring take place? When do we receive these things? In God's "right time". Our job is to focus on Holy Spirit empowered service for our Lord, he will then honour our service, in his way, and in his time, and we are to leave ourselves totally in his hands for this. True service for the Lord begins with the humble mental attitude, a total dependence on the Lord's mighty power through the Holy Spirit, and on our obedience to whatever the Lord leads us into. Our periods of active service, end with the Lord "lifting us up", honouring us, with greater opportunities for more service, and finally they end in eternity with eternal rewards, the crowns of glory and life.

Before re-reading verse 7, read the following passages. **Psalm 27:13, 14, 37:3 - 7, 55:22, Psalm 56:3 -4, 9-11, Matthew 6:25, 34, Philippians 4:7.** The verbs used here are, like the earlier verse, very strong verbs. The word for, cast, is a powerful military, and wrestling term from the Olympic Games of the time. It is the word meaning to "body slam", to violently pick up and throw an opponent in such a way as to knock the wind out of them and render them harmless, to pace them totally at your mercy. This word covers then both the mental attitude and the prayer action of the believer when they face their otherwise distracting cares, anxieties or worries.

Believers are to see their worries and anxieties like an enemy of the soul and spirit. We are to take them and violently/powerfully throw them at the foot of the cross for the Lord to deal with. We are to literally to, "knock the wind out", of our worries! We are called to apply our faith in God, by trusting him with our worries, and leaving them with him. When he paid the price for us on the cross, he paid for everything, and that includes the worries we have in time; they are his, for we are his, give them to the one who owns them! To hold onto your own worries is pride, for they are not yours to worry about. Be obedient and "body slam" them on the Lord! The promise is that he keeps on caring for us. He keeps on having loving care over all the details of our lives.

Having disposed of worries into the hands of another, the temptation is to sit down and put the feet up and relax. Peter has encouraged us to “relax over worries”, but he reminds us, we cast aside our worries in order to be more focused on the task the Lord has for us. Worries are a distraction, a waste of our energy that should be spent in focused service of the Lord.

So, having disposed of all distractions, focus on the soldier's task, and the soldier's enemy. We have an enemy, and he is still alive and well. Many today have grasped a false theology, and pray for the complete “binding” of the enemy. Peter tells us here, he is not bound yet, and won't be until the Lord's return. He has been left to be a test for us, a test we must pass to be effective in the Lord's service. Our prayers may “bind” his activity in place and areas of service according to the Lord's Plan for us, but he is not universally bound yet. Peter gives us four orders relating to the activities of Satan and his demons; orders we are to obey for our own safety. Before we move to these, note an obvious, but often missed point!

Our worries are “our” worries, and they are to be dealt with directly by us before the Lord's Cross. Anxieties within are not satanic, they are simply our own Old Sin Nature area of weakness moving us into “panic palace” rather than holding the firm ground of faith upon the rock that is Christ. Our “worries” are inappropriate and need to be dropped! Satan prowls around “outside”, he has no power inside, for the Holy Spirit is there with us. Satanic attack is a limited thing on believers. If we walk in the power of the filling of the Holy Spirit he has very little opportunity to get any “hit” onto us.

Verse 8-9. All too many believers today are giving Satan too much credit for powers that in some cases he never had, and in other cases, certainly doesn't have since the cross and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lions only attack the sick, weak, and isolated! Stand strong in spiritual power believer, then any attack is “by permission” only, and you will be blessed!

The five “Daily Orders” for the battle against the adversary, are to be applied in the church age, in the power of the Holy Spirit. They will protect us against the cunning of the “lion”, who will destroy our ministry if we open our self to him.

1. **Be Sober!** - At all times be self controlled, not under the control of any emotion, or any other substance(drink or drugs), but only by the Holy Spirit. Romans 13:11-13. 1 Thessalonians 5:6 -8.
2. **Be Vigilant!** - At all times, stay awake to danger, don't relax your guard, don't get careless.
3. **Resist!** - Stand up to, resist, oppose everything he stands for. Zero tolerance of evil is to be the standard for our lives. Also refer, Luke 4:3-12, Ephesians 4:27, 6:11-13, James 4:7.
4. **Be steadfast in the faith once delivered** to the apostles! Be unbreakable, stand as a solid mass of soldiers resisting attack. Stand with the apostolic doctrines, and their practices. As a local church be united, stand together, tight and committed to each other.
5. **Keep on knowing you are not alone!** All believers suffer pressures when they stand for their Lord, but stand with Jesus, in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The word Peter uses to describe the reality of the “afflictions or sufferings” of the other believers, is an interesting one. He says that the sufferings will be accomplished, and the word indicates that it is a part of the job role; that it is a duty associated with the role. **Matthew 6:25-34.**

To be a believer is to be associated with suffering. Once more he normalizes the suffering of the believers. It is not a strange thing, it is our duty, and we are to take it as a soldier takes the rigours of a long campaign; without complaint, and with dignity and strength.

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

Humility is a theme not mentioned as much as it should be in today's churches. We have joined the world and emphasized assertiveness, rather than biblical humility(the readiness to do any task for the Lord, not thinking anything beneath you) and biblical strength(the power of a Holy Spirit filled life). In this section we see Peter emphasizing the biblical concepts, and these are our standard for life. We are to be humble in our dealings with each other in the church, not seeking to lord it over anyone, but ready to do anything to serve and bless all in the Lord.

We are first to be humble in our attitudes to the tasks we may be asked to do, then to our future in life itself. We are to place ourselves totally in the Lord's hands regarding our future work and service for him. We are to be ready to serve in any area in any way, and wait for the Lord to give us the roles we may secretly desire. If we lift ourselves up we will get what politics can achieve, but if we do what Peter commands here, and humble ourselves before God, we will get what he can do!

The next subject addressed here is anxiety; how to deal with your worries. The first point Peter makes is, our worries are not ours but are really his, and are to be given to the Lord totally. We are to trust him with our worries as we trusted him for our salvation. The God who saves and delivers from sin, is also the God who can deliver from troubles. "Anxiety mirrors the fragile nature of our ability to trust. It decreases in exact proportion to our willingness to let go and trust God." (Mounce, 1982, p 87).

"To recognise the fatherly hand of God is to be released from anxiety. . . . The one solid argument is the cross of Christ and his resurrection. Golgotha is both the demonstration and measure of God's caring." (Cranfield, 1958, p 118). We are to see all things through the cross and empty tomb. We are to see all troubles through the delivering power of our Saviour Deliverer God. He is able, Peter says, and he will deliver; so body slam your problems on the Lord believer!

Of the devil Meyer observes, "it is a subtle manoeuvre of his to lead men to suppose that there is no devil at all. A gang of thieves is never so dangerous as when they have it widely rumoured that they have left the neighbourhood." (Meyer, 1953, p 181).

Satan is not bound today; he walks about! He is defeated by the cross, and eternally doomed, but still dangerous in time, until the end, when the Lord returns. We are to apply the spiritual daily orders for our security in our daily battle in the angelic conflict. We are always safe from the lion in the wild, if we are alert, and ready for it. Careless people get devoured! Vigilant people are alert, and stand firm with the rest, and so the lion flees from the solid mass of steadfast soldiers.

[b] PASTORAL

The Lord cares for us. This is the central truth of our faith, and it puts the Christian faith ahead of all others in this alone. "Other religions with their many ceremonies are commonly occupied with the business of making god care, of 'awakening by sacrifice, or prayer, or act, the slumbering interest of the deity' (Mastermann). Christians begin with and are meant to build upon the confidence that God does care! **Matthew 6:25-35, Romans 5:8, 8:32.**" (Stibbs, 1959, p 171).

"In these few words is the central truth that Christ was manifested to reveal. It is the belief that God cares that marks off Christianity from all other religions, which under all varieties of form are occupied with the task of making God care." (Mastermann, 1912, p 167). The most powerful thing about this doctrine is that God cares, even in the midst of pressure, suffering, death and troubles beyond words. His loving kindness and care for us never stop. **Jeremiah 9:24, 31:3, 32:18**, Psalms have 23 references to the loving kindness of God, **Titus 3:3-7**.

Peter's many military references in this section underline his emphasis on strength and steadfastness in our mental attitude, and the need for us as pastors to produce this sort of mental attitude in our people. If the church is not standing firm and steadfast like a solid wall of Roman soldiers then it is not living and operating as the Lord intended. Let us get our preaching and systems right pastors. Humility in service, Faith under pressures, Steadfast Strength when opposed by evil, Teamwork when faced with all attempts to split us off from our peers; these are the virtues that the world should see in the church.

DOCTRINES

OLD SIN NATURE [See page 51-53 above]

SATAN - ADVERSARY

1. SCRIPTURE - Genesis 3; Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; Matthew 4; Revelation.
2. BIOGRAPHY

Satan is the most beautiful creature ever to be created by God. He is an angel who rebelled against God before the creation of man (Isaiah 14:12-15). Originally he was the covering angel, the personal attendant of Jesus Christ in the very throne room of God. Unlike God, Satan is a created being and as such can only be in one place at any one time. He is attended by a vast number of angels (called demons) who have given him unswerving allegiance. After the creation of man, he tempted Adam and Eve to be as gods and to know good and evil by disobeying God. Satan then became the ruler of this world (Genesis 3:1-7). He attacked the human race in many ways prior to the birth of Jesus Christ. Throughout Jesus Christ's life, Satan attacked the Lord. Since Christ's victory at the cross he attacks believers. Satan still has access into heaven where he accuses the brethren. Halfway through the tribulation period Satan is thrown out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). This causes him to intensify his attack on the human race. During the millennium he is confined to the bottomless pit, allowing a perfect environment on the earth (Revelation 20:1-3). After a brief rebellion at the end of the millennium (Revelation 20:7-10), Satan is condemned to the eternal lake of fire which was created for the devil and his angels.

3. EVALUATION

Satan is called:

- a) The destroyer (Revelation 9:11).
- b) The accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10).
- c) The adversary (1 Peter 5:8).
- d) Beelzebub, prince of devils (Matthew 12:24).
- e) The deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9).
- f) The great dragon (Revelation 12:9).
- g) An enemy (Matthew 13:28,29).
- h) The wicked one (Matthew 13:19,38).
- i) The father of lies (John 8:44).
- j) The god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- k) A murderer (John 8:44).
- l) The prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2).
- m) The ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30).
- n) The ancient serpent (Revelation 12:9).
- o) The tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).
- p) A blinder of minds (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- q) A roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8).

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) Believers are in Christ and therefore in a position of supremacy over Satan (Romans 8:37).
- b) Satan was defeated at the cross once and for all (Colossians 2:14,15).
- c) He can therefore only use devices and schemes, trying to convince the believer that he can still win the battle against God.
- d) Satan, through religion, tries to get man to work independently from God.
- e) A Christian out of fellowship can promote principles proposed by Satan (Matthew 4:8-10; Mark 8:33).
- f) Satan will use Scripture slightly changed, or added to, to try and confuse believers and lead them astray (Matthew 4:3-10; cf. Psalm 91:11,12).
- g) If Satan the adversary is resisted he will flee from you (James 4:7).

h) Knowledge and application of the Scriptures is essential in understanding the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11).

SATAN'S WORK

1. Satan's sphere of operations among mankind. (Psalm 109:6--13)

- a) Satan blinds mankind to the truth of the Word of God by means of religion (v.7)
- b) He has the power to shorten life (v 8a)
- c) He can remove persons from a place of authority (v 8b)
- d) Satan can kill (v 9)
- e) He can persecute children (v 10)
- f) He can remove wealth (v 11)
- g) Satan can turn people against each other (v. 12)
- h) He can cut off man's posterity to the second generation (v. 13)

2. Satan as a killer

- a) He has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14, 15)
- b) Killed Job's children (Job 1:12, 18,19)
- c) Motivated Cain to murder Abel (John 8:44, cf. 1 John 3:12)
- d) Often administers the sin unto death (1 Corinthians 5:5)

3. Satan as a source of disease

- a) Was responsible for Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- b) Produced illness in Job (Job 2:6-8)
- c) Uses his demons to inflict diseases (Matthew 12:22, Luke 13:16, Acts 10:38)
- d) Causes certain types of deafness, dumbness, paralysis and crippling effect by means of demon possession (Matthew 4:24, 12:22, Mark 9:17, 18)
- e) When demon possession causes the affliction, the removal of the demon or demons produces an instant cure (Matthew 10:1, Mark 1:32-34, 6:13, Acts 8:7, 19:12)

4. Satan as an instrument of discipline

- a) Desired to discipline Peter (Luke 22:31, 32)
- b) Was authorised to discipline the Corinthian adulterer (1 Corinthians 5:5)
- c) Was called upon by the Apostle Paul to administer extreme discipline to Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19,20)
- d) May become involved in the discipline of ministers and deacons (1 Timothy 3:6, 7)
- e) Attacks through a believer's lack of forgiveness and orientation to grace (2 Corinthians 2:10, 11)

5. Satan as a healer

- a) Healing was a temporary spiritual gift before the completion of the Canon of Scripture (Acts 19:11, 12, cf. Philippians 2:27, 2 Timothy 4:20)
- b) God still heals today (Philippians 2:27)
- c) Since Satan possesses the power of disease he often counterfeits healing by the removal of demons (Matthew 12:24, 24:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 16:14)

6. Characteristics of Demon Possession

- a) Loss of individuality: the demon-possessed person no longer has control of faculties of the soul (Mark 5:1-13, Luke 8:27, 9:39, 40)
- b) Abnormal behaviour:-
 - i) Convulsions (Mark 1:26, 9:20, Luke 4:35)
 - ii) Violence (Matthew 8:28)
 - iii) Abnormal strength (Mark 5:4, Luke 8:29, Acts 19:16)
 - iv) Raving (Mark 5:5)
 - v) Foaming at the mouth (Mark 9:20)
 - vi) Nakedness (Luke 8:27)
- c) Loss of health:-
 - i) Dumbness (Mark 9:17, Luke 11:14)
 - ii) Deafness and dumbness (Mark 9:25)
 - iii) Blindness and dumbness (Matthew 12:22)
 - iv) Epilepsy (Mark 1:26, 9:20, Luke 4:35)
 - v) Mental illness (Mark 5:15)

7. Demon possession explains:-

- a) So called divine healing
- b) Alleged speaking in tongues
- c) Faked contact with the dead (1 Samuel 28)
- d) Success of self styled exorcists
- e) Rise of certain world leaders (2 Thessalonians 2.9, Revelation 16:13, 14)
- f) Cause of some wars (Revelation 20:8)
- g) Reincarnation
- h) Fortune telling (Acts 16:16)

SATAN'S STRATEGY

1. Believers are warned against him and his tactics (Ephesians 4:27, 6:11-13, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8).
2. We must be ready and alert (2 Corinthians 2:11).
3. Satan is a deceiver and a counterfeiter. He uses deception - not obviously wrong or sinful - but very subtle changes to the truth (Genesis 3:1). Remember, a counterfeit looks like the original.
4. Satan is described as an "angel of light" - often seeming attractive and "good" (2 Corinthians 11:14).
5. His tactics:
 - a) Towards unbelievers:
 - i) to blind them regarding the gospel (2Corinthians 4:3, 4, 2Thessalonians 2:9, 10).
 - b) Towards believers:

- i) Satan seeks to hinder our growth and witness (1 Peter 5:8).
 - ii) Satan will mislead into false doctrine and legalism (1 Timothy 5:14-15).
 - iii) He persuades believers to ignore the will of God through disobedience (Genesis 2:17, James 4:7-8).
 - iv) Satan often attacks our assurance of salvation so that we doubt God.
 - v) Worry (1 Peter 5, 7-9).
 - vi) Fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).
 - vii) He accuses believers of sin both to God and to the believer (using guilt) (Revelation 12:9-10, Job 1:6-11).
 - viii) He takes our focus off Christ by getting eyes on self (1 Corinthians 1:10-11), on people (1 Corinthians 1:12), on things (Hebrews 13:5-6).
 - ix) When we don't allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives, we open ourselves up to Satanic attack (1 Corinthians 7:5, 2 Corinthians 2:11, 1 Timothy 5:14-15).
 - x) The Lord will allow Satan to attack a believer as discipline for unconfessed sin (1 Timothy 1:20 cf. 2 Corinthians 12:7).
 - xi) Satan cannot indwell or possess a believer, only beguile them (Galatians 3:1).
- c) Towards the world in general:
- i) The World - Satan tries to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:7-10).

SATAN'S DESTINY

1. Satan is called a "prince" indicating that he had his own power and followers (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, Ephesians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 4:4).
2. Yet he is still a creature, and is still ultimately subject to God (Job 1:12).
3. At the cross, Christ defeated Satan, as his main power was through sin and death (John 12:27-32, Romans 5:12, 1 Corinthians 15:54-56, Colossians 2:14-15, Hebrews 2:14-15).
4. God's purpose with the world is not yet complete - therefore the enforcement of Satan's defeat will not take place until the end of the Millennium (Hebrews 1:13, Revelation 20:10).
5. Satan's final judgment is sure:-
 - a) When he fell he was condemned, this was before Genesis 1:2.
 - b) In the garden the certainty of God's judgment was announced (Genesis 3:15).
 - c) The Cross was his final defeat (John 12:31, Colossians 2:14-15).
 - d) In the midst of the Great Tribulation his access to heaven will be stopped. He will no longer be able to slander believers. (Revelation 12:7-12)
 - e) At the Second Advent he is arrested and bound (Revelation 20:1-3).
 - f) After the Millennium he is briefly released to lead the last great rebellion against God, and is finally cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10).
 - g) There are therefore four falls of Satan:-
 - i) from his place in eternity past to the earth with access to heaven
 - ii) then that access is denied causing him to be restricted to the Earth
 - iii) he is then contained in Hades for a thousand years

iv) then his final fall into the Lake of Fire.

6. Satan has six abodes in his journey from the throne room of God to the Lake of Fire:

- a) The Throne of God (Ezekiel 28:12)
- b) The Mineral Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 28:13)
- c) The Atmospheric Heavens (Ephesians 2:2, 6:12)
- d) The Earth (Revelation 12:7-12)
- e) The Abyss (Revelation 20:1-3)
- f) The Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:7-10).

GOD CARES FOR YOU

1. God knows ...

- a) Our sorrows. (Exodus 3:7)
- b) Our devotions. (2 Chronicles 16:9)
- c) Our thoughts. (Psalm 44:21)
- d) Our foolishness. (Psalm 69:5)
- e) Our frailties. (Psalm 103:14)
- f) Our deeds. (Psalm 139:2)
- g) Our words. (Psalm 139:4)
- h) The composition of the universe. (Psalm 147:4)
- i) All things. (Proverbs 15:3)
- j) Our needs. (Matthew 6:32)
- k) About animal creation. (Matthew 10:29)
- l) Mankind. (Matthew 10:30)
- m) What might or could have been. (Matthew 11:23)
- n) His own. (John 10:14)
- o) Past, present and future. (Acts 15:18)

2. God is able to ...

- a) Save forever those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:25)
- b) Supply every need (2 Corinthians 9:8)
- c) Deliver all who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18)
- d) Sustain the weak believer and make him stand (Romans 14:4)
- e) Keep us from falling and make us blameless (Jude 24,25)
- f) Surpass all that we could ask or think (Ephesians 3:20)
- g) Raise us up in resurrection in the likeness of His Son (Hebrews 11:19)

3. With God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26)

4. God is in control. Nothing will ever happen to you that you are not able to deal with. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
5. God's character is stable
 - a) if God is for you who can be against you (Romans 8:31-34)
 - b) no matter what happens God's love is stable (Romans 8:35-39).
6. God's promises are secure for he is always with us. (Matthew 28:19-20, Jeremiah 1:19)
7. God's power is always the same:-
 - a) He will always keep us. (John 10:29, 2 Timothy 1:12)
 - b) God does not forget us or lose His power to keep. (Jude 24)
 - c) Even if we fall away from fellowship we still are saved. (2 Timothy 2:13)
8. God knew before time what we would need in time and has provided for the supply of all our needs. (Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 4:16, Ephesians 3:12,)
9. God has the power to bless us. (2 Corinthians 9:8)
10. God is able to make all grace abound towards us. (Ephesians 3:20)

REWARDS AND CROWNS [See page 42 above]

SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER OF EPHESIANS CHAPTER 6

General Scripture Ephesians 6:11-17. This passage relates to the armour which the Roman soldier wore and analogises its use into the spiritual realm.

1. USE OF THE ARMOUR Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the whole armour of God. " Ephesians 6:11a. We are instructed to "put on" (ENDUO Gk) - this means "to clothe"- it is a command by God to the Christian soldier. We are to "clothe ourselves" or to "dress ourselves".

"Whole armour" (PANOPLIA Gk) - the complete armour "of God" (THEOS Gk) true source of the armour is God.

The whole armour of God is given in Ephesians 6:14-17. It comprises:-

- a) The Belt of Truth Ephesians 6:14a
- b) Breastplate of Righteousness Ephesians 6:14b
- c) Boots Ephesians 6:15
- d) Shield Ephesians 6:16
- e) Helmet of Salvation Ephesians 6:17a
- f) Sword of the Spirit Ephesians 6:17b

PRINCIPLES:

- i) The Roman soldier wore all his armour for his own safety and protection.
- ii) When the Roman soldier was highly disciplined he ruled the world.
- iii) When the Roman soldier became degenerate the Empire declined and fell.

- iv) The Roman soldier was in the army 7 days a week.

SPIRITUAL ANALOGY

- i) As Christian soldiers we wear our armour for our own safety and protection.
- ii) When we are highly disciplined in the Christian life we are very effective in our warfare.
- iii) If we become degenerate or apostate our Christian witness and effectiveness declines and we become casualties in the spiritual warfare.
- iv) The Christian soldier is in the battle 7 days a week. A part time soldier never amounts to an effective soldier.

That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil". Ephesians 6:11 b. "to stand" (histemi (Gk) - to hold your ground. We are in a spiritual warfare and the purpose of the armour is to hold our ground against the foe. "the wiles (methodeia dia Gk) - tactics, cunning or fraud" "of the devil (diabolos Gk).

We therefore have the whole armour of God to enable us to stand firm against the devil's tactics.

PRINCIPLE: By learning the tactics likely to be employed by your opponent the Christian soldier is able to go on the offensive using the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God. (verse 17).

2. THE ENEMY (Ephesians 6:12)

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world against spiritual wickedness in high places. "

"Wrestle" - "the wrestling" (he pale estin Gk) hand to hand combat not wrestling as a sport. "not against flesh and blood" - not against other members of the human race, but against:-

- a) PRINCIPALITIES (arche Gk) Ruling demons.
- b) POWERS (exousia Gk) - Demons with authority, officers in the demon army.
- c) RULERS OF THE DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD (kosmokrator Gk) - world rulers, demons close to the seats of government such as the demons of (Daniel 10:13, 20).
- d) SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES (pneu matikos poneria Gk) - the demon army.

Quite clearly our right is against a spiritual foe. From Hebrews 2:7 we know that as human beings we are inferior to angels. Therefore in order to have success against superior forces we must have God's armour.

3. BE PREPARED (Ephesians 6:13)

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. "

Since the resurrection ascension and session of Jesus Christ the attack of Satan has moved from the line of Christ to the individual believer. Our dependence on the whole armour is imperative yet many believers reject part or all of the armour. There are many casualties as a consequence.

We are again exhorted to put on the whole armour of God.

4. THE BELT OF TRUTH (Ephesians 6:14a, Isaiah 11:5)

"Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth

The Roman belt was a wide girdle of leather worn around the waist from which hung the scabbard for the sword and loops for rations and equipment. The leather belt was supported by a cross shoulder strap studded with

metal plates with thick leather strips hanging down to protect the lower body. The belt therefore was the basic armour on which the defence of the soldier was based.

PRINCIPLE: Our basic defence is the truth contained within the Word of God. The sword of the Spirit hangs securely to the believer by means of the promises contained within it. The greater our trust in the truth of God the greater our protection against the enemy.

5. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Ephesians 6:14b, Isaiah 59:17)

"and having on the breastplate of righteousness". The breastplate (thorax Gk) was usually made of leather overlaid with metal strips. Shaped like a sleeveless coat it was in the higher ranks often covered with gold or silver. The belt held the breastplate firmly in place its primary function being to protect every vital area of the soldiers body.

PRINCIPLE: The righteousness of Christ protects us. We stand in his righteousness alone. He gave us his righteousness at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our continued protection through his righteousness is through the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) (See topic Holy Spirit: Filling of the Spirit).

6. THE BOOTS (Ephesians 6:15, Isaiah 52:7)

"And your feet shod, with the preparation of the gospel of peace".

The boots (caligae Gk) were made of hobnail studded leather soles 15mm (1/2") thick secured with a leather tie over the instep and round the ankles. Good footwear is essential for the soldier with infantry still being essential even in these days of sophisticated armaments.

PRINCIPLE: In spiritual terms the feet are often analogised to service. The feet take one towards the enemy. The gospel of peace is a direct attack on the enemy. Peace in this context talks of reconciliation between God and man. (Romans 1:1 4-16, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20).

7. THE SHIELD OF FAITH (Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4)

"Above all taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. "

The Roman shield (thureos Gk) was shaped like a door being made of glued planks wrapped in canvas or calf skin, the top and bottom edges being protected by iron. The shield was the most active of the defensive armour carried by the Roman soldier. Loss of shield often meant death to the soldier.

PRINCIPLE: The Christian soldier's shield is walking actively in the promises and principles set out in the Word of God. If we do not use our faith we can become spiritual casualties. Using the shield of faith we can claim -the 7,000 promises for the Christian walk including Isaiah 41:10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 4:4.

8. THE HELMET OF SALVATION (Ephesians 6:17a; Isaiah 59:17)

"And take the Helmet of salvation.

With the exception of the standard bearer who wore a wolf's head, every Roman soldier wore a metal helmet (perik Gk) usually of bronze over an iron skull cap. This protected the most important part of the soldier - his head.

PRINCIPLE: Before a person can be a soldier for Christ, he has to be born again. He has to wear the helmet of salvation. One of the wiles of the devil is to make the believer feel that he has lost his salvation. If a believer loses his assurance of salvation he takes his helmet of salvation off and is totally vulnerable to the attack of the foe.

9. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (Ephesians 6:17b)

"and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

The sword referred to is the machaira or Roman short sword. The sword represents the basic offensive weapon for close combat. It was only effective when out of its sheath.

PRINCIPLE: The sword in its sheath is potentially devastating but it is only effective when it is used to combat and defeat the enemy. We must therefore conquer using principles, promises and doctrines from the Word of God.

PARAPHRASE

“In exactly the same way as the pastors, you younger believers be respectfully responsive to your elders; yes, all of you be respectful and serve one another, and be clothed with the spirit that seeks to serve in any way it can. Remember, God sets himself up as an enemy to those who are proud and arrogant, but he gives great gifts to those who have humility and serve others without being proud or arrogant. Humble yourself therefore under God’s mighty hand of power, and in his good time he will lift you up to a higher position where you may serve him even more. Body slam your problems and worries upon the Lord, because his nature is that he always has loving care for every detail of your life. At all times be self controlled, (let nothing other than the Holy Spirit exercise any power over you). Stay awake and be alert for danger at all times. (Be ready for action at all times). The reason for this order? Our adversary the devil prowls about, roaring constantly, like a hungry lion, seeking those he can devour. Your role is to resist him, oppose everything he stands for. Stand firm with all other believers, like a solid wall of soldiers, the church is to stand against evil. (Unbroken and united, so the lion cannot snatch any away). Keep on remembering that suffering is endured by all believers everywhere on the earth; (suffering is the normal state of battle for us in the devil’s world, but remember his time is short).”

VERSES 10 - 14

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. 11 To him be the 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”

KEY WORDS

Called	kaleo	aorist, active, participle; at a point in time he has called us to this.
Awhile	oligos	a little while; but a moment when compared to something else - eternal rewards.
Perfect	katartizo	future, active, indicative; will put in order, mend, make whole (used to set a broken bone)
Stablish	sterizo	future, active, indicative; establish by strength, to fix firmly.
Strengthen	sthenoo	future, active, indicative; will strengthen and make stronger.
Settle	themelioo	future, active, indicative; will provide a solid foundation, will ground you firmly.
Glory	doxa	the glory of God.
Dominion	kratos	ruling mighty power.
Suppose	logizomai	I reckon, regard him as ‘faithful’, expressing Peter’s complete confidence in him.
Write	graphoo	epistolary aorist = I am writing this”.
Exhorting	parakaleo	present, active, participle; I keep on exhorting, urging, encouraging.
Testifying	epimartureo	present, active, participle; I keep on witnessing, affirming the truth of the evidence given.
Stand	istemi	aorist, active, imperative; strong order, here you are to take your stand! Military order = “we die here, no retreat!
Faithful	pistos	trustworthy, having fidelity. One who can be trusted to do the job.
Suppose	logizomai	I keep on reckoning him as this. Emphasises Peter’s confidence in him.
Stand	istemi	aorist, active, imperative ; take your stand(military order).
Saluteth	aspazomai	present, middle, indicative; keep on embracing, and greeting warmly.
Greet	aspazomai	aorist middle, imperative of the verb; at every time it is relevant, warmly greet, embrace your fellow elect members of the body of Christ.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Grace and suffering, stability in the midst, and glory to come; these are some of the themes of this letter, and as he draws to a close, Peter reinforces the lessons of suffering within the grace provisions of a loving God. "But all is ordered of Him. He will not permit one trial too many. When His purpose is fulfilled we shall be perfected and established in His Grace." (Ironsides, 1984, p 60). **1 Corinthians 10:13**.

Verse 10. Suffering does not mean that God has "lost his grip" over events, but rather that the Lord has allowed us to enter an area of service where we will experience even more of his gracious provisions. Sufferings open the door to growth, as we place our trust in him.

There is certainty of blessing in the midst of suffering. This is underlined by the use of strong verbs in this section, all in the future tense. "The verbs here are future, not optative; it is the expression not of a wish but of a promise." (Mastermann, 1912, p 170). "The permanent vindication and blessedness which God will ensure for them are hammered home in four powerful verbs in the future indicative, indicating vigorous confidence." (Kelly, 1969, p 213).

Verse 11. The suffering comes within the plan of the one who saved us from sin for blessing forever, not for cursing. When suffering comes then, it comes from our loving and gracious God, not from a power that seeks our destruction. It also comes for, "a little while", only. We have an eternal call and destiny, and all that happens in time is just a "little while". Peter calls us here to keep the "eternal life perspective" on all that occurs in time.

Note each of the verbs of verse ten.

1. **He will "perfect" us.** - Through suffering he will, put us in order, bring us together, bind up any wounds we have and make us "whole people". Those who train in the Gym for fitness only build muscle by, in effect breaking it down, by training hard and stretching their muscles until they at times hurt. Real gym training is controlled suffering, but it makes the athlete strong. So it is with suffering and our own lives under God's care. Like the gym instructor the Lord in grace brings us through his training program in suffering and there is the certain outcome; we will be made whole people through it. We will be perfected, we will grow as people.
2. **He will establish us.** - He will fix firmly our faith within our souls through the suffering, and we will become strong. This verb indicates that the muscles will be firmly fixed to the bone, so that then they can grow bigger and stronger.
3. **He will build upon the strength** and attachment of the muscles to the bone and build more strength upon what is already there.
4. **He will settle us.** - He will provide a firm foundation upon which we can be secure in pressures.

In verse eleven he takes us back to the doctrine of the Character of God. In verse ten he has referred to God, as the "God of all Grace", and here in verse eleven he uses the other words that remind us of God's plan, purpose, and destiny for us. He is the one who has the GLORY, and MIGHTY POWER, and it is, FOREVER AND EVER. We serve the mighty God, so when anything awful comes our way it is not because God could not stop it coming, it is because he wants us to face it, and grow through it.

When what we call tragedy strikes, we are too apt to look to the heavens and ask God why? We look up with accusation, as if the Lord let this trouble, "slip past him", as if he didn't see it coming and has been caught out by it. Peter states clearly here, all things are under my gracious God's care, and he is the one who saved you. Relax in his grace, and walk with him through your suffering. Fix your eyes upon him and see the glory that is to come; the Lord is still on the throne. Even as they were to be killed this was to be the message they were to cling to.

One of the first to die in the Roman province of Asia was the Christian leader bishop Polycarp. "Thus Polycarp is said to have been martyred in AD 155 at Smyrna, when Statius Quadratus was proconsul, but when Jesus Christ was reigning forever". (Moffatt, 1963, p 169). "Bless the Lord oh my soul, and that is within me bless his holy name!" **Psalms 103:1**. We are forgiven and lifted up by the Saviour God who knows our weaknesses. **Psalms 103:8-17**.

The way the ancients referred to eternity, was by the phrase, “to the ages of the ages”, (“eis ton aionos ton aionon”). It was a reminder by the very words that there are various “ages” of man and the worlds themselves, and we are but in one of them at present. Every time they used these words they recalled that this world in this age was but one of many, and that in Christ Jesus they were inheritors of an eternal destiny that goes beyond this age. This is the eternal life perspective that we need as we face the “short” pressures of time.

Verse 12. This introduces the scribe who wrote the letter itself at Peter’s dictation. As mentioned already in the introductory section to this study, the scribe of the ancient world had a fair bit of leeway in the composition suggesting alternative ways of saying something, polishing the language of the writer, to make it even more powerful and specific. They were the “word smith” hammering out the form to convey the message the author intended.

Silvanus, or as we know him from Acts, Silas, is the man who was here helping Peter, as he had earlier helped Paul. Refer to **Acts 15:22-40, 16:19-29, 17:4-15, 18:5**, also refer to his work with Paul in **2 Corinthians 1:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1**. This is a man who was a living example of the virtue of “humility” that Peter has spoken of through this letter, a man who was prepared to always play the supporting role, without ever feeling he wanted to be the leader. He was truly used of God for he put the masters work first and took all “jobs” he was given with cheerfulness, even though as a Jewish leader he had great standing in his own right.

Peter acknowledges his “scribe” Silvanus, paying credit to him for the good Greek in which this letter is written, but also noting that it is he who is behind the work’s message and that the instruction carries his apostolic authority. Note the characteristic of Silvanus character that Peter identifies here as the key word describing him. He is a “faithful brother”. In days when self interest is considered a “virtue”, let us return to biblical virtues, and the first in order is fidelity; that we are women and men who are true to our word, what we say we will do. Fidelity to the task given is one of the great virtues of the Christian faith. Ephesians 6:25, Colossians 1:7, 4:7, 9.

What the Lord had called these men to complete they completed to death if necessary. To fail to do that was a great disgrace, and Demas is mentioned this way, with great sadness by Paul, 2 Timothy 4:10. Faithfulness was the key virtue on Paul’s lips as he faces his own death, as he says, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”. 2 Timothy 4:7.

Peter’s purpose is also spelt out again here. He has written doing two things; exhorting and testifying. His purpose is also two fold; that they might know the “true grace” of God and stand firmly in it. Why does he say the “true grace” of God? From this letter we can see the answer; many have been preaching in his day, as in ours, a “cheap grace”, and “easy believism”, a “prosperity gospel”, that ignored, disparaged, or mocked the concept of suffering as something essential in Christianity. True Grace is the concept that Peter has been “exhorting”. Peter has underlined that in suffering we grow more than in plenty, and that in suffering we learn more of the loving care of God than any other place; that suffering for Christ is not a “strange” thing, but is to be an expected thing. It is to be embraced, if it comes, without fear, but in confidence in God’s provisions within God’s plan for our life.

The eternal life perspective is to be followed rather than the desires of time for an easy life. Peter here sums up his points made earlier in a few words. Life is brief, eternity is forever and ever, and it’s rewards alone matter. Any suffering we have to endure because of our Lord, is to be welcomed as an opportunity to glorify him, and is to be seen an opportunity to win glory and the crown of life and glory in eternity. This world is not our home, we are just passing through, and we are marching like an army, with a task to do!

Like Paul, Peter has used strong military terms to further underline the “mission” purpose of this life, and to correct the laxness of the church of his day, that was getting too much “at home” in their corner of the world. “Your view of things is too small”, he is saying to them and to us! He has called us to see the angelic conflict and our place in it, and blows the trumpet for us to “join our battle units” and get into the fight.

Verse 13. The fellowship of all the believers upon the earth with each other is mentioned again in verse thirteen. We are never alone upon the earth, for where-ever there are believers there are brothers and sisters, and we are to join with them, in praise, in worship, in loving concern, and in prayer. The church where Peter is greets the other churches with joy. Peter uses the word, Babylon, to describe the location of the church. Does he mean the ancient city by that name in modern Iraq? Many think so, as it was a significant city still in this day when he wrote. The two alternatives are that Peter was in Babylon as he wrote

this, for there were also many Jews there still in the first century. Or that this was a code name for Rome. Refer to, Kelly, 1969, pp 218-220, for a good discussion of the two options.

The church is referred to as, "fellow elect" (suneklekte). It is Peter's way of underlining that all believers are equally joined together in Christ, chosen and precious to him. From different countries, culture, races, languages, we are all brought together into a loving family, in Christ Jesus. This loving bond was demonstrated by early church members, by a loving kiss, with which they greeted each other. This was a hug and kiss on the cheek, and was a part of early Christian life through the centuries. The same kiss that the traitor Judas used in the garden was transformed by the church into a sign of love and care in Christ Jesus. It was referred to as, "the kiss of peace", and according to Justin Martyr (1 Apologeia 65:2) it was a regular feature of the communion service in Rome in his day. It was given with the words, "the peace of Christ be with you". It was his peace and love that was being remembered as fellow believers were greeted. It was a reminder that even under suffering and persecution, there was loving care over each person, and that they had the peace of God that passed all understanding with them, in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7, Isaiah 12:2, 26:3.

Keep on greeting each other with the loving kiss, and then Peter pronounces his benediction, which is the Jewish one, Shalom to you all!; peace, joy, love, all good things in Christ, be to you all. In living union with Christ there is "shalom", and this peace and security of the soul is only found, "in" Christ Jesus, for there is life and peace in no other, for there is no other name given whereby men can be delivered from sin, death and fear!

APPLICATION

[a] PERSONAL

The Lord reigneth, and he is the "God of all grace! Have we praised his name for who he is yet today? Read these brief Psalms and lift your voice to the one who loves you and upholds you with his grace. Psalm 93:1-5, 95:1-11, 96:11-13, 97:1, Psalms 98, 99, 100, 103:1, 10-14, 17.

Peter has summed up his teaching on the necessary nature of suffering; it's short duration, the Lord's provision in the midst of it, and the eternal rewards that are ours if we bear up like soldiers through it. It is not a "strange thing" when we face different forms of suffering, it is a normal thing for this temporal world. Let us check ourselves out on this matter; are we moaners like the Israelites at Marah and Meribah, or are we standing with Moses and Peter?

The Lord has power to keep us in the midst of anything that this world can present us with. He will complete his work within us, he will establish us by his Holy Spirit's power, he will stabilize us on the sure foundation of our eternal destiny. Are we relaxed mentally about these things or are we still the slaves of anxiety? Peter calls us to take the remedy for fear, and serve the Lord with strength and focus on the task, rather than being distracted by the troubles that come along as part of the battle.

Silvanus was a man of his word. He was there to begin the missionary journey with Paul after the falling out with Barnabas and John Mark, but he is faithful to the Lord's calling for service, and here we find him with John Mark serving Peter. These were men who could disagree and separate, but it was without pride centered anger, and for service, and that service brought them together again, for their eyes were on their Lord, for whom the service was offered. Let us be like them!

All three of these men joined together to write this letter, a work that was meant to encourage and strengthen, and train up the churches to do their job before the Lord. How well do we work together with others on tasks that require co-operation, and will be achieved best by joint effort?

All too often we want to take total credit for work done, and we do not see the value of cooperative projects where the strengths of the Peter and the Silvanus can come together to produce even more than would have been dreamed of. With the power of the Holy Spirit, one plus one does not equal two, it may equal ten!

Believers are meant to be changed by reading the Word of God; changed within themselves and changed in their inter-relationships with others in Christ Jesus. "The Christian message must be transformed into changed lives. The purpose of doctrine is less to instruct than it is to provide the theological basis for a new way of living." (Mounce, 1982, p 91). Peter's challenge in this little letter is clear; are we living the transformed life that the Lord has called us to, and are we sharing it's power with others?

[b] PASTORAL

Do our people get the message about suffering from our teaching? Do they see the three points that Peter wants them to:

1. **Suffering is inevitable.** - It is part of being a Christian in a world where the devil is still active.
2. **Suffering is necessary for growth.** - Only under trial and test can faith grow.
3. **Suffering is limited.** - It is always within the grace provision of a loving God.

Are we examples, models, patterns to follow for the Lord's flock that he has given into our loving care? Do we set the pace, by such example as Peter has called us to through this little letter? We must remember the old word of wisdom, "monkey see, monkey do". "The weak take in teaching, rather from what they see than from what they hear. The teacher must be a living witness to the Word, a proof of it's truth and power. If he be not this, all his teaching is of little value." (Lumby, 1893, p 208).

Are we "faithful brothers" in our working relationships with others in the Lord's service? Do we join together with our fellow pastors, who love the Lord and stand in the truth, even when we disagree about some minor points? Peter and Silvanus may have had some disagreements but they joined together in this endeavour to write this little letter for the glory of God and the strengthening of the Lord's church. Let us remember that it is the Lord's church, it is never "ours". He died for the church, he empowers the church, he is there for the church under suffering, and he is coming again for his church! Hallelujah! We have a mighty God! Peter wants our days to be filled with praise to the Lord Holy name, giving thanks for his great deliverance.

CONCLUSION

Peter has told of the nature of the God of all grace, and we stand in him and in his grace and glory and mighty power. Peter wants praises in pressure, for that is the normal response of one who knows the grace in which they stand. Suffering is "normal", and so is the praise of God from the midst of the fiery trial. The eternal life perspective is his theme; if we keep our eyes fixed on him we have the stability that is required of the true soldier of Christ.

DOCTRINES

GOD: CHARACTER OF GOD [See page 18 above]

ETERNAL LIFE [See page 70 above]

GLORY [See page 127 above]

PARAPHRASE

"For it is the God of all grace who has called us, and he has called us to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus! All suffering is just for a little while, (and in the midst of it, and through it), he will bind up your wounds, strengthen you and establish you on his firm eternal foundation. To him be the glory and mighty power, to the ages of the ages, Amen. Silvanus, our faithful brother, was my assistant as I wrote this letter, and it is brief, but in it I have exhorted and given lasting testimony to the truth, telling you what is the nature of the grace in which we stand. The church that is with me at Babylon, fellow elect with you, sends warm greetings to you, and so does John Mark my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love and peace. Shalom be to you all."

SECOND PETER - CHAPTER 1

VERSES 1 - 4

“ 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 goodness, 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.”

KEY WORDS

Servant	doulos	bond slave, never to be freed. Paul's favourite word to describe himself also.
Apostle	apostolos	the one sent out to rule; from the Athenian admiral of the fleet.
Obtained	lagchano	aorist active participle; to obtain by lot cast by others. God's gift of special favour, and Peter indicates that God has such gifts for all believers.
Precious	isotimos	equally privileged, with the same honour; a faith that carries equal privileges.
Multiplied	plethuno	aorist, passive, optative; may you receive increase, may grace be multiplied.
Knowledge	epignosis	full knowledge; not just facts but the full implications known and applied to life.
Divine Power	dunamis	mighty working power (dynamite), as an attribute of the nature of God.
Given	doreo	perfect , middle, participle; to give, as a grant from power, to give as a gift, the results of which go on forever (perfect tense, genitive absolute – with eternal results).
Pertain	ta tou	which (pertain) to; which provide what is required to live a life of.
Goodness	eusebeia	godliness, true faith that is demonstrated in a life of piety, and obedience to the divine standard, and lived in the divine power.
Knowledge	epignosis	again Peter emphasises that it is not just “knowing about” God that is required not just gnosis; it is the active faith, that is fully known and applied to daily life.
Called	kaleo	aorist, active, participle; reference to the point in time when we were called.
Glory	doxa	the glory of God.
Virtue	arete	moral excellence of character; the outworking of divine power in moral action.
Whereby	di on	through which things.
Exceeding	megistos	the relative superlative; magnificent, most great can't be any greater than this.
Precious	timios	valuable, honoured, esteemed of great worth.
Promises	epaggelma	an assurance of something, from some-one dependent on their character.
Given	didomi	perfect , middle, indicative; has given, with results going on forever.
Partakers	koinonos	partner, sharer, partaker; a joint or partnership concept is in view.
Nature	phusis	the true nature/character of a thing/person by which it is known.
Escaped	apopheugo	aorist, active, participle; to escape completely away.
Corruption	phthora	rotteness that comes from within and decays a thing; the nature of the thing is that it decays once it dies. It will become rotten by it's nature in the end.
Lust	epithumia	strong desires that arise from the Old Sin Nature area of weakness.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Skim read the first chapter and you will be struck by the number of times Peter refers to knowledge and to remembrance. We could write over this letter three phrases; “know these things”, and, “remember these things”, and then, “apply these things to your life”. Peter's theme is, “the saving knowledge of God”. (Lumby, 1983, p 233).

Peter introduces himself using his Jewish and Greek names, reminding us of his ministry area, and that he worked with both Greeks and Jews; indeed that he had been the one to open the door first for the Gospel to go out to the non-Jews. Acts 10 - 11. This provides additional evidence of Peter's fluency in the Koine Greek. God only uses prepared people, and if Peter had not been able to speak good Greek he could not

have spoken to the Gentiles he ministered to in Acts 10-11, and afterwards. Peter also uses two words to describe himself. The two opposites of race were, Jew and Gentile, and the two opposites of social status in the Empire were, General/Admiral - "apostolos", and bond slave. It is these two words he brings together in the same sentence – that is the new place for all believers – born-again royalty and also caring servants of each other. **1 Peter 2:7-10, 5:5-11.**

He is an Apostle, the highest order of gifting in the church age, and yet he is also a bond slave, never to be free, belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ. In these four words we are confronted with the impact of Christianity on the world. Racial division is broken down, and social class distinction is eliminated, with the great disciple of the Lord using both high and low terms and lifting both up to the heavens in service of the Lord. The paradox of Christian service is just this; that we are "lifted up" to serve in heavenly places, yet as slaves, but slaves to the one who "bought" us with his blood.

We are determined to serve him forever, without any hope of or desire for personal freedom, but rather we rejoice in his will for our lives instead of our own. We are never more free than when we are his slaves! We rejoice in our slavery to his will because we know what it brings with it. We are the recipients of blessings beyond words in time through the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and rewards forever. In time and space and beyond this universe we are blessed beyond words.

Peter begins this letter reminding us, by these words he selects, of who we are, and what our blood bought salvation status means. We are free of the power of sin, evil and death; we are free to serve our deliverer forever. We have received special favour from the Lord through our salvation. The word he uses which is translated, "obtained" in our text, indicates that this is something gained by the "play/lot cast" of another. The Lord took all the risks, we share the dividend that He "won". The "lot" cast was his very life blood for us! We took no risks, faced no danger, and yet can receive all.

We do not earn nor deserve anything that comes with our salvation, but it is a wonderful gift. It is "precious". Note the meaning of that particular word; it is a gift that carries with it a privilege and obligation with it. If a stranger gave you ten million dollars, you would never have to work again, but wouldn't you ask the stranger, "what can I do for you to express my thanks?" How much more should we respond to our Saviour God who has given us all things of value?

Peter's closing phrase, 'our Saviour God', in verse one would have hit his readers like a bolt of lightning. "Peter is in fact boldly taking the Old Testament name for YHWH and applying it to Jesus, just as he did in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:21." (Green, 1968, p 61). Peter is absolutely clear, the Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour and our God. The doctrines of the deity of Christ, Trinity, Hypostatic union, Kenosis, are all here behind this verse, and the next. The more we know of the nature of the Lord, the more secure we will be in our faith. Knowledge is power forever!

Verse two introduces another pair of words that sum up the Christian faith; grace and peace. Peter not only mentions these concepts, with which we are familiar, but he notes how they are to be found and how they become a part of the soul itself. They are to be found as we get to know the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. As we do this these two characteristics of the genuine Christian life will be multiplied within us. The word for knowledge is, as we saw above, the word for "full knowledge" (epignosis), that is the sort of knowledge that is found after something has been understood, believed, and applied into the very fabric of a life.

Epignosis (full knowledge) is what we really "know" after the final application has been made. Wisdom comes as we apply things again and again in many different situations. Peter's point is that every application of God's Word to life, brings with it, a multiplying of grace and peace within. Blessing comes by application of the living Word of the Living Saviour God.

In verse three, he tells us that we have the power we need to deal with whatever is thrown at us by the world, the flesh or the devil. God's mighty divine power has given (**perfect tense**, = results go on forever) us enough spiritual resources to deal with all testing situations, and Peter writes this as he faces later his own death by crucifixion. All we need for living a godly life, in this world is provided in Christ Jesus, and all that we need to enter eternity in triumph has also been provided. [Refer to Bible Topic Book for the study, "Gifts Given at Salvation".]

We have resources that we often times do not even know about, and Peter makes it clear that we are to be blamed for not knowing! These things are given to be known and used this side of eternity. Once again he uses the word "epignosis" to underline the importance of hearing, believing and applying the Word of God.

The results are glory and virtue/fruit; glory to God for what he is then going to be able to do through us as we are led by the Holy Spirit and empowered to serve.

Virtue is the ancient Roman/Greek concept of what is was to be truly noble, truly god-like in values, behaviour and mental processes. To live a virtuous life was to live a life that was characterised by moral excellence, and strength of character, so that you lived in a god like manner, above temptation, and petty squabbling about things that do not matter. True Roman Virtue is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in each spirit filled believer's life. Holy Spirit filled living will always produce Christ-like behaviours – His character alone is “noble”.

Verse four takes this point the next step forwards. Peter is trying to get these people, and ourselves, to see that the Spirit empowered life is the only answer to the problem of temptation, and weaknesses of all kinds. The “normal” way people live is anything but the way Peter commands and exhorts; sadly most live as Lumby indicates. “Men first walk after their own lusts, then they are led by them, then obey them, and at last become their slaves”. (Lumby, 1893, 241). Peter is clearly grieved, as all good men are, by the evil and sinful lives of the believers around him. They were clearly not ready to handle the testing times that were to come, for they were not living God's way to start with, let alone living in God's power.

Many of the words used in this verse are words from the common language of the secular and philosophical world. Peter appears to have chosen many of these words from a dictionary, and so we must take each of their meanings as specifically as they are meant to be, in their ancient context. Many good pagan people of Peter's day sought escape from the corruption of their world, which had become so jaded and saturated with evil as the first century progressed. Even the pagan writers complained of the corruption of morality of their day, and identified that their gods had no answers.

Peter is saying, ‘we have the answer, but it must be lived by each of you!’ God has **perfectly given** his many precious promises within his Word, but they are of no value while they stay in the book, they must be applied into the lives of the believers; they must become “epignosis”! If they are applied what will happen is amazing; we will be made partakers of God's very nature, we will start to become like him. The result of that, is that we will then escape, in the only way it is possible, from the corruption of this evil world, with all it's powerful lusts.

Only by Holy Spirit filled living do we become Christ like, and truly “escape” the seductive power of the “Cosmos System of the enemy. All the pagan writers spoke of the subject of escaping from lusts, but none could give an answer. Peter has here. He says, “BECOME LIKE HIM!” We have been given all we need in Christ Jesus; both precious gifts and divine power to perform. The two perfect tenses of the verb “Didomi” remind us that we have and will always have the power that we need to serve Him in all He calls us to serve and achieve. We have also received all the gifts we need, and the “34 things” below remind us that God gives abundantly all we ever will require to be the servants we are called to be, to bring glory to His holy name now and forever more.

How do we do that? By feeding on his Word, in Holy Spirit filled purifying power, by applying it's principles into our lives, and so really knowing God, as we see his policies applied into our lives, and enjoying the changes this makes.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

Our security and stability in life's tests, depends upon our knowledge of, and security in, the Lord's nature and His eternally secure plan for our individual lives. He is our Saviour and our God, the one who made us, and provided for our salvation; he is our “Saviour God”. The more we know him, the more stable and strong we become.

The more we serve him in his available power the more we grow in knowledge, and the more we can apply, and then grow through. The point Peter is making is that the whole process is cumulative, and will take us upwards. Doubts and laziness in the study and application of the promises of God's Holy Word, will lead us downwards, being earth bound in our thinking and behaviour and finally losing eternal rewards through the chaos of our earthly lives.

Are we prepared to take the place of the bond slave of God? Do we have this level of gratitude to our Lord for all he has done and will do for us? The place of the slave is paradoxically, the place of the friend of the Lord. **John 12:26, 15:15, 13:13-17, Acts 27:23, 1 Thessalonians 1:7, Luke 16:13, Revelation 7:15, 22:3.**

One commentator, reading this epistle says, "not faith, but knowledge is the theme of the epistle". (Sidebottom, 1982, p 105). Is this correct? The answer is clearly "NO", from the first verse onwards. Knowledge is Peter's theme, but it is knowledge that works out in life; and that is practical faith, for faith without knowledge is foolishness. Peter is facing his death, and wants us all to grasp what really matters under pressure. What matters is to know him, who died for us.

If we have a burning passion to know Him more we will grow in the knowledge of God and our Lord's plan for us. If we fail to grow this way, we are sitting ducks for the hunters that will come to destroy the church. It remains the challenge for us all! Will we grow in "epignosis", or will we be lazy? Will we use the spiritual assets that God has provided or will we sit around waiting for things to happen? They will – but they will not be good!

Peter is blunt; grow or be a casualty and finally a loser of eternal rewards! He said this in a day when to be a loser was to die without the peace of God, and to be a winner was to die with the peace and joy of Christ within as you went. It was a tough time, but we face a similar age today, and the issues remain the same. Grow believer, please be obedient and grow spiritually and be useful! Failure is not an option worthy of thought – for it is disgrace, death and eternal loss.

B. PASTORAL

Are our people clear about the importance of the things that Peter emphasises in the introduction of his letter by the three pairs of key words:

Sh'mon + Petros = all racial/cultural barriers are down in Christ Jesus

Apostle + Bond-slave = all social status barriers are down, and the highest in status takes the lowest place without embarrassment, or shame.

Grace + Peace = the results of spiritual growth, and service for our Lord.

Peter's emphasis in these verses is clear pastors, is it not? He is telling us to systematically teach the Word of God so that all might know the truth, and that they might be urged to apply it into their lives. Are we doing this in our church? It is this, that Peter makes clear, for which we must give account to the Lord of Glory. The Lord's people must hear his words so that they have the opportunity to believe and apply them! If they don't hear the word we are held responsible, once we have preached they are responsible.

DOCTRINES

CHRIST: DEITY

1. Jesus Christ is both God and man. The two natures are inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, the union being personal and eternal. (Philippians 2:5-11, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:4, Romans 9:5, 1 Timothy 3:16)
2. Jesus Christ is undiminished deity. This includes all the divine characteristics:
 - a) Sovereignty (Genesis 1, Revelation 1:5, 6, 17:14, 19:16)
 - b) Eternal Life (Isaiah 9:6, Micah 5:2, John 1:1-2, 8:58, Colossians 1:16-17, Ephesians 1:4, Revelation 1:8)
 - c) Holiness (Luke 1:35, Acts 3:14, Hebrews 7:26)
 - d) Love (John 13:1, 34, 1 John 3:16)
 - e) Unchangeable (Hebrews 13:8)
 - f) All Knowing (Matthew 9:4, John 2:25, John 18:4, 1 Corinthians 4:5, Colossians 2:3, Revelation 2:23)
 - g) All Powerful (Matthew 24:30, 28:18, 1 Corinthians 15:28, Philippians 3:2 1, Hebrews 1:3, Revelation 1:8)
 - h) Everywhere (Matthew 28:20, Ephesians 1:23, Colossians 1:27)

- i) Truth (John 14:6, Revelation 3:7)
3. Christ is the Son of God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2)
4. Proofs of the deity of Christ:
- a) He is the Creator of all. (John 1:3,10, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10)
 - b) He is the Preserver of all things. (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3)
 - c) He pardons sin. (Luke 5:21,24)
 - d) He raises the dead. (John 5:21,28-29, 11:42-43)
 - e) He will reward the saints. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
 - f) He will judge the world in the Last Day. (John 5:22)
 - g) He receives worship (Hebrews 1:6)
5. Jesus Christ is so identified with the Divine plan as to be God. (Psalm 22:1-6, Psalm 40, Psalm 110)
6. The Christophony of Christ indicates his pre-existence therefore His eternity.
- a) Angel of Jehovah identified as Jehovah. (Genesis 16:7-13, 22:11-18, 31:11-13, 48:15-16, Exodus 3 with Acts 7:30-35, Exodus 13:21, 14:19, Judges 6:11-23, 13:9-20)
 - b) Angel of Jehovah distinguished from Jehovah. (Genesis 24:7, 24:40, Exodus 23:20, 32:34, 1 Chronicles 21:15-18, Isaiah 63:9, Zechariah 1:12, 13)
 - c) Angel of Jehovah is Second Person of Trinity, visible God. After his birth the Angel of Jehovah no longer appears. (John 1:18, 6:46, 1 Timothy 6:15, 16, 1 John 4:12)
7. Jesus Christ is Jehovah.
- a) Jesus is God. (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; John 20:28; 2 Peter 1:1; Titus 2:13). Jehovah is God. (Jeremiah 32:18; Isaiah 43:10; Isaiah 45:22; Philippians 2:10).
 - b) Jesus is I AM (John 8:24; 8:58; 13:19; 18:5). Jehovah is I AM (Isaiah 43:10; Exodus 3:13-14; Deuteronomy 32:39).
 - c) Jesus is the First and the Last (Revelation 1:17; 2:8; 22:13). Jehovah is the First and the Last (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; 41:4).
 - d) Jesus is the Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4; Isaiah 8:14; 1 Peter 2:6; Matthew 16:18). Jehovah is the Rock (Exodus 17:6; Isaiah 17:10; 2 Samuel 22-32; Deuteronomy 32:4).
 - e) Jesus is Saviour (Acts 2:21; 4:12; Romans 10:9; Jude 25). Jehovah is Saviour (Psalm 106:21; Hosea 13:4; Isaiah 45:21; 43:3,11).
 - f) Jesus is Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16; 1 Timothy 6:14-16). Jehovah is Lord of lords (Psalm 136:1-3; Deuteronomy 10:17).
 - g) Jesus is Creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:10). Jehovah is Creator (Job 33:4; Isaiah 40:28; Genesis 1:1).
 - h) Jesus is Light (John 8:12; John 1:9; Luke 2:32). Jehovah is Light (Micah 7-8; Isaiah 60:20; Psalm 27:1).
 - i) Jesus is Judge (2 Timothy 4:1; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). Jehovah is Judge (Genesis 18:25; Joel 3:12).
 - j) It is quite clear that Jesus is God (1 John 5:5).
8. Jesus lived on earth in total dependence upon God the Father. He never used His own divine attributes in contradiction to the will of the Father. (Matthew 4:1-11, 27:42-43)

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9. At the birth of Christ no change occurred in the deity of Jesus Christ. During His earthly life, some attributes were unused but they were never deleted or destroyed. To remove any attribute from His deity would be to destroy deity.
10. Jesus Christ is true humanity. This includes attributes such as thirst, hunger, weariness. (John 19:28)
11. Jesus Christ had a body, soul and spirit, but no old sin nature. He did not receive an old sin nature because of the virgin birth.
12. God became flesh, it is not a case of God merely possessing humanity.

TRINITY

1. There is one God. He has manifest Himself in three personalities. (2 Samuel 23:1-3, Isaiah 48:16, Isaiah 63:7-10, Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:33, 2 Corinthians 13:14)
2. The oneness of God refers to the unity or sameness of character. All three members of the Trinity are equal (Philippians 2:6, Deuteronomy 6:4, Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9), although they have different functions/purposes in relation to man.
3. The three members are distinguished according to their function in the plan of salvation (1 Peter 1:2-3)
 - a) The Father - the authority, who planned our salvation (Isaiah 14:27, John 4:34, 5:17, 12:44, 1 Corinthians 8:6a, Ephesians 3:11)
 - b) The Son - the obedient son, who was born as a man, died for our sins, and rose from the dead (John 4:34, 5:17, Hebrews 10:7)
 - c) The Holy Spirit - the ministering servant, who reveals the Son and sanctifies us (John 16:8-11).
4. The Son is the only visible member of the Trinity (John 1:18, 6:46, 1 Timothy 6:16, 1 John 4:12). He was revealed in the Old Testament in Christophanies (e.g. the Angel of Jehovah) and became flesh in the New Testament (Exodus 3:14 cf. John 8:58; Psalm 10:16 cf. Revelation 11:15; Zechariah 14 cf. Revelation 19).
5. Evidences of the Trinity:
 - a) Affirmed by the use of the title Elohim (plural, Gods) in the Old Testament and the plural pronoun "us" in (Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7).
 - b) The worship of God we have repeated three times "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4).
 - c) The name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit indicates Trinity (Matthew 28:19-20).
 - d) The Lord's Baptism - the Spirit descends, the Father speaks from heaven and the Son is baptised (Matthew 3).
6. Light is a good illustration of the Trinity (1 John 1:5). Light is one, but has three elements:
 - a) Father - actinic light - that part of light which is invisible, nor felt.
 - b) Son - luminiferous - that part of light which is both seen and felt.
 - c) Spirit - calorific - that part of light which is not seen but felt.

HYPOSTATIC UNION

1. Hypostasis means standing together under one essence, two things united under one with no loss or transfer to the other and no change to either.
In the person of Jesus Christ the two natures, divine and human, were inseparably linked with no loss or transfer of properties or attributes, and no mixture or loss of separate identity the union was personal and eternal.
The Lord Jesus Christ is still perfectly human and divine
2. See Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6, John 1:1-14, Romans 1:2-5, Romans 9:5, Philippians 2:5-11, 1 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:4
3. The incarnate person of the Lord Jesus Christ included undiminished deity; He remained co equal and co eternal with the father while on earth. As a baby in the cradle he was holding the universe together.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ was also true humanity; body, soul and spirit although due to the virgin birth he had no old sin nature (1 Peter 2:22).
5. The two natures were united without transfer of attributes; the Essence of Deity and humanity were unchanged.
6. No aspect of the divine nature was lacking, although certain attributes were not exercised in line with the Father's plan (Matthew 4:1-10).
7. The union was personal and hypostatic; one essence with two natures.
8. Deity did not indwell humanity or possess it. The union was more than sympathy and harmony, it was unique combining the two natures eternally.
9. Christ had two natures in one person, therefore he could be supremely powerful yet weak at the same time.
 - a) Deity cannot be tempted, humanity can (Matthew 4:1-10).
 - b) Deity cannot thirst, humanity can (John 19:28).
 - c) Deity is omniscient, humanity learns (Luke 2:40,52).
10. The necessity of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in the following:-
 - a) To be our Saviour he had to be man as God cannot die (Hebrews 2:14,15, Philippians 2:7,8).
 - b) To be our mediator He had to be equal with both God and man (Job 9:2, 32-33, 1Timothy 2:5-6).
 - c) To be our High Priest He must be a man (Hebrews 7:4,5 14-28; 10:5, 10-14).
 - d) To be a king he must be a man, a Jew in the line of David (Psalm 89:20-37, 2 Samuel 7:8-16).
11. There are three categories of sayings or actions of the Lord:
 - a) From his deity alone - John 8:58
 - b) From his humanity alone - John 19:28
 - c) From his hypostatic union - John 11:25,26
12. The uniqueness of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is a key doctrine to understand for all believers, for it is on this point that the accurate preaching of the gospel rests (1 Timothy 3:16).
13. The gospel in one word is Immanuel - God with us. John's testimony on this point - John 1:14. In Christ we see God's love and favour towards man. As God revealed himself in the Old Testament, so He perfectly reveals himself in the person of the unique person of the universe, the God man the Lord Jesus Christ.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORD

1. There is a big difference between knowing about something and truly knowing something so that your life is changed or transformed by it. The Greeks distinguished between these two concepts by two words: gnosis which was simply knowing about, and epignosis which was knowing the facts to the point where your life was transformed by them.
2. In learning Bible Doctrine we have the teaching ministries of the Holy Spirit to assist us in understanding and application (John 14:16-20, 15:26, 16:7-15).

With the Holy Spirit as the teacher within and the Pastor as the teacher without, the believer has no excuse for not growing spiritually. Spiritual growth is not a matter of human IQ. Spiritual IQ is dependent on doctrine that is believed and applied in the life; it depends on what we pay attention to. (1 Corinthians 1:19 - 2:16)
3. Paul's prayers for the churches were that the believers would grow in full knowledge and the application of the word that would bring the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the life (Colossians 1:9-11, Philippians 1:9-11).
4. God has provided everything for the believer so that we might grow in the fullness of the stature of Christ. As we use it we grow and enjoy the life that God intended for us. (James 4:6, Ephesians 4:12,16, 5:16,18, 6:10, Colossians 4:5)
5. Synonyms for spiritual growth are:

- a) - Putting on the whole armour of God Ephesians 6:11-13,
 - b) - Following the pastor Hebrews 12:1,2, Philippians 3:13-17,
 - c) - Godliness 1 Timothy 6:3-6, 2 Peter 1:3.
6. Only believers who advance in their Christian walk are suited for service for the Lord, as only they are used to listening regularly to the teaching of the Holy Spirit within and therefore are able to be led into more and more service.

GIFTS GIVEN AT SALVATION

Listed below are the 34 things God provides for every believer at the point of salvation.

1. In the eternal plan of God. (Sharing the destiny of Christ)
 - a) Foreknown (Acts 2:23, Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2)
 - b) Elect (Romans 8:33, Colossians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Titus 1:1)
 - c) Predestined (Romans 8:29, 30, Ephesians 1:5, 11)
 - d) Chosen (Matthew 22:14, 1 Peter 2:4)
 - e) Called (1 Thessalonians 5:24).
2. Reconciled:
 - a) By God (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, Colossians 1:20)
 - b) To God (Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 2:14-17).
3. Redeemed (Romans 3:24, Colossians 1:14, 1 Peter 1:18).
4. Condemnation removed (John 3:18, 5:24, Romans 8:1).
5. Under Grace instead of judgment; God is satisfied with the death of His Son (Romans 3:24-26, 1 John 2:2).
6. All sins judged by the death of Christ (Romans 4:25, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 2:24).
7. Dead to old life - alive to God:
 - a) Crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20)
 - b) Dead with Christ (Romans 6:8, Colossians 3:3, 1 Peter 2:24)
 - c) Buried with him (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12)
 - d) Raised with Christ (Romans 6:4, Colossians 3:1).
8. Free from the law:
 - a) Dead (Romans 7:4)
 - b) Delivered (Romans 6:14, 7:6, 2 Corinthians 3:11, Galatians 3:25)
9. Regenerated (John 13:10, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:5)
 - a) Born again (John 3:7, 1 Peter 1:23)
 - b) Children of God (Galatians 3:26)
 - c) Sons of God (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18, 1 John 3:2)
 - d) A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 2:10).
10. Adopted (Romans 8:15, 8:23 (future) Ephesians 1:5).
11. Acceptable to God (Ephesians 1:6, 1 Peter 2:5)
 - a) Made righteous (Romans 3:22, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9)

- b) Sanctified positionally (1 Corinthians 1:30, 6:11)
 - c) Perfected forever (Hebrews 10:14)
 - d) Made meet (qualified) (Colossians 1:12).
12. Justified (declared righteous) (Romans 3:24, 5:1, 5:9, 8:30, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:7).
13. Forgiven all trespasses (Ephesians 1:7, 4:32, Colossians 1:14, 2:13, 3:13).
14. Made nigh (Heavenly citizenship based on reconciliation) (Luke 10:20, Ephesians 2:13, 19).
15. Delivered from the kingdom of Satan (Colossians 1:13, 2:15).
16. Transferred into God's kingdom (Colossians 1:13).
17. On a secure foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11, 10:4, Ephesians 2:20).
18. A gift from God the Father to Christ (John 10:29, 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24).
19. Delivered from the power of the sin nature (Romans 2:29, Colossians 2:11).
20. Appointed priests unto God:
- a) Holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5)
 - b) Royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6).
21. Under the care of God as a chosen generation and a peculiar people (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9).
22. Given access to God (Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 4:14, 16, 10:19, 20).
23. Within the "much more" care of God (Romans 5:9, 10)
- a) Objects of His love (Ephesians 2:4, 5:2)
 - b) Objects of His grace:
 - i) For salvation (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
 - ii) For keeping (1 Peter 1:5)
 - iii) For service (John 17:18)
 - iv) For instruction (Titus 2:12)
 - c) Objects of His power (Ephesians 1:19, Philippians 2:13)
 - d) Objects of His faithfulness (Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 13:5,6)
 - e) Objects of His peace (John 14:27)
 - f) Objects of His consolation (2 Thessalonians 2:16)
 - g) Objects of His intercession (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25).
24. God's inheritance (Possession) (Ephesians 1:18).
25. Beneficiaries of an inheritance as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17, Ephesians 1:14 Colossians 3:24, Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:4).
26. A new position (Ephesians 2:6)
- a) Partners with Christ in life (Colossians 3:4)
 - b) Partners with Christ in service (1 Corinthians 1:9)
 - c) Workers together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 6:1)

- d) Ministers of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:6)
 - e) Ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)
 - f) Living epistles (2 Corinthians 3:3)
 - g) Ministers of God (2 Corinthians 6:4).
27. Recipients of eternal life (John 3:15, 10:28, 20:31, 1 John 5:11, 12).
28. Members of the family and household of God (Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 2:19).
29. Light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:4).
30. United to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
- a) In God (1 Thessalonians 1:1) of "God in you" (Ephesians 4:6)
 - b) In Christ (John 14:20 of "Christ in you" Colossians 1:27)
 - i) A member in His body (1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - ii) A branch in the vine (John 15:5)
 - iii) A stone in the building (Ephesians 2:21, 22, 1 Peter 2:5)
 - iv) A sheep in the flock (John 10:27-29)
 - v) A part of His bride (Ephesians 5:25)
 - vi) A priest of the kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9)
 - vii) A saint of the "new species" (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - c) In the Spirit (Romans 8:9) of "the Spirit in you".
31. Recipients of the ministries of the Holy Spirit:
- a) Born of the Spirit (John 3:6)
 - b) Baptized with the Spirit (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - c) Indwelt by the Spirit (John 7:39, Romans 5:5, 8:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, Galatians 4:6, 1 John 3:24)
 - d) Sealed by the Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 4:30)
 - e) Given spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11, 27-31, 13:1, 2).
32. Glorified (Romans 8:30).
33. Complete in Him (Colossians 2:10).
34. Possessors of every spiritual blessing provided in eternity past (Ephesians 1:3).

KENOSIS OF CHRIST

1. Kenosis is an expression which means to "empty oneself" or "to make himself of no reputation."
2. Principle of Kenosis:- (Philippians 2:5-8).
3. Jesus Christ from eternity past always has been God. As such he is all knowing, he is all powerful, has everlasting life and many other absolute qualities. He was not created because he is eternal.
4. Jesus Christ chose to become a little lower than the angels and took on the form of man.
5. Adam the first man aspired to be God, the second Adam who is God divested himself of his deity (Kenosis) and became man in order to save mankind.

6. During his earthly ministry, rather than using his own absolute power he used the power of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTLE refer above page 24

PARAPHRASE

“Simon Peter, a bond slave, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to all those who have received as God’s special gift, the same precious, privileged faith that we have. We have received this great responsibility through the righteousness of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied within you all, as you grow in the full knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord. As he has given us, in his mighty divine power, all things needed to live a life of moral goodness, so that we apply the knowledge of him, to produce glory and virtue in our lives. (In order for this to occur) he has given us magnificently amazing promises (in his Word), that by application of these into daily life, you might all become like God is in your character. (Only this way) will you escape the lusts and rottenness of this present world.”

VERSES 5 - 11

“ And besides 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. 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 will 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.”

KEY WORDS

Besides this	kai auto touto	and for this very reason; because you are meant to share the divine nature.
Giving		(not there - understood that you have to do something about all this)
All	pas	all, any every, the whole lot! haste, effort;
Diligence	spoude	strong military word for giving your urgent last push of strength to a task, or to throw yourself with urgency into a battle which may be final for you.
Add	epichoregeo	aorist, active, imperative; at every point of time when you can do this, bring alongside, as a ship with supplies is brought into the wharf; supply the needs.
Virtue	arete	as in verse 3. Moral excellence of character, living in God’s power, resembling the Lord Jesus Christ, in your behaviours. Moral energy and action; heroic.
Knowledge	gnosis	the first step to wisdom is knowing about things, then we apply them and learn more (epignosis), and then with experience, what we know becomes wisdom.
Temperance	egkrateia	the third of the military words here. Under pressure, holding yourself together.
Patience	hupomone	continuing hopeful endurance; standing up to pressure with a toughness of spirit, confident of deliverance.
Godliness	eusebeia	a life of obedience to God’s standards in God’s holy power.
Brotherly kindness	philadelphia	the love within a wholesome and godly family, where each puts the others interests ahead of their own.
Be	huparcho	present, active, participle; keep on having life from (the Spirit) within you
Abound	pleonazo	present, active, participle; keep on increasing, becoming even excessive! In the ancient world this verb was used to imply ‘more than enough’, but in the Lord all excess of these things is fine and good.
Barren	argos	inactive, idle.
Unfruitful	akarpous	not bearing fruit. Peter refers back to the Lord’s words, later put in John 15.
Knowledge	epignosis	full knowledge again here, as it is what is applied.
Lacketh	pareimi + me	present, active, indicative; keep on being not present with.
Blind	muopazo	short sighted he is!
Forgotten	lethe + lambano	because they have forgotten (they have received forgetfulness, rather than received the full knowledge of God.)
Purged	katharismos	purification of old (past) sins.

Diligence	spoudazo	aorist, active, imperative; at every point in time thrown yourself in with zealous commitment.
Make	poieo	present, middle, infinitive; make certain, give a guarantee. "The holy life is the guarantee demonstrating the calling and election to others."(Reinecker).
Election	ekloge	choosing, selection by God.
Sure	bebaios	secure, firm and stable; used of a legal guarantee.
Do	poieo	infinitive; keep on doing these things.
Fall	ptaio	aorist, active, subjunctive; to stumble and fall into an evil or sinful path.
Entrance	eisodos	the way of entering into a place.
Ministered	epichoregeo	future, passive, indicative; provided abundantly with things over to spare.
Richly	plousios	richly, abundantly.
Everlasting	aionios	eternal.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Note how many similar words there are in this section to the first four verses; Peter is very repetitive in this letter, underlining his theme - REMEMBER!!! This is another reminder to us, he is in jail awaiting death, and in such places you are repetitive and passionate to ensure you emphasize things strongly enough. The other word we could add, is DILIGENCE, or more correctly, the order – "BE DILIGENT!" There is urgency to Peter's words. Remember the context; he is awaiting his own execution and persecution has broken out in and around Rome at Nero's behest, and many in the church have already been murdered, and others will follow them.

Because we are all meant to share in the divine nature: because we are meant to be like Christ, there are things that should happen in all our lives. The process of Christian growth, that indicates a person is growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ is expressed by the development of the following "virtues" in the life of the believer.

- a. Diligence throwing yourself into the study and application of scripture into life.
- b. Faith the commitment of your destiny/life into the Lord's hands, to his plan for you.
- c. Virtues heroic moral energy in action, resembling the behaviour and attitudes of the Lord Jesus Christ, in standing for moral excellence.
- d. Knowledge learning about all the things that scripture records so they are known truly and applied daily.
- e. Temperance under pressure you hold yourself together in the mighty power of God, not giving way to lusts.
- f. Patience standing up under pressures, so that you demonstrate hope filled confidence in the keeping power of God.
- g. Godliness obedience to God's revealed holy standards of living.
- h. Brotherly kindness demonstrating family loving commitment to the needs of others in the world wide Christian family.
- i. Charity the agape love that practically cares for the ultimate requirements of others that they might reach their spiritual potential also.

Compare Paul's similar lists in, **Philippians 4:4-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:11-24**. This passage is also to be directly related to the, "Fruits (that demonstrate the genuine presence) of the Holy Spirit". Refer also to the following passages and then re-read this section of 2 Peter. **Matthew 7:15-23, 12:33, 13:23, John 15:2-16, Romans 6:21-23, 7:4-6, 9:16-23, Galatians 5:16-26, Philippians 1:9-11, James 3:17-18**.

We are called, not just to have these characteristics in our lives, but to "abound" in them. We are all too satisfied with mediocrity; but as Peter, and Paul face the end of their lives they call us to abundance. We are to be filled up and overflowing. Remember the context again here; Peter is awaiting his execution, and he is talking about "abounding". That gives you the emphasis of both these men in possibly their adjacent cells.

Abound believer, **abound!** This is SO important as far as Peter is concerned, that if you are unconvinced of this principle of Scripture, stop right here, and do a word study of this concept in the following verses. **Romans 5:15-21, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, 8:1-7, 9:5-11, Ephesians 1:5-8, Philippians 1:9-11, 4:10-19, 1Thessalonians 3:12-13, 4:1-2, 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5.**

We are enriched by all the Lord has given us, and he always gives, so that we might in turn give more. "Pass it on", is the standard instruction within Christianity regarding all we have received. Let's not wait until we are dying to "get the message", let's abound here and now and always. If we can serve the Lord, let's do it daily with joy and passion. Just last week my wife buried a great friend who had found the Lord in his dying, but had not been able to serve in his life! We don't need to be baptized, join the church and serve for a minimum period, before we are granted entry to heaven. The "dying thief/terrorist" is the example of that. **Luke 23:43.**

In verses eight through ten Peter gives us his further incentives for spiritual growth. Verse eight identifies the effects of abundant growth - we will be effective servants, and we will be fruitful. We are to "abound"; our cup is to run over with joy in Him and pleasure in His service. **Whole hearted worship, witness and service** is God's demand of us - nothing held back. I am only now fully understanding in older age the phrase, "**as in the days of Noah**". **Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:25-30, 1 Peter 3:20.**

The great sin of Noah's day was "unbelief" and inaction towards spiritual things. **Romans 8:9, 14:23.** They simply didn't have time for their Creator and Saviour, and the half-hearted believers are equally guilty! Verse nine shows the blight that comes into a life from failure to grow spiritually - we will be living like those who are short sighted, and operating without glasses. **James 1:21-27.** We are to be focused on His goals, and His Plan for our unique life, and not be distracted by anything less. How many "priorities" are false values, and won't outlast our death?

Verse ten concludes with an exhortation to more and more spiritual growth. If we are not fruitful, we are called two things by Peter, each referring to parables told by the Lord, which indicate the reason we are left on planet earth by him. **First** he uses the word "barren" of life fruit (argos), that is, lazy and bone idle, unproductive, rather than working as a good servant of the Lord. This refers back to the Lord's parable of the talents/lazy servant. **Luke 19:11-26.**

Secondly he tells us that we are to be fruitful, referring to another teaching of the Lord that John would later record in **John 15:1-17.** Not to "abound" is to be disciplined by the Lord, for the Lord is overflowing in love, grace and power towards us, and loving grace and mercy towards the lost. As his servants if we are not overflowing (abounding in the Fruits of The Holy Spirit), we are not living as we **MUST** to really serve him as we are called to. We are left here to be fruitful and so give the gospel out; that is the only reason He has left us alive after salvation. We are here to abound!

If we do not do our job he will remove us from this life early and we will lose rewards! **Matthew 10:38-42, 16:24-27, John 15:1-17, 1 Corinthians 3:8-15, 9:15-27, Colossians 3:1-25, Hebrews 10:35-39, 11:24-29.** (There is another major Bible study to share with people by reading through these verses in order, just as those lists on the previous page.) We have a task to perform and we are assessed on this standard in time, with opportunities for further service in time, and we win rewards in eternity by passionate service only. Peter is passionately urging us to action.

God wants action from us brethren, he wants performance; he wants us to live for him, not sit around waiting for him to return. **2 Thessalonians 3:5-13.** What some are falsely calling "quiet piety", Peter labels correctly, as laziness and unfruitfulness. The fruit is meant to be the work of the Holy Spirit, and it will lead to evangelistic fruit also. We are left here to lead the lost to the Saviour and encourage the saints in loving worship, witness and work.

Verse eight concludes, by reminding us that the full knowledge of the Lord will always be fruitful, for "applied knowledge" (epignosis) will always work out in the life and witness. **James 2:16-26.** That is the sign of "epignosis", it always works out in the life! Academic knowledge is only "gnosis", it is "knowing about" and can pass exams, but it is not what God wants. God doesn't need more PhDs in theology, He wants living breathing application of biblical truth into the fabric of every day life.

If these fruits of the Holy Spirit (or evidences of the working presence of the Spirit), are not present in the believers life it indicates that the particular believer involved is "short sighted" (muopazo). In days before glasses, to be short sighted meant that you would never be able to see what was coming from afar, and that is Peter's point here. To be short sighted is to be able to see clearly only what is right in front of you. You

lack focus in the distance. It is the perfect picture of the believer who lacks application of God's Word into their life. They do not see the things that the Lord has for them, they do not see prophetic fulfillment unfolding, nor identify their role in the unfolding drama of redemption, all they can see is what is directly in front of their face. In short they lack discernment and an appreciation of their part in the Plan Of God. If you haven't re-read the passage do it now - **James 2:16-26**.

Short sightedness is a dangerous thing in the midst of a great battle, for the person cannot see the masses of enemy from afar; they do not see their friends or their enemy, and they cannot distinguish between things and make right choices to keep themselves safe. This is the lot of the believer who does not apply the Word of God to life. They are a danger to themselves, and if they are leaders, they are a danger to others for they lack the discernment to keep themselves, or those they lead safe in the Angelic Conflict.

Another result of spiritual blindness (short sightedness) is also the associated amnesia about crucial doctrines. What you do not use you lose. This principle applies in both the physical realm and the spiritual; study done for degree is soon forgotten, and after a time of lack of use of knowledge we can recall less than ten percent of what we once knew in order to pass an exam. A muscle that is not used will shrink and be unable to be used with strength if not exercised regularly. Just so with the doctrines of the Lord's Word for us.

What is it that Peter says these slack believers forget? The passive tense of the verb reminds us that these believers receive forgetfulness, because they do not receive and apply doctrine regularly. Once again, apply the principle in the physical realm so you see Peter's point. You receive a big roll of fat around your middle if you do not work on training your abdominal muscles. You don't have to do anything to receive fat into the body except just live and eat food. Fat just comes to the body with eating wrongly at wrong times, sloth and laziness, and lack of exercise, so forgetfulness just comes, with spiritual slackness and laziness, and lack of feeding and application of God's Word into your life.

What the believer receives when they lack spiritual sight through lack of application is a forgetfulness regarding the forgiveness of their own sins. They start to doubt their deliverance, they doubt their salvation, they doubt their being kept saved, they doubt their position in Christ, and they doubt God's Plan, Power, and purpose. There are two alternatives for the believer; to live in the sphere of life of applied doctrine, or live in the sphere of life with grave doubts. We will either be robust in our faith, or paralysed by doubts.

When facing testing times, and places of great pressure, "Doubting Castle" is a bad place to be imprisoned by your own spiritual laziness and slackness. John Bunyan's great classic, "Pilgrim's Progress" sums this principle up well. Break out of the prison of doubts believer! Break out of the jail of your own slackness, and start to feed upon the Word of God again, and apply it to your life. "A Believers robust spiritual growth confirms that God has called and chosen them. The blighted condition pictured in verse nine destroys such assurance." (Hiebert, 1984, p 51).

Under pressures we need to have full assurance of our spiritual life and feel it's power within, or else we will crumble. Peter calls us to robust faith, not the weak and the sickly "easy believism" of his, or our own day. Remember the analogies that the early apostles used to refer to the Christian life; they referred to the life of the farmer, the athlete and the soldier. All three professions work in all weathers, rise early to start their day, train hard at all times, and do their job no matter what the opposition, be they the natural elements or the attacks of other men. If your faith walk does not feel like the life of the active and successful farmer, an athlete or a soldier, then you are probably not living as the Lord intends you to! Lazy believers are either carnal or fake! God calls us to active, not passive faith!

Rather than continuing in slackness, Peter calls us, in verse ten, again to diligence (that military word again - spoudazo). In effect Peter is saying again; 'throw yourself into your Christian life, no half measures'. Throw yourself into the Christian life with the zeal of a man fighting his last battle on earth and wanting to do his best in the eyes of his commanding officer. What does he mean, 'to make our calling and election sure'? From God's perspective our eternal security cannot be more secure, for our lives are hid with Christ in God. **Colossians 3:3, John 6:34-40**. Also refer to the doctrine of Eternal Security in the Bible Topic Book.

What then does Peter say here? Look closely, and see that what he is saying is for the believer to take action, so that they will personally and completely know that their faith, and position in Christ (election/choosing) is secure. By walking with the Lord in daily life you are constantly being reminded of his Word and presence, and so your faith has reality. It is like a human friendship; you may love a person, but if you never are having any more than a series of short conversations with them, that love will grow cold and you will start to doubt it. It is the closeness and intimacy of conversation that strengthens all relationships,

and makes you sure and stable in your assurance of an individual's love for you. Just so with our relationship with the Lord; his love for us is stable and sure, but we build our assurance of his great love in and through our daily walk with him.

If we do these things, Peter says, we will not stumble and fall off the path. He uses what we would call a "hikers" word here, referring to the stumble that occurs on a steep or rough path when we wander away from the centre of it, and fall off into the scrub and thorns. Too many believers end up in the scrub and thorns today, because they will not walk the walk they are called to, and they will not stay on Jesus "narrow path"! **Matthew 7:13-23, Hebrews 3:17-4:12**. They will not take the Word of God daily and apply it into their daily life.

Many ask, 'how can we enter into the blessing of the Lord?' Peter says, 'this is the way!' The life that is daily focused on how the Word of God can be applied into every detail of life is the life that will see the door open to the blessings of God upon that life! Peter says in verse eleven, the door of heaven's blessings opens when we do these things. By living this way you truly enter into the blessings, opportunities and privileges of his eternal kingdom. Kingdom living is defined here. It is to live each day in the living reality of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in your life, by feeding on and applying his Word into the daily details of our lives.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

"Peter is calling for an attitude of eagerness and zeal, the opposite of sluggishness and self indulgence". Like James, **James 2:20**, Peter is calling for faith to work out in life. "Peter is anxious that they do not frustrate the grace of God by resting content with faith without works". (Hiebert, 1984, p44).

If a believer has no "diligence"; if they are not zealously eager to feed on the Word of God, then there is serious doubt as to their salvation. It is a contradiction in terms for a believer to be thankful for their salvation, and also lazy regarding hearing the words of the Lord who gave his all for them! Let us all test our selves on this matter. If we do not have zeal for His Word, we are out of fellowship with him, and that must be addressed by confession of whatever sins have separated our heart from His!

David Stern notes of this passage. "Try your hardest, and try even harder to add these qualities to your faith. Faith saves, but not if so called 'believers, are merely passive spectators of their salvation, for then they are barren and unfruitful (**John 2:14-26**), and fail to make their being called and chosen a certainty. Instead they deceive themselves into thinking they are saved when they are not (see **Hebrews 6:4-6**). The only way to be certain one will enter the eternal kingdom of our Lord and deliverer Yeshua the Messiah, is by letting God act through you as you develop the qualities named in vv5 - 7. For similar chains of qualities see, **Romans 5:2-4, 8:29,30**, and in the Apocrapha, (Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20)." (Stern, 1992, p 756).

We are all called to be "fruit inspectors" of our own lives, **2 Corinthians 13:5**, and the list of fruits in this section of 2 Peter, is one that we can use for these daily "audits" of our spiritual status. Are we abounding in these things? We are called to abound, to overflow with the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and so, be the witness to the unsaved that we are meant to be. Faith that delivers under pressure is abounding faith; mediocre faith is weak, pathetic and soon swept away.

Many have asked, 'why don't we hear from God?', but they are out of spiritual range due to unconfessed sin or laziness. "We learn Him, as we live with Him and for Him." (Moffatt, 1963, p 182). "A flourishing spiritual life is a safeguard against failure." (Hiebert, 1984, p 52). Many today appear to be keen to know the Lord, they are keen to learn about him, but their knowledge is only ever, in Peter's terms, "gnosis". He calls us to application, to take what we know about the Lord and apply it, producing "epignosis"; the full knowledge that is applied into daily life so that we are changed by it.

Verse eight reminds us that, "ethical living produces a spiritual harvest. Christians often desire fruit in their lives but fail to understand that it comes from a prior commitment to godly living". (Mounce, 1982, p110). Let us be obedient to our Lord's words, for only then can we truly fellowship with him. We cannot be living in disobedience to him, and expect our faith to be real for us. Reality comes as a fruit of obedience, and application. Stop being play actors with faith on Sundays, start to live and walk with Christ every moment of every day – the days are short – don't waste them.

The challenge of Peter is to live with the focus of the farmer, the athlete, or the soldier. All life that falls short of the robust standard of service that is in these three areas, falls short of God's standard, and we must be

corrected and “toughen up”. Are we making our calling and election “sure” by each day’s walk with the Lord, or are we walking in such a way through daily life that we are undermining our own faith and stability? Let us draw near him daily and serve him with praise, and obey his word, applying it into life, in order that we might have a growing assurance of our salvation and eternal destiny.

Open the door to kingdom living, by obedience to the Lord who gave himself for you. Give yourself, every second of your day to him, and so he will bless and lift you up, and then you will daily know what it is to live as a member of the kingdom. We are in His Kingdom already through faith in him, we are all members of his royal family. Peter says, “live like it brethren!” Catch the excitement of kingdom living, and JUST DO IT!

B. PASTORAL

How zealous are our people for the living Word of God? If they are not at the level that Peter indicates should characterise the “normal” Christian life, then we must ask ourselves as pastors, are we preaching as we should?

We are to take seriously the Lord’s demand that we check out the fruit of those who would serve him in the church. If a person does not demonstrate the fruits of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives, then they are either not indwelt by the Holy Spirit, or not walking in the Spirit’s filling. Whatever the reason, they must not be given roles in the church; instead, they must be commanded in the Lord’s name to repent, and set their lives (back) on the right course. If we do not resemble him it is because we have not met him and walked with Him properly. All who meet the Lord are transformed by their meeting. No transformation of life = no genuine meeting with him = no salvation, or possibly no sanctification. This must be preached solidly, so that people have a holy fear of falling short of God’s standards, rather than the slackness, and casualness, that all too often is the situation within the churches.

The battle we are engaged in is a real one, and the results for a believer of getting it wrong are serious; eternal loss of rewards, and in time misery and doubt filled days. The Lord’s intention is that we live now in the power and glory of his eternal kingdom, and banish all doubts and anxieties by our living fellowship with Him every day. We either have the reality of the presence of the Lord or the reality of anxiety! Do our people understand the root of anxiety? Do they see its remedy? This is Peter’s message, and if we stand on the realities of the apostolic faith it must be ours also!

Eternal Security is a doctrine that if taught as Peter teaches it here, will produce the deep desire to work in the service of the Lord. It produces service that is rooted and grounded in the stability of the soul that knows they are saved and have an eternal destiny secure in Christ Jesus. Service becomes a daily hymn of praise to the one who has delivered them from death. Are we seeing that in our church? If not, it can only be that they have not heard the truth from us as pastors!

Catch the glory of kingdom living in your own life pastor, and then urge all who the Lord has given you to follow your example, as you follow the Lord. Catch the fire, catch the glory, and catch the spirit of kingdom living! LIVE for him each day, and enjoy the stability, the peace that passes understanding, and in the excitement of that speak to all you meet, about your great and glorious hope.

DOCTRINES

MATURITY Refer above pages 20-21

SOLDIER: CHRISTIAN SOLDIER OF EPHESIANS CHAPTER 6 Refer above Page 149-152

CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. God is pleased with believers:
 - a) By asking for the right things (1 Kings 3:9, 10).
 - b) By living a separated life (2 Timothy 2:4).
 - c) By doing his will (Hebrews 13:20, 21).
 - d) Walking in fellowship with him (Hebrews 11:5, Genesis 5:24).

- e) By praising God (Psalm 69:30, 31).
- f) By resting by faith in God's provision (Hebrews 11:6).

2. The Christian life involves walking:

- a) in the Truth (2 John 4)
- b) by means of faith in wisdom (2 Corinthians 5:7, Colossians 4:5)
- c) in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25)
- d) in Love (Ephesians 5:2)
- e) in newness of Life (Romans 6:4)
- f) worthy of our vocation (Ephesians 4:1)
- g) worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12)
- h) honestly as in the day (Romans 13:13)
- i) in good works (Ephesians 2:10)
- j) in light (Ephesians 5:8, 1 John 1:7)
- k) in Christ Jesus (Colossians 2:6)
- l) circumspectly (Ephesians 5:15,16)
- m) as ye ought (1 Thessalonians 4:1).

3. The Christian life demands honourable conduct.

- a) Believers have freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1), but our conduct must not:
 - i) harm the weak (1 Corinthians 8:9);
 - ii) be hypocritical (1 Peter 2:16);
 - iii) does not edify (1 Corinthians 10:23);
 - iv) lead to habits which enslave (1 Corinthians 6:12);
 - v) lead to self-indulgence (Galatians 5:13);
 - vi) offend personal conscience (Romans 14:5).
- b) Our conduct towards God:
 - i) Done in His Name (1 Timothy 6:1)
 - ii) As unto Him (Colossians 3:23)
 - iii) For His glory (1 Corinthians 10:31)
 - iv) To be worthy of Him (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5)
- c) Our conduct towards others:
 - i) Be a good example (Romans 14:7; 1 Timothy 4:12).
 - ii) Worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1).
 - iii) Honest (2 Corinthians 8:21).
 - iv) Free from the appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

- v) Helpful to a neighbour (Romans 12:18; 15:2).
- vi) Not a cause of stumbling (Romans 14:13).
- vii) Honouring one's parents (Colossians 3:20).
- viii) Honouring to the government (Titus 3:1).
- ix) Must not entail unequal yoking (2 Corinthians 6:14).
- x) Not to judge others (Romans 14:10-13).
- xi) Not to cause others to stumble by our actions (Romans 14:15,21-23).

d) Our conduct towards self:

- i) Pure and not lustful (1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Peter 2:11).
- ii) Must not defile (1 Corinthians 3:17; Titus 1:15).
- iii) Must not condemn (Romans 14:22).
- iv) Must do good works (Titus 3:8).

e) This conduct is only obtainable under the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 1:9).

4. The Christian life demands diligence:

- a) Love towards others. (Galatians 2:10, 2 Corinthians 8:8). We should be eager to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves especially by giving them the gospel.
- b) We should be keen to take care of the saints (other believers) (Hebrews 6:11, 2 Corinthians 7:12, 2 Corinthians 8:16,17, 2 Timothy 1:17)
- c) We should be eager to rest in the promises and principles of God. Happiness comes from this. An example of not resting in the promises is the Exodus generation.(Hebrews 4:11)
- d) Confirmation of our calling (2 Peter 1:5, 2 Peter 1:10) We should witness for Christ eagerly, zealously.
- e) Unity of the body. (Ephesians 4:3) We should be zealous in maintaining the unity of the body.
- f) For the commendation of God. (2 Timothy 2:15). Be eager to show yourself approved by God.
- g) To have a life without spot or blemish. (2 Peter 3:14) We should walk close to the Lord and not expose ourselves to unnecessary areas of temptation.

5. Priorities in the Christian life:

- a) The First Person - Jesus Christ has ultimate priority - Colossians 1:16-18
- b) The First Possessions - The kingdom of God, the greatest gift - Matthew 6:33
- c) The First Offering - the giving of oneself - 2 Corinthians 8:5
- d) The First Denial - the denial of self - Matthew 7:5
- e) The First Discipline - the discipline of prayer - 1 Timothy 2:1-4
- f) The First Commandment - to love God supremely - Matthew 22:37-38
- g) The First Excuse - too busy to have time for God - Matthew 8:21-22

6. The Christian life has a number of deposits:

- a) First Deposit - at salvation the believer entrusts his life with the Lord. (2 Timothy 1:12)
- b) Second Deposit - the Lord deposits the Word of God with the believer - teaching and study. (2 Timothy 1:14)
- c) Third Deposit - the believer deposits his fears, problems, pressures, (1 Peter 4:19, 5:7, Psalm 55:22)

d) Fourth Deposit - the believer deposits the gospel with the unbeliever. (Romans 1:14)

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT Refer above Page 24

SPIRITUALITY Refer above Page 20

DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

1. Divine discipline is the result of a believer disobeying the will of God.
2. God disciplines all true children. Those who are not true children do not know discipline (Hebrews 12:8; 1 Peter 5:9-10).
3. God's discipline of believers is shown in:
 - a) Old Testament (Proverbs 3:11,12)
 - b) New Testament (Hebrews 12:3-13; Revelation 3:19).
4. Attitudes towards God's discipline: (Hebrews 12:3-15)
 - a) Think lightly of it (verse 5)
 - b) Faint or become disheartened (verse 5)
 - c) Endure discipline (verse 7)
 - d) Learn and benefit from discipline (verse 11).
5. The effect of God's discipline:
 - a) Discipline blesses the believer (Psalm 94:12)
 - b) Lives are changed (Hebrews 12:11)
 - c) It is for a limited time (1 Peter 1:6,7)
 - d) It is for the believer's benefit (Hebrews 12:10).
6. The believer who refuses to repent may be disciplined to the extent of death (1 Corinthians 11:30-31, 1 John 5:16).
7. Divine discipline never implies a loss of salvation (Galatians 3:26, 2 Timothy 2:11-13).

REWARDS AND CROWNS Refer above Page 42

ANGELIC CONFLICT Refer above Page 43

ETERNAL SECURITY Refer above Page 31

PARAPHRASE

"For this very reason, throw yourself into (your daily walk with the Lord), like a soldier who is facing potentially his last battle, and so supply even more to your soul, (for further service). Add to your faith in Christ, moral excellence of character in all details of life, to moral excellence, add the information you need about the Lord, and to it add moral fibre; under pressure hold yourself together,(and apply what you now know to the situations you face). Add to this inner strength, continuing hope filled endurance under pressures. To endurance, add godliness, (by holy obedience to his revealed standards for daily life). To godliness a real brotherly kindness (that practically shows loving care to all your fellow believers in needs of any kind). To brotherly kindness add the love (that thinks first of the eternal benefits that can

be given to others, rather than doing things for selfish reasons.) For if these things are in your life, and keep on increasing, they will ensure that you are neither inactive in your spiritual duties, nor unfruitful in your spiritual work. (With these things active in you, you will see the result of your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as it works out in your life and witness). The person lacking these things is spiritually short sighted, (they cannot see what is coming, or anything that isn't in front of their face). They end up even forgetting the nature of the Lord's deliverance of them from their old sins! Rather (than have this instability plague your lives), therefore at every point in your life, thrown your self into living spiritually, in close daily fellowship with your Lord, walk close to him daily, and so be sure of your calling and election. Do this and you will not fall off the path (that the Lord wants you to walk down here). This is the way to live so that you truly enter through the door our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ has opened into kingdom living now, with all it's privileges and blessings right now, and also eternal blessings later."

VERSES 12 - 18

“ 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 shown me. 15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. 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 eye-witnesses 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.”

KEY WORDS

Wherefore	dio	for these reasons.
Negligent	mello	future, active, indicative with the strong negative, ouk. The verb means to be about to do something; here it means, "I will not in the future, be negligent to do this.
Remembrance	hupomnesis	to make you remember these things.
Always	aei	always, ever when we are together.
Know	oida	perfect , active, participle; although you are knowing(with results that do go on forever).
Established	sterizo	perfect , passive, participle; to be set up permanently, established, strengthened.
Present truth	pareimi	present, active, participle; to be at hand, in the present.
Meet	dikaiois	right, just, righteous, impartial, the correct thing to do according to righteousness.
Think	egeomai	present, middle, indicative; I keep on considering this (to be right).
Stir	di-egeiro	present, active, infinitive; to wake up thoroughly.
Knowing	oida	perfect , active, participle; absolute surety is in view here, "I know" results go on and on!
Shortly	tachinos	suddenly, speedily, soon; the concept is, "at any time soon".
Put off	apothesis	put off like a set of clothes.
Tabernacle	skene	tent, for temporary habitation.
Shewed	deloo	aorist, active, indicative; the Lord "made plain/clearly known" to Peter at a point in time.
Endeavour	spoudazo	future, active, indicative; I will throw myself into this with urgency and effort.
Decease	exodus	departure, as in a leaving one place for another.
Be able	echo	present, active, infinitive; to be able to have (in your power).
Have	poieo	present, middle, infinitive; to bring about.
Remembrance	mnesis	to recall.
Followed	exakoloutheo	aorist, active, participle; having followed out from one thing to another.
Cunningly	sophizo	perfect , passive, participle; wisely made up, cunningly devised, contrived.
Fables	muthos	myths, as in stories told for a moral purpose.
Power	dumanis	power (dynamite).
Coming	parousia	the revelation, arrival, coming, presence, advent.
Eyewitnesses	epoptes	one who sees with their own eyes.
Majesty	magaleiotes	divine majesty that is the highest in order, that brings worship as a response.
Honour	time	exalted status that is proclaimed and therefore known.
Glory	doxa	radiance that is seen.
Excellent	megaloprepes	magnificent, sublime, special magnificence.
Pleased	eudokeo	aorist, active, indicative; is well pleased, or satisfied that all expectations are met

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Go back and re-read the first letter of Peter, Chapter one verses 10-12, and you will see where these first three verses refer back to. The mockers had come into the church even back then. There were many who within years of receiving the gospel started to deny the basic elements of the apostolic faith, because it didn't suit their life style preferences. They no longer believed in the reality of the Lord's return, (as these false brethren still doubt today), and they mocked those who clung to the apostolic faith in the "parousia". Peter will come back to this issue in chapter 3.

As we face death we confront the acid test of what we truly believe, and we see fully what we truly believe about what our eternal destiny is. Peter's desire for the people he led was that they might be grounded and firmly established in the truth that he was, as he wrote these words, preparing to die in. He "knows" these truths, and they also "know" (perfect tenses) these things, and the perfect tenses in this passage remind us that this knowledge has eternal consequences and eternal security in the holding of them. The "cunningly devised fables" (perfect tense) of the enemy also have eternal consequences for those fooled by them!

"Whenever we are together I will teach you these things", he says, because they are so vital. Why? Because at any time the believers may be called to account before the authorities, and there be be faced with the choice to stand for their Lord and die, or deny him and live. He wants to thoroughly wake them up to this reality, and the reality of the previous verses, of loss of rewards if we fail to live as the Lord intends. Peter wants them to have an apostolic view of the nature of death, and eternity beyond, for only that will keep them stable and secure in the midst of persecution. He wants them all "established" (perfect tense) in the truth, so that they are stable witnesses to the truth of the incarnation, and its eternal significance. If we are "established" in truth there are eternal consequences of that – and they are amazing beyond all present words.

Death to Peter is simply like changing clothes, or swapping one tent for a better one. He uses words in these verses that illustrate the mature Christian attitude to death. It is changing clothes, or swapping a tabernacle for a temple. Both words used by Peter illustrate an "improvement" that is expected. The Tabernacle of the Exodus was a beautiful thing but it was simply a tent, whereas the Temple was a great and fine building; just so the leaving of this body is swapping a fine tent, that hopefully we have looked after and enjoyed, for a far better form of living, with the Lord, beyond all the limits of space and time forever. The Christian message, as we see again and again in these "last letters" is – "The Best is yet to come!"

The other analogy is equally suggestive of positional advancement. You only changed clothes in the ancient world because you had an important meeting to go to. Peter is saying, I have an appointment with my Saviour, and I am ready to change these temporary working clothes (this body) for another set of more magnificent clothes, and go to the meeting that the Lord told me I had to keep all those years ago. He refers back to the words of the Lord, still at the point of his writing not yet recorded in the Gospel of John.

John would later record the words of the Lord in **John 21:18-19**. He, like his Lord would suffer the agonising death of crucifixion, but Peter, feeling unworthy to die in the same way requested that he be killed upside down. The Romans, always keen on a bit of variation, obliged, and so they killed Peter, after first killing his elderly wife in front of him.

The horror, to us, as we contemplate this, was well known to Peter, for he had seen many crucifixions; yet his mind is clear and his heart stilled, even though the pain was real until the end when he entered heaven. It is recorded by the early church that he called out to his wife, as she died on her cross, to keep thinking of her Lord and so to die bravely, which she did. Peter goes on in this passage before us to refer to his death as an "exodus". What does he mean, and why use this word? Both were then buried under what would be later called Vatican Hill. Graves probably found 2017.

He writes to Jewish believers who would have immediately turned back in their Old Testament Scriptures to the story of the Exodus; his reference to tabernacle would have already given them this clue. Life on earth is a learning time, a time for learning worship and practising service, and a time for spiritual growth under trial, but we are not meant to feel "at home" here! For our true home is heaven, and it is there we are meant to live forever, just as the Israelites "Promised Land" was Israel. The wilderness was to be wandered through, but the goal was Israel. Just so with us; our goal is heaven, and heavenly rewards, not prosperity, or an easy life down here on this temporary planet!

In verse fifteen he uses his favourite word, “spoudazo”, again. He is going to throw himself into the teaching process right up to the end of his life. I want you to have this information, he says, “in your power”. An interesting phrase, which underlines the importance of Bible doctrine; it is powerful! “I want you to have this information and be able to use it”. Peter is saying here, “I want you without excuse before God, if you don’t do these things!” This is the pastoral role, to warn and exhort, and encourage, so that the flock has the information that it needs to apply and keep themselves safe. Then if they don’t apply the word they cannot blame anyone but themselves. The message given is trustworthy, Peter says in the next verse, and must be followed or else you may end with deep sadness and disaster.

In verse sixteen, Peter uses the strong word, translated, “eye witnesses”. It was a Greek word signifying those who had entered into the sacred mystery religions, and fully known them, and had seen the pagan god’s theophanies. It was the word to say, “we know this, and without doubt, we have seen God”. He refers back, in his walk with the Lord to the events on the Mount of Transfiguration. We saw a glimpse of God’s majesty, Peter says, and it was the power and majesty that drove us to our knees. A right view of the Lord will protect us under pressure, for we follow the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. We are on the right side of history, with the winner as our Lord. Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9, **1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 19:16**.

Verse sixteen also underlines what Christianity is emphatically not. It is not a set of pleasant fables or myths! Our faith is not cleverly put together stories for a moral purpose. Christianity is not fables told to enable people to live better lives down here! Living pleasant and moral lives on earth is a by-product of Christian teaching, it is not the purpose of them! The purpose of the teachings of the Lord is that we might be readied for heaven; the focus is always heavenly! As the Exodus generation’s focus was on the land of promise, not the desert they were wandering through, so our focus is to be upon heaven, which is our destination. We often do not distinguish between by-product of faith and goal of our faith.

The word for ‘followed’ used by Peter underlines this point. He uses the very specific word, “exakolutho”, which means to follow out (ex) of something, and to go to another place altogether. We have a destiny, and that is our goal, and it is heaven. Living here is about witnessing, serving, and living according to God’s purposes, which are focused on readying us for heaven. Prosperity on earth is not the purpose, nor should it be a goal of life, yet so many believers live like pagans, trying to become the wealthiest person in the cemetery. What a foolish thing that is!

Peter says, don’t follow after myths, follow after the truth that is in Christ Jesus. That truth is about our ownership, role, and our destiny; we are owned by the Lord (he paid the price for us with his precious blood,) he has a role for us here, and we have an eternal destiny in heaven with him. The use of the third perfect tense in this section is instructive indeed. **“We do not follow cunningly devised fables/myths”**, but the simple truth that unfolded before the apostle’s eyes through their walk with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

They are the men who saw miracles, and worked miracles, seeing that when God steps into history everything is changed forever! They also learned in their walk that the miracles were done in accordance with the Plan of God, not the desires of men for entertainment and drama. There are eternal consequences for being foolish enough to follow fables, or the entertainment focused “fable-marketing” plans of today’s false teachers! You are “conned” if you follow fables, by the eternal con man, Satan himself, and you may share his eternal destiny, if unsaved. **Revelation 20:11-15**.

The Father’s testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ is the testimony that Peter intimates we should also be hearing on entry into heaven. The father “delights” in the Son, and his desire for us, his will for us, involves our fulfilling our mission here as our Lord did, and so receive the “delight” of the father in us also. Catch the fire of this challenge believer!

“We heard the voice from heaven”, Peter states bluntly, and we stand, in our faith, ready to die because we are this sure of it’s divine foundation. These last two verses in this section are simple, straight forward testimony from the great apostle. Do we believe this or don’t we? The liberal arm of Christendom does not believe this, they assign the words of the apostles to the realm of “myth”. Choose your company this day believer.

Do you stand with Peter, or with the liberals who doubt him! If you choose to stand with Peter, Paul, Jude and John who write these “last words” to the churches, then live like them! Peter has given us the tools to do that in this section. I am with the apostles, in life and death. Make your own choice believer, and make it daily to walk with the Apostles into application of the Word into the fabric of life, and so add to your assurance of salvation eternal rewards.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

The believer's death is not a tragedy. It is the start of a new and more amazing thing. "To believe in him at all, is to believe everything he has promised. Our Exodus is a glorious beginning, not a tragic ending." (Mounce, 1982, p 116). Let us all examine ourselves in light of the things that Peter identifies are the hall marks of true biblical focus. Do we see the things of earth as temporary?

Do we see the years of our life here as "wanderings in a desert place", or do we live here as if it is our promised land? Do we love this world? (**John 17:14-25, 18:36 – 37.**) Remember, Satan is the fake, and now (since the Cross and Resurrection) the defeated "prince of this world", and those who love this temporary world are lovers of what he can only temporarily give, rather than what God provides now and forever! **John 12:31, 14:30, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 2 Timothy 4:10.**

How clear are we today on the purpose of our life, and our life's goal/priorities? Do we see this life as a wilderness wandering with the goal of reaching the promised land of heaven, or are we getting too comfortable here? Is our focus on our place in heaven? Peter is calling us to "heavenly mindedness"; the very thing that some today say is 'of no earthly use', yet Peter argues is the key to our role being fulfilled on earth.

If we are "heavenly minded", we will be of earthly use to the Lord, for we will be focused on fulfilling our heavenly warrant. Like all officers of every Army, and all ambassadors of every foreign country we have received a "warrant" with our new position and role. We will fulfil our "warrant of appointment" by trying to please the one who called us, commissioned us as his ambassadors.

The true officer, or ambassador, will be thinking only of bringing glory to his Lord's name, and finally, through a life of devoted service, they will dream of having him delight in them. My brethren, let that be us! Catch Peter's vision, for it is the one the Lord gave him, and it must be ours, if we would be a "delight" to the one who shed his precious blood for us!

B. PASTORAL

"Age had not lessened the zeal of Peter's concern for others. Even though his martyrdom was just around the corner, he continues to give himself without reserve for the benefit of those entrusted to his care." (Mounce, 1982, p 115). Do we neglect to stir people up, and so return them to their roots in apostolic faith? Peter was always reminding the Lord's flock of the Lord's teaching, that they might walk the Lord's way, and so receive the Lord's protection and the Lord's rewards! This is our task still! We have no excuses to fall short of God's holy demands.

Heavenly mindedness is mocked by many today, yet it the heart of Peter's message to us all. He urges us to see things God's way rather than our own. Is this the message our people hear from us as pastors? Do they see the importance of distinguishing between the "rewards" of time that the world can give, and the blessings of eternity that God gives to those who love and serve him? Do our people see the temporary nature of what the world gives, or they too easily seduced by the pleasures of sins of the moment? **Hebrews 11:25.** Remember the Lord's words about the "days of Noah".

Can we say the things Peter says here in this section? Have we informed the flock of the things that Peter urges here be taught regularly? Have our people heard the doctrines of life and death that Peter lays out plainly before his people? It is on this ground that we will be judged; can any member of our church look us in the eye as they die and say, 'pastor you never told me about this! If they can, and we cannot answer, 'I taught it, but either you failed to attend, or failed to apply', then we have failed in our duty before God.

A person's focus and goals determines what they will reach in the race they run. If we do not teach in such a manner as to clarify the issue of the people's focus of their mind, and ensure it is on heaven, then all they do will be "off the mark". Remember that sin is defined as, "missing the mark", "falling short" of the standard.

Can you see why that is the definition now? We, "miss the mark", because we have the wrong perspective on things! We are distracted and "fall short" because we do not aim where we should, we do not set our goals in terms of heavenly reality. By our teaching we must raise our people's sights. We must get them to see the heavenly reality and identify the temptations of time for what they are. We must expose the

“cunningly devised satanic fables”, for they are the fatal side track of the “prince of this world”, the deviation that leads away from the path of the “Lord’s delight” to the eternal “Lake of Fire”.

DOCTRINES

WORLD

1. World under control of Satan:
 - a) ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
 - b) god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - c) he deceives the world (Revelation 12:9).
Satan is filling the world with his propaganda (1 Timothy 4:1).
2. Jesus Christ created earth (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18). He gave control to original mankind (Genesis 1:28) but man lost it at the fall (Genesis 3:6).
3. Sin and spiritual death are the basis of Satan’s rule over this world. Therefore, God so loved the world that He gave a Saviour (John 3:16), hence Christ as a title in this connection. Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).
4. Therefore Christ is the saviour of the world (John 3:17; 4:42; 1 John 4:14). The Saviour who gave His life for the world (John 6:33); hence Christ has a title in this connection. Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5).
5. Therefore Christ has overcome the world (John 16:33), so that the believer can overcome the world (1 John 5:4,5).
6. Consequently believers in Christ must not love the world (1 John 2:15,16). Nor must believers conform to the world (Romans 12:2). Worldliness is what you think, which may be demonstrated by what you do.
7. World control by Satan will stop at the Second Advent. However, believers will continue forever (1 John 2:17).
8. Also, the Word of God abides forever (1 Peter 1:23,25), and is designed to overcome the ruler of this world (1 John 2:14). Therefore, not conforming to the world and overcoming the world are accomplished through Bible doctrine, by which God has made foolish the wisdom of the world (1 Corinthians 1:20; 3:19).
9. It is therefore of greatest importance that the believer’s attitude is based on the Word of God (Philippians 2:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 26:3,4; Philippians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 1:5,6,8).
10. Backsliding is characterised as friendship with the world (James 4:4).

WORLDLINESS

1. Worldliness means to follow the beliefs and philosophy of man rather than that of God.
2. Worldliness is the opposite to Godliness; it is thinking/doing in opposition to God’s revealed word (Titus 2:11-14).
3. All people are faced with the constant choice of following God’s way or the world’s (Romans 5:12, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20).
4. Satan is the “prince of this world”, and has power to deceive those who are negative to God’s plans (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Peter 5:8,9).
5. We must not love the world (1 John 2:15-17).
6. We must hate all the world stands for, in thought and in deed (1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 11:30-32, Galatians 6:14, James 1:27, James 4:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 19).
7. We must not return to our old behaviour patterns (Ephesians 2:1-7).
8. This evil world system and the prince of this world will be condemned (Matthew 18:7, John 12:31, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 2:1ff).

1. Believers are said to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).
2. The same Greek word is used in (John 3:12) where the word 'things' is mentioned.
3. The heavenlies is the area of the believer's spiritual experience as identified with Christ in various ways:-
 - a) divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
 - b) life (Col 3:4; 1 John 5:12)
 - c) relationships (John 20:17; Hebrews 2:11)
 - d) inheritance (Romans 6:16,17)
 - e) service (John 17:18; Matthew 28:20)
 - f) suffering (Philippians 1:29; 3:10; Colossians 1:24)
 - g) future glory (Romans 8:18-21; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10).
4. The believer is a heavenly man and a stranger or pilgrim on the earth (Hebrews 3:1, 1 Peter 2:11).
5. The believer is an ambassador from Heaven (2 Corinthians 5:20).

ETERNAL LIFE

1. Mankind was created by God to enjoy fellowship with Him forever (2 Peter 3:9).
2. Entry into eternal life is by faith in Christ (John 3:36, 5:24, Acts 13:46, Galatians 6:8, Matthew 25:46).
3. Those who are serious about life and death ask about it (Matthew 13:40-43, 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 10:25, 18:18).
4. The Lord provides the answer to questions about life and death (John 6:68, Romans 5:20,21, Romans 6:22,23).
5. It is the Lord who gives eternal life (John 5:39, 40, John 12:50).
6. Believers have eternal life now, as a present possession (1 John 5:11-13). This guarantees our salvation.
7. Eternal life is received in full at the rapture/resurrection when we all receive our new bodies from the Lord.
8. We are all urged to live each day with the eternal life perspective in mind, thinking of our place with the Lord forever (Matthew 19:29, 30, Mark 10:29-31, John 12:25, John 4:36, Romans 2:6,7).

REWARDS AND CROWNS [See page 42 above]

PARAPHRASE

"For these reasons, I will never, ever in the future, neglect to fulfil this duty to you. I will, at all times we are together, keep on reminding you of these things, even though you know them, and are permanently established or grounded in this ever present truth. Yes, indeed, I believe it is the right and proper thing to do, that as long as I live in this bodily tent, to waken all out of sleep, and remind them of this truth. (I am especially stirred up about these things because) I must shortly change these earthly "clothes" for a heavenly body, even as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me (all those years ago). Moreover, I will keep on throwing myself into this task, to ensure at even after my death (exodus) everyone keeps on being reminded of these truths. For we have not followed after cunningly invented and developed fables or myths; when we told you of the majestic power and glorious coming of the Lord, we were giving you an eye witness account, for we saw his majestic glory (that day on the Mount of Transfiguration). For he received from the father divine honour and majestic glory, and (we heard there) there came from the glorious heavens such a voice to him saying, 'this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'. And this voice, which came from the heavens, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount of Transfiguration."

VERSES 19 - 21

“ 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.”

KEY WORDS

Have	echo	present, active, indicative; we keep on having and holding.
Sure	bebaioteros	more certain than visual, experiential evidence (eye witness)
Word	logos	the mind behind the words; the words with their meaning.
Prophecy	prophetikos	prophetic. Together = the prophetic words incorporating OT and NT.
Whereunto	ho	to which (words of scriptural prophecy).
Take Heed	prosecho	present, active, participle; to hold the mind on a topic, because it matters.
Light	luchnos	hand held lamp used to find the way in the dark.
Shineth	phaino	present, active, participle; it keeps on shining.
Dark place	auchmeros	obscure, murky, dirty, dark and horrible, dry and barren also.
Day dawn	diaugazo	aorist, active, subjunctive; light breaking through the darkness.
Day Star	phosphoros	the light bringer, the planet Venus, the morning star. Numbers 24:17. Malachi 4:2.
Arise	anatello	aorist, active, subjunctive; to arise.
Knowing	ginomai	present, active, participle; we keep on knowing.
Private	idias	of it's own; with reference to itself. Prophecy is in a tradition and must be interpreted within the prophetic tradition.
Interpretation	epilusis	releasing, solving, explaining, interpreting; it is hard but there is a way!
Came not	phero	aorist, passive, indicative; plus strong negative, ouk. It was not born, or brought forth, or produced.
Old time	pote	at any time!
Will	thelema	volition or will power, and origin.
Moved	pheromenoi	present, passive, participle; were carried along as a ship is by the wind. They received the wind, but had to “set their sails”. God spoke, but the men through whom he spoke were receptive.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

What can be more sure than the very Word/Logos of God coming from the heavens? What can be more sure than the memory of an actual event that you were the eye witness of? Peter says that the living Word Of God, the Scriptures, is **more sure** than even his dramatic transfiguration experience. The living reality of the Word is more “sure/stable/encouraging” than memories of the most dramatic realities. All events once stored in memory become fainter as the years pass, but the Word of God is new every morning. **Lamentations 3:23.**

Memory of great events may be wonderful, even as here, at the highest level of glory, yet memory fades, but the more sure testimony of God's glory is in his Word which goes on and on, ever with us to encourage and strengthen. Peter uses a very strong word for, ‘more sure’, underlining that the Word of God is far above personal experience. What a challenge this verse is. Is the Bible to us, more real than our experiences? For this is the demand that Peter makes upon us. If we lack this certainty we lack apostolic faith. For the men on the mount with Jesus that day, the scriptures they held in their hands were more real than the memory of that unique event! Are we with them in this?

If Peter took heed (listened, learned from and applied) of the events of the mount of transfiguration, then so much more ought we to pay attention to the things that we see, hear, or read within the Scriptures. This is Peter's message to future generations. Trust the word above your experiences, even if they are at the level of the ones we had! This becomes vital when we confront the signs and wonders of the false prophets that Peter will warn of in chapter two.

Verse 19. “You will do well”, was the normal way in the papyri of saying, “please”. (J H Moulton) It is a similar usage to James 2:3. Peter is polite but very powerfully urgent in his words here. This will become a matter of life and death after John's death. With the death of John the last eye witness to the events of the Lord's ministry would be gone, and the surety of the words of scripture needed to be given the same status in the church as the verbal memories of the apostles who still lived at the time Peter wrote this letter. Peter is

saying, "You do not need us, you only need our testimony, and we, like all the others, have recorded these things for your benefit in the scriptures".

"The transfiguration bears witness to the permanent validity of the Old Testament. . . . We are on a pilgrimage throughout our lives in this dark world. God has graciously provided us with a lamp, the Scriptures. If we pay attention to them for reproof, warning, guidance and encouragement we should walk safely. If we neglect them, we shall be engulfed by darkness. The whole course of our lives ought to be governed by the Word of God." (Green, 1968, p 87).

Peter appears to then become quite poetic in the last part of verse nineteen. What is he saying? Let us look at each of the elements he refers to.

1. **Light shining in a dark place.** - This is a clear reference, first to the Word of God, which from the Psalms was referred to as "light". **Psalm 43:3, 119:105, 130, Proverbs 6:23.** It is also, and primarily a reference to the presence of the Lord amongst his people as the Shekinah Glory.

First in the Exodus, the Lord was the pillar of fire that gave light to the people, **Exodus 13:21, 14:20.** Light was also the symbol of the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the lamps that burned with the pure olive oil in the Temple. **Exodus 25:37, 27:20.** David could say, "the Lord is my light and my salvation", **Psalm 27:1, 36:9, 89:15.**

The prophets spoke of the Lord's coming as light, **Isaiah 9:2, 60:1-20,** and finally the Lord refers to himself as the "light of the world". **John 8:12, Matthew 4:16, 5:14, John 1:4-9, 3:19-21.**

2. **Day dawn.** - The day dawning, in the context of the use of light in the Scriptures, then can refer to only one thing; the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the "day star", the morning star which heralds the coming of the dawn, the end of the dark night of history. This image gives us the correct viewpoint of history. This present age is like the hours of darkness, where the believers have only the light of the Lord's presence in their hearts (or in Israel's case in the Exodus, his presence in the cloud and fire), and the light of his Word. Even with this light for our lives, we are still living in darkness. The real light only shines, the real purposes of God in the creation are only seen once the dawn breaks on the Messianic Age, with the king here and ruling on the earth. **Isaiah 21:6-12.**

3. **Day star.** - This is the Lord Jesus Christ. First referred to as such by Moses, **Numbers 24:17,** and in several of the apocryphal books written between the Old Testament and the start of the New. Testament of Levi 17:3, Testament of Judah 24:1- 5, both of which make it clear that the Jewish people considered the Messiah to be the "Morning Star". Both these date from before the Lord's birth.

4. **Arise in your hearts.** Until he returns to rule on earth, we need to have his living presence within our hearts. That is Peter's prayer for these people; that they may awaken to the reality of the rulership of Messiah in their hearts each day. This is the desire of the Lord for each of us; that he might rule in our hearts each new day, in this spiritually dark world. **Ephesians 5:8-18, Colossians 3:15.**

"However high it's civilisation may rise, this world, in it's wilful alienation from God, who is light (**1 John 1:5**), lies in the darkness of sin, ignorance, despair, death". (Hiebert, 1984, p 162). This is the divine view of history, and we are recalled to this viewpoint by Peter who urges us to let the light of God shine in our hearts. He then moves on to the subject of interpretation of the Scriptures. The light is meant to shine into our hearts, but due to the sinfulness of men it may be "refracted" by false methods of interpretation, and so be twisted to mean things it does not. Peter will go on to warn of this in his last chapter, verse 16. **Psalm 56:5.**

"A text out of it's context, is a pretext". So said Dr David L Cooper, the great Hebrew scholar, and, Peter underlines this principle in verses 20 -21. He also identifies that the writers of Scripture were not just like ships being blown along by the wind of the Holy Spirit (this analogy is a good one only if taken fully, as we will see below). Inspiration is a process that involves the Holy Spirit working with the dedicated and open will, passion and life experience of the writer. In just the same manner as the writers were empowered by God, just so we are to be led along in our interpretation; by the power and teaching ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The first thing to know about interpretation is says Peter that it is not to be a "personal" thing. To us, who have been brought up in a post reformation age this warning is a shock, for we have been brought up with the concept that each believer is to sit with the Scriptures and interpret them for them self. We are so brain washed about this, and the reason was a good one; But we must listen to Peter. In the corrupt mediaeval church the priests alone were allowed to read scripture, and tell the people what it meant. They lied, and the

reformers reacted to this, but we have inherited a false view that each person may interpret the scriptures for themselves; for my brethren, it **IS** false! The truth is neither the view of the corrupt mediaeval church, nor that of the reformers; it is the apostolic viewpoint. So let us carefully see what that is.

The words used by Peter are specific. We are forbidden to interpret Scripture with reference to ourselves alone. We are not to make private interpretations. The Scriptures come within the biblical tradition, and they are to be read and interpreted within that biblical tradition – as W G Scroggie put it, “within the unfolding drama of redemption”. Scripture is to be interpreted by scripture, each text being taken within its context, and compared to others. If one passage of Scripture directly interprets a previous passage, then that is to be taken as the correct interpretation. We are always to be corrected by the previous and subsequent words of Scripture. We are not to come to the Scriptures and tell the text what to say, or interpret things to suit ourselves.

So the first principle of hermeneutics (Biblical Interpretation) is that there is to be no private, self centred interpretations of Scripture, each passage is to be taken in the context of the entire revelation of God. Revelation will always be for the blessing, glory and use of the entire church, never for narcissistic reasons for individuals. The second principle is now given in verse 21. As the writers “were moved along by the Holy Spirit”, so are we to be also as we read their words. The words of scripture are Holy Spirit breathed, and they are to be heard in the Spirit’s power, and applied by Him into our lives for the blessing of the Church, and the glory of the Lord’s name. **2 Timothy 3:14-17, John 16:13**. There is no interpretation without the context of the previous teaching of the prophets and earlier writers of scripture, and there is no interpretation without the Holy Spirit’s power, either then or now.

It is not our will that is revealed in the Scriptures, it is God’s Will for us. It is to be known only God’s way, and through his means, and in his Holy Spirit’s power. The word for being “moved” is the word that sums up the two way process of the writing, and interpretation, and application of Scripture. It involves being moved along by the power of something greater, but also it involves the concept of volition (will), with the one being moved positioning themselves so that the greater power can move upon them with effect. The sailing ship will only be moved along by the wind if it positions itself into the wind, and the crew sets its sails. We position in God’s will for our lives, and we are blown forward by the Spirit’s power.

It is to be just so with us. We are only moved along by the Holy Spirit, if we are correctly positioned; that means we are, “in Christ Jesus”, and “in fellowship” through confessions of any sins. Even then we will not be moved along, unless we open ourselves to God’s Word, by positioning ourselves where it is being taught, and we pay attention and apply it to our lives. Those who are serious with God, and take his Holy Word seriously, are “carried along”, by the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives; only then do they really become useful to God, and are blessed by God in time and eternity. **John 3:6-16, 6:63**.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

In days when people seek signs and wonders to establish their faith Peter challenges us to see that the “sign of the scriptures” is more powerful than the greatest of all experiences known to man. All experiences fade in our memory, but the Word is renewed in power through the Holy Spirit every new day. Peter saw the Lord glorified, both on the Mount of Transfiguration and at the Ascension, and yet he says that the Scriptures are a “more sure word”. Do we have the love and passion for the Scriptures that Peter clearly had? Do we value them as he did?

Once again Peter has challenged us about our attitudes towards this world and the things in it. He has, throughout this chapter, reminded us that we have in this world no lasting assets. He has reminded us that this world is a dark place, and nothing here is worth giving our energy for and obtaining. Our destiny is not earth bound, it is heavenly, and we are here to serve our Lord alone, to win eternal reward, not obtain earthly glory. **Ephesians 5:8-18, Hebrews 13:14**. Is this our mental attitude, or are we side tracked by the desire for temporary earthly success, or pleasant earthly experiences?

Has the Lord risen and does he rule in our hearts as the king of our soul? He is King of Kings and Lord of lords, but does he rule within us over the allocation of our time each day? This is Peter’s challenge to us. He will return to rule, but until then let us ensure he rules within our hearts every day we are in this dark world. Let us take His Holy Word seriously and let us interpret it correctly in its proper context. We are to do things God’s way not our own. There is no correct interpretation of the Scriptures without the rest of the Scriptures being taken into account, and there is no correct interpretation without the Holy Spirit’s empowerment within

the believer's life. Let each of us ask two questions regarding the two clear principles of biblical interpretation contained in this section.

1. Do we know enough of the Scriptures to be able to compare Scripture with Scripture?
2. Do we walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we do not hinder his work of interpreting the Scriptures to us?

If we cannot answer "yes" to both these questions we are not living as the Lord has directed us to!

Green may go too far in the following quote, in eliminating the clear teaching of Peter regarding interpretation, but he hits the mark regarding the Lord's requirement for our working with Him. "Peter is not talking about interpretation but authentication. . . . he is talking about the divine origin of Scripture not about it's proper interpretation. . . .The author is not concerned with what they felt like or how much they understood, but simply with the fact that they were the bearers of God's message. . . . For revelation was not a matter of passive reception; it meant active co-operation. The fact of God's inspiration did not mean a supercession of the normal mental functioning of the human author. The Holy Spirit did not use instruments, he used men." (Green, 1968, pp 90 - 92).

Let us, "step up to the plate", and be ready for the Lord's use. We position ourselves daily for usefulness by opening the Word daily and being ready to hear the Lord's words in our heart and mind, and apply everything we need to apply.

B. PASTORAL

As pastors, are we sounding like Peter in our teaching? Is the emphasis that we have seen in this section, the emphasis that our people hear daily from us? If not, then we are completely out of order! This is the apostolic faith, and it is in this that we must stand or else we become "reprobate". **2 Timothy 1:7, 3:8, Titus 1:16.**

Have we been influenced more by our theological training than we have by apostolic teaching? All too many vigorously maintain the teaching of the reformers without letting the scriptures correct them. We must guard against reading of our preferences into the scriptures, be they Medieval, Reformation, or Modern "neo-orthodoxy", but rather let the Holy Scriptures correct our limited education!

The two principles of inspiration/interpretation are to be a part of our own daily study and work, and certainly are to under pin all our teaching. Without scripture being compared with scripture, and without the power and teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit we are empty vessels and clanging cymbals! The Bereans set the pace for us all, **Acts 17:11**, for they took the study of Scripture seriously and compared the Scriptures with Scriptures, and within the biblical context, under the Holy Spirit's conviction, came to their conclusions. This is the way we must study personally and then teach our people.

DOCTRINES

IN CHRIST

1. At the point of salvation, every believer in the Church Age is entered into the Body of Christ, and is therefore united with Christ. Our position is now, "in Christ".
2. The baptism of the Spirit is how we are united with Christ. (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:5) The Holy Spirit places the believer in union with Christ.
3. Positional truth belongs to the carnal as well as the spiritual believer, to the apostate believer as well as to the mature believer. (1 Corinthians 1:2,30)
4. Positional truth protects the believer from divine judgment in eternity. (Romans 8:1)
5. Positional truth qualifies the believer to live with God forever.
 - a) Eternal life (1 John 5:11,12)
 - b) Imputation of God's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).
6. Positional truth is the key to both election and predestination (Ephesians 1:3-6).

7. Positional truth creates a new creature. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10) based on who and what Christ is, therefore what grace accomplishes - not what changes we make - at salvation or thereafter.
8. Positional truth guarantees the eternal security of the believer (Romans 8:38,39).
9. Positional truth has two aspects:
 - a) Past - identification with Christ in His death (Romans 6; Colossians 2:12; 3:3)
 - b) Present (and Future) - identification with Christ in His "new resurrection life".
10. Current positional truth implies that the believer shares certain things in union with Christ.
 - a) Eternal life (1 John 5:11,12)
 - b) Righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - c) Election (Ephesians 1:4)
 - d) Destiny (Ephesians 1:5)
 - e) Sonship (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1,2)
 - f) Heirship (Romans 8:16,17)
 - g) Sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2,30)
 - h) Kingdom (2 Peter 1:11)
 - i) Priesthood (Hebrews 10:10-14; 1 Peter 2:5,9).
11. Our new position in Christ means we are and must be separated from the world (Ephesians 2:6).
12. As new creatures in Christ, we have a new ministry as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, 1Corinthians 3:6, 6:4).
13. In Christ, we are never alone, (Colossians 3:4, John 17) we have communion with Him, and with His body (other Christians).
14. We are united with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit forever- we are in the Father, He is in us - Ephesians 4:6, we are in Christ, He is in us - John 14:20, Colossians 1:26, we are in the Spirit, He is in us - Romans 8:9.
15. We are members of His body, branches of His vine, living stones of His building, sheep of His fold, part of his Bride, priests in his kingdom, saints set apart for his glory.
16. The characteristics of positional truth are six-fold:
 - a) It is not an experience - neither emotional nor ecstatic.
 - b) It is not progressive - cannot be improved in time or eternity.
 - c) It is not related to human merit, ability, or human good. Here are the implications of retroactive positional truth. There is no place in the plan of God for human good.
 - d) It is eternal in nature, it cannot be changed by God, angels or mankind.
 - e) It is known only through the Word of God.
 - f) It is obtained in total at the point of salvation.

BIBLE: INSPIRATION

1. The principle of inspiration is found in (2 Timothy 3:16) "All Scripture is God breathed" - Gk. THEO PNEUSTOS.

The Holy Spirit communicated to the human authors God's complete plan (2 Samuel 23:2, 3, Isaiah 59:21, Jeremiah 1:9, Matthew 22:42, 43, Mark 12:36, Acts 4:24, 25, 28:25).

The human authors of Scripture so wrote that in spite of their personalities, they were able to communicate God's plan with perfect accuracy in the language they wrote.

2. The origin of Scripture is beyond human viewpoint (2 Peter 1:20, 21).
3. The Bible is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Therefore it is the absolute standard for believers (Psalm 138:2).
4. Pre-canon revelation from God occurred through the Holy Spirit. There was no written scripture until the time of Moses (2Samuel 23:2, Ezekiel 2:2, 8:3, 11:1, 24, Micah 3:8, Hebrews 3:7).
5. Four categories of Old Testament revelation:
 - a) The spoken word - thus saith the Lord (Isaiah 6:9, 10, Acts 28:25).
 - b) Dreams (Numbers 12:6, Genesis 15:12, 31:10-13, 31:24, Daniel 10:9) - whilst asleep.
 - c) Visions (Isaiah 1:1, 6:1, 1 Kings 22:19) - whilst awake.
 - d) Angelic teaching (Deuteronomy 33:2, Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19, Psalm 68:17).
6. The extent of revelation:
 - a) The unknown past - the Bible portrays past historical details unknown to man apart from revelation (Genesis chapters 1-11). The accuracy of these historical facts is guaranteed by inspiration, e.g. Creation, Noah's Flood.
 - b) Ancient history - whilst the Bible is not a text book of history, all historical citations are accurate.
 - c) Objective law - the Old Testament contains many laws for both individuals and national life. These laws express perfectly the mind of God to those people to whom they are addressed.
 - d) Some portions of the Bible contain direct quotations from God. The doctrine of inspiration guarantees that such quotations are properly recorded exactly as God desired.
 - e) God uses the emotions, trials and triumphs of certain believers to declare His grace in devotional literature like the Psalms, Song of Solomon
 - f) Inspiration extends to the recording of falsehoods just as they were uttered - Satan Genesis 3:4.
 - g) Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of all recorded prophecies.

LIGHT

1. God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)
2. The Lord is the visible manifestation of that light. (John 1:4, 8:12, 12:46)
3. The Lord's coming as the Light of the World was prophesied. (Isaiah 49:6)
4. The light was seen in the darkness of the world. (Matthew 4:16, Luke 2:32)
5. The Lord brought light and immortality through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1:10)
6. Believers are said to be light bearers. (Matthew 5:14-16, John 12:36)
7. We are said to be the children of the light. (John 11:9-10, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 1 Peter 2:9)
8. Light is necessary for man's existence on the earth. (Ecclesiastes 11:7; Jeremiah 31:35)
9. Divine guidance of Israel was provided by God through light. (Exodus 14:20)
10. Bible doctrine in the soul is portrayed by light. (Psalms 119, 105, 130)
11. The gospel is called light. (2 Corinthians 4:3,4; 2 Timothy 1:10)
12. Salvation brings the believer out of darkness into light just as the planet Earth was brought out of darkness into light by God. (Luke 1:79; 1 Peter 2:9).
13. Satan is the distorter, the angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)
14. Satan's strategy is to outshine the true light with his own false gospel. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

PARAPHRASE

“But even more sure (than this great experience we had), is the words of the prophets, to which words you do well if you pay close attention, as to a source of light that keeps on shining in the dark and murky place, (that is our fallen world). (Keep on doing this) until the day light (of the Lord’s coming) comes, and the “star” (of the living ruling presence of the Lord), arise in your hearts. Keep on knowing and applying (these two principles of biblical inspiration and interpretation), that firstly, no prophecy of the scriptures is of any private or personal interpretation. [Secondly remember] that all prophecy came, in older days, not by the will of man (and so we are not to impose our will upon it), but by the will of God, as godly men spoke prophetic words as they were moved within by the Holy Spirit.”

CHAPTER TWO

VERSES 1 - 9

“ 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 judgement now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 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 judgement; 5 and spared not the old world but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah 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 judgement to be punished.”

KEY WORDS

There were	ginomai	aorist, middle, indicative; there became to be, to arise, to appear.
False prophets	pseudoprophetes	false, counterfeit prophets, claiming the name, but not being real.
False teachers	pseudodidaskalos	false teachers, pretending they are something they are not.
Privily	pareisago	future, active, indicative; smuggle in, by creeping alongside.
Damnable	apoleia	destructive, absolute destruction of all things.
Heresies	airesis	false teaching.
Denying	arneomai	present, middle, participle; to deny, to say no to something.
Bought	agorazo	aorist, active, participle; to buy (a slave) in the market place.
Swift	tachinos	swift, sudden, soon.
Destruction	apoleia	absolute destruction.
Follow	exakoloutheo	future, active, indicative; will follow out from and away.
Pernicious	apoleia	destructive (third time used), for absolute emphasis on the result of heretical teaching.
Evil spoken	blasphemeo	future, passive, indicative; have their reputations defamed, attacked.
Covetousness	pleonexia	uncontrolled greed.
Feigned	plastois	well turned out, flexible, forged to look like something else (plastic).
Merchandise	emporeuomai	future, middle, indicative; they carry on as merchants seeking to trade off you, to cheat, make gain from you and exploit.
Of old	ekpalai	of a long time.
Lingereth	ouk argei	is not idle, but rather is already actively starting the judgement process.
Slumbereth	ouk noustazo	present, active, indicative; does not nod off to sleep, isn't tired.
Spared	epheisato	aorist, middle, indicative; did not spare from judgement (reality = 1st class condition).
Cast	tartaroo	aorist, active, participle; cast them into Tartarus (hell), holding them there with “chains of darkness”.
Delivered	paradidomi	aorist, active, indicative; God delivered them over (the indicative shows the reality of it).
Reserved	tereo	present, passive, participle keeping on keep/guarding them there.
Unto judgement	eis krisis	they are guarded for only one purpose; for judgement/condemnation, Peter's sense is that the verdict is passed, they are guarded until their just sentence is carried out. The outcome is secure and unchangeable
Spared	epheisato	as above; spared not. Peter emphasises that God's standards remain the same regarding judging sin, throughout the ages.

Preacher	kerus	Herald of the king, the one proclaiming the king's policy = preacher.
Bringing in	epago	aorist, active, participle; to bring guilt or judgement upon suddenly.
Ungodly	asebes	impious, ungodly, wicked in deeds; those opposed to godliness.
Turning	tephroo	aorist, active, participle; to reduce to, or cover with ashes.
Overthrow	katastrophe	total destruction, overturned so all is utterly transformed and lost.
Making them	tithemi	perfect , active, participle placing them, results going on forever.
Ensamble	hupodeigma	a pattern, a blueprint, an example to be seen and used for building.
After	mello	present, active, participle; those "about to live ungodly lives". Peter appears to be saying that the judgement is already made, and covers all those who adopt the ungodly path of life; even those who have not selected this path yet, are already covered by this sort of judgement.
Delivered	ruomai	aorist, middle, indicative; the Lord rescued, caused to escape.
Vexed	kataponeo	present, passive, participle; to be worn down by exhausting work, indicating the effort that Lot did put in to correct the evils around him.
Filthy	aselgeia	lawless, uncontrolled lust filled lives.
Conversation	anastrophe	conduct, manner of life.
Vexed	basanizo	imperfect, active, indicative; while he was there (imperfect) he was in a mental state of constant torture by their actions.
Knoweth	oido	primitive perfect verb ; from the past ages God knows, he always knew. Peter underlines the fact that God has not been 'caught out' by events, he has always had this in his plan, and judgement is based on his character as is the deliverance of his saints.
Deliver	ruomai	present, middle, infinitive; keeps on having the power/will to deliver.
Temptations	peirasmos	testing situations that "try their metal". Used to describe a "test" or an ordeal that is meant to prove the person's fidelity, strength of character
Reserve	tereo	present, active, infinitive; to keep on guarding them.
Judgement	krisis	carrying out of the judgement; emphasising again that the verdict is in and their doom is sure.
Punished	kolazo	present, passive, participle; to receive "cutting short" of life, pruning, divine punishment in and through the ending of their lives, as they have not fulfilled their duty to God. Refer John 15:1-6.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Before studying this passage refer to the earlier Commentary on Jude verses 4- 16, and you will see that Peter is drawing attention to this passage, and providing a second commentary to put alongside his brother in Christ, Jude. Peter adds significantly to the picture Jude gives. "They resemble one another in the illustrations, . . . but St Peter makes a two fold use of them; the ungodly will be punished, . . . and the Lord knows how to deliver his servants out of trials. Of this latter side of the prophetic picture Jude shows us nothing." (Lumby, 1893, p 284).

Peter is focused on the Spirit's application of the pictures from the Old Testament. They are not "fables", but truthful pictures of the character and plan of God in action, and are prescriptive for us; showing us how we ought to act, and giving us the theological basis for our actions.

Nothing is new under the sun! "The lamp of Old Testament prophecy shows that yours is a lot which has befallen others". (Lumby, 1893, p 284). The false teachers of Peter's day are still with us, even down to their use of terms and strategies. They are cunning, but not that bright or clever covering their satanic tracks. "False teachers often hide their doctrinal peculiarities by using orthodox terms to which however, they attach an altogether different meaning to that which is ordinarily accepted". (H A Ironside, 1984, p 80).

To survive the troubles of the days ahead Peter urges the believers of his day to be discerning. In our own days such a warning is very relevant. The cunning of the false teachers remains at a high level, but they can be spotted if the believer is alert, and we must be alert, and vigilant, for these false teachers are dangerous to our spiritual life, if believed, and dangerous to the reputation of the Christian faith, if they are not opposed, silenced, and their influence eliminated.

The arrogance of the false teachers is the indication of their Satanic origin. They have such pride that they reject God's words, but also his standards; for they know better. This is the sign of their Satanic origin, they know better than the apostles, than all other godly Bible commentators, and especially more than you and I. They act as if God is an "old fellow" up in the sky and that he can be fooled by them, and so they can slide by his judgement. Peter corrects that notion of evil here. The Lord has not changed, and his standards remain holy, and his judgment is absolutely sure.

“They did not recognise the obligation of holy living imposed by the crucified. By their lives they denied the Lord who brought them. . . . The man who attempts to serve God and self is on the high road to swift destruction, for either death of the parousia will cut him off in mid course.” (Green, 1968, p 95). There is no variation in the holy standard of God, nor is there any escape from his righteous and very final judgement.

In verse two we have one of the early terms used to describe Christianity; “the way of truth”. This is a good phrase to describe what we are truly about. We are called to stand for, and walk in the Lord’s truth in all things. Many will be fooled by these people, for their message appeals to the Old Sin Nature of mankind, as does all satanic religion.

Satan is “into” marketing and packaging, but he is always light on real factual and doctrinal content. What he specialises in is a religion that is attractive to the eye, pleasant to the ears, and easy on the behavioural changes demanded. He demands little effort, and appeals to the lust and pride of man, and he certainly doesn’t want any relationship with Jesus. He is not “big” on relationship, service, or sacrifice, and is definitely not interested in the “Blood of Christ”, rather he amplifies the goodness of man, and the reasonableness of his “traditional” religion. Genesis 3 - 4.

Peter uses the word, “destructive”, (Greek, apoleia), three times in these verses, thereby underlining the nature and result of the heresy of the false teachers. The source of their false teaching is the heart of Satan, ‘the liar from the beginning’, **John 8:44**. Its very nature is destruction, for it is built upon Satanic lies which can only lead to total loss for all who follow them. Satan is the counterfeiter and deceiver, and so the “broad way” he appears to open up for man, seems to be safe and pleasant, but it leads to destruction. Peter recalls the words of the Lord in **Matthew 7:13-23**, where the Lord himself warns against the false teachers, making this very point. The source of the way of Satan is evil, and the final result is total loss for those who follow it. The unbeliever who is fooled by Satan is wilfully fooled; they follow him because they would rather believe a lie than the truth, for the truth makes more demands upon them! This is the tragedy of the lost; they go down to destruction, by their own choice, due to their refusal to accept the truth about their sin, their need of a Saviour, and the holy demands of a righteous God.

The first result of the false teachers is the leading astray of the foolish, but the second result is equally devastating to the lost. It is the loss of the reputation of the Christian gospel message, because of the actions and words of the false teachers who will claim to be Christians. Satan’s main strategy is to counterfeit, and pretend, and by getting his people into the heart of the church he can undermine the reputation of the church for truth and sanity. False teachers always bring disgrace upon all they are involved with. Their lives bear evil “fruit”, as Jesus identified, **Matthew 7:13-23**, and so the real truth contained in the Four Biblical Gospels is tainted by their reputation.

Foolish unbelievers are sadly led astray by the false teachers into cults, but even more sadly the “smart” unbelievers are often put off the truth of the Gospel by seeing and rejecting the lies of the false teachers, as if they have rejected Jesus. Satan’s great plan is to encourage false preaching, as if it were the real gospel, for by it he achieves the three goals; misleading the foolish unbeliever, and disabling the lazy/ignorant believer, and driving away the unbeliever from the real truth and bringing Lord’s name and work into disrepute.

How many times have you been speaking to a smart unbeliever and he or she has told you about their experiences with a “gospel preacher”, and you have found yourself thinking, ‘this is not the gospel!’ This is the very thing that Peter speaks of here; the “way of the truth” is evil spoken of because Satan has had one of his “false teachers” appear to be a Christian preacher, and so disgraced the message, so that when the truth is truly heard it is not accepted, because it has been tainted by the person’s previous experience with the Satanic false teacher.

In verse 3 Peter identifies three different manifestations of the evil false teachers and prophets.

1. There is the aspect of the active pride and rebelliousness of the angels who fell with Satan.
2. There is the passive disobedience, and apathy of Noah’s day. They couldn’t be bothered to be moral and follow God - it was easier to be immoral.
3. There was the active commitment to sexual immorality of Sodom; they gave themselves over to living a totally ungodly life.

Peter here gets to the “heart” of Satan’s alternative “religions”; he identifies the **narcissism/self centeredness** that is at the root of all of satanic philosophy and false religion. The self becomes the god to be followed in all satanic systems. People do not, in their blindness, see that they are following Satan, for they see themselves simply following their own desires. That is the Satanic deception at it’s best; to fool the lost into thinking they are actually in control of their lives, whereas they are simply his puppets, dancing to the tune of selfishness and moral uncleanness.

Lust is the personal motive behind most of Satan's tricks that deceive those who are basically self centred anyway, but Satan’s false teachers can be seen by the “fruit” of personal greed for sex, money, power, or all three. “Back of every system of error is the sin of covetousness. Men seek to draw away disciples after themselves in order that they may make gain of them.” (Ironsides, 1984, p 81.) Satan is dependably narcissistic, and his team members always selfish. Beware the super-spiritual manifestation of this in Covid times, with ego-centric pastors angrily calling church meetings even if there is a real danger of spreading the virus to their overweight, unfit, and unhealthy, = vulnerable congregations!

Satan knows the central “truth” of the advertising industry; that all people are drawn to things that make them feel good, feel special, and promise to make them significant and/or powerful; just not have to think and make hard decisions. Once we start to follow these powerful lusts (epithumia), the reality of where it all leads is lost to us, for we are so focused on the self centred enjoyment of the “path” we are on, we forget to look up to see where it is going, and remember whose instructions we ought to be following.

Satan’s mottos for the lost are all catchy and “modern”; “no consequences”, “no tomorrow”, “being there”, “no worries”, “just do it”, “live for today”, etc. The reality however is that there are consequences for all choices, and God holds us to account for the life he has given us. **Hebrews 9:27, 1 Corinthians 15:32**. Every day is a gift from God and we are to use it with the Lord in our heart and eternity in our thinking and decision making processes.

Peter reminds us all of the reality of God’s judgement. God is not like the pagan god, Baal, asleep. **1 Kings 18:27-39, Psalm 121:3, 4**. “God does not let evil go unpunished. Let the false prophets beware. Divine retribution is based upon the consistent action of a righteous God. Their evil has not escaped his attention.” (Mounce, 1982, p 125). The judgement may appear slow in coming but it is “on time”, and will fall in accordance with God’s timetable. Peter is clear in his mind, and so must we be, of the fact of divine judgement. The judgement upon the wickedness of Satan and those who follow after his lying ways, has already been pronounced, and the sentence readied. It is simply a matter of the time when the Lord executes the judgement; God is working on His timetable not ours.

Dr Billy Graham once said of God’s judgement on America. “God will not tolerate wickedness. What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah has become an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly. Unless God brings judgement on America he will have to apologise to Sodom and Gomorrah”. (Quoted in, Mounce, 1982, p 127).

There is certainty that judgement will fall upon the evil ones. Let us see the illustrations of evil that Peter lays out before us, through the three illustrations he uses. Note that in each there is a comparison between the fallen and the saved; the fallen angels active on the earth in Noah’s day, compared to those who stayed with the Lord, Noah contrasted to the people of his day, then finally the Evil inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot.

The angels and men who fell into the gross Satanic deception, and the associated immoral sins, in the days of Noah were judged and executed at the time. There was a period of grace, while Noah preached the truth, of possibly a full 120 years, but after the period of grace was over the judgement came in God's perfect time, so that none could say it was “unfair”; just so it will be for our own generation. None will be able to say God is unfair, for he gives grace to all men, time for them to reflect and turn away from their sins.

The haunting words of the Lord to his generation must have rung in Peter’s ears as he awaited his own execution. “Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered they children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not”. **Matthew 23:37, Daniel 9:26, Luke 19:41-44**.

Those last words recorded by the Synoptic Gospel writers, “ye would not”, sum up the judgement of all mankind who reject Christ; they wilfully reject Him, and upon that basis they are judged, just as Satan and the fallen angels are. The story of the angels who fell in the days of Noah is told in **Genesis 6:1-8**, and brings out two points that Peter wants us to get clearly in our minds. Firstly that God warns mankind and

gives them a period of grace to respond to the truth, and secondly that they are judged for their wilful rejection of the truth, and when that judgement falls it is irrevocable and eternal in its scope – it is “forever”.

Noah himself is the next figure used by Peter to bring out important points for ourselves today about judgement. Noah’s life and witness tells us many things about the way the Lord works and how he preserves his own in the midst of almost total rejection of the truth. **Genesis 6:8ff**. There are three concepts that emerge as we think about Noah, also note, that in each illustration Peter uses, these three biblical/doctrinal points are present.

1. God’s preservation of the saved in the midst of times of judgement; the “ark” concept.
2. The fact that the majority of mankind will not respond to the truth, but will follow Satan in their self centeredness and rebellion; the “remnant” concept.
3. The fact that there is a limit to God’s patience with mankind, and that when time runs out, he judges swiftly, and it is too late for the lost then. The “final judgement” concept may also be expressed as the “certainty of his return”. He came once as Saviour, he comes again as King and Judge. There are two certainties then; reward for those who accept Him, and certain judgement for those who join Satan in rejection of Him.

In the teachings of the Lord he referred specifically to Noah’s days as an illustration of each of the above points, and Peter recalls this in this section of his letter. The Lord, as recorded in **Matthew 24:35-42, Mark 13:30-37, Luke 17:26, 27**, taught these very things. The casual carelessness of Noah’s neighbours is the main point Peter emphasizes, not their immorality; they are simply too busy with the details of life to listen to the demands of God on their life.

When the judgement came they wanted to be delivered but it was too late, judgement had fallen. They were then genuinely sorry, and genuinely repentant, but it was too late! Over Noah’s generation could be written, “too late”, and this is a sobering message for the lost of our own generation. For the Lord’s people the message that Peter is urging in his letter is the Lord’s message; “be alert”, serve the Lord each day, for you do not know the moment when he returns for you. For all of us there is a “moment” when time and space ends for us, and we enter eternity for blessing or judgment!

Read through these parables of the Lord’s coming, and have any false viewpoint eliminated from your thinking! Read carefully and sequentially through **Matthew 24:32-25:46**, also read, **Luke 17:20-18:14**. The great “sorting” of mankind will occur, and once it is started there are no second chances for mankind – its “too late”. The Lord will move and when he does he will keep moving until all are judged fully and finally. This is one of Peter’s urgent points, as he faces his own death and the reality of the first wave of persecution for the church. Under the pressures of persecution, or troubles of other kinds, we are to recall these three doctrines above and be both comforted and strengthened.

The Lord is coming again, and he is coming to judge and reward; to judge the lost, and reward those who are faithful to him. We are to remain alert every day, as if it is our last, seeking each day only what he would have us do for him, that we might every day, be ready to give account of our stewardship. **Matthew 12:33-37, Luke 16:1-13, Romans 14:10-13, Hebrews 9:27**. In the Luke 17 passage the parable about Lot follows straight after the reference to Noah, and so Peter’s next illustration is Lot. Pay close attention believer, for in the days we face today post Covid-19, we need alertness!

Lot is a problematic figure for many. He certainly is not to be admired for his life and witness, for he failed in most things, and had to be saved by the urgency and direction of the angels. He did however stand for righteousness, and that alone kept him in the place where God could deliver him. “Lot was a righteous man living in the wrong place, and as a result he was in a constant state of vexation. It could never have been said that ‘by faith’, Lot dwelt in Sodom, it was rather lack of faith that took him there. He hoped thereby to better his worldly circumstances.” (Ironside, 1984, p 84).

“There remained hope for him because he had not abandoned in principle the righteousness required of a holy God. He was still distressed by the open sinfulness of the people with whom he had so unwisely chosen to live.” (Mounce, 1982, p 128). Lot is the compromising believer and we meet them often in the churches, and sadly they often lose everything that was “temporary”, but that they valued as “important”, before they leave this life and leave it all behind.... Lets get our priorities right brethren – if we leave a thing behind its not all that important!

Lot was reluctantly delivered (**Genesis 19:15,16**); he hesitated to leave Sodom, and he had to be dragged out of the city by the angels, but even as a carnal believer he was delivered by the Lord. This is a great encouragement to us all! It is not our “perfection” that delivers us; it is our “position” in Christ, and the Lord’s provision that leads to our being delivered through the midst of the times of judgement. Our stupidity, (for that was what it was for Lot to stay in Sodom, after he knew they had rejected his message), does not stop the Lord delivering us, but there will be loss for us.

In Lot’s case he was delivered but had to leave some sons and daughters behind with the evil people amongst whom they preferred to live and die. There is certain judgement for the rejectors of God’s purpose and plan, and there is the deliverance of the “remnant according to faith”, through their obedience to the Holy and dependable Word of God.

Peter has two contrasting believers here, with “faithful Noah”, the “preacher of righteousness”, and “reluctant Lot”, who through faith in God, was also, “righteous Lot”. They are both the spiritual and the carnal at the time of their deliverance, (and even Noah falls into sin later and in his drunken carnality brings evil upon his family). One of Peter’s points may be, that he is urging us to be like “alert Noah” before the flood, rather than “sleepy Lot” in Sodom. A major application point certainly appears to be that deliverance does not depend on our power but upon God’s (just as salvation is his work not ours; although we must respond by faith). **Ephesians 2:4-13**.

The Lord is the one who delivers his people, carnal and spiritual, and that our position “in him”, is what saves us, not any strength of our own. We have but to obey his Word and we are delivered. **John 15:7-14**. The lost are judged for rejection of his word of warning, and Peter’s clear message here is, as God has judged in the past, just so will he judge in the future; fully and finally. God’s Character is stable and dependable, and so his salvation can be rested in for all who come to Him in faith, but his certain eternal judgment is to be feared by all who insult his love, grace, and mercy.

Verse nine sums these key points up. God knows how to deliver his people out of the midst of the worst judgements to date upon the earth, so he is not short of ideas or power, as to how to deliver his people out of the midst of the Roman Empire’s persecution coming upon them in Peter’s day. If God does not deliver us from death now, Peter is saying, then it is because he is doing a greater thing in our martyrdom than he could do through our physical deliverance. God has the plan and he has the power to ensure the plan is successful – it certainly will be victorious. It is God’s Plan, so it cannot fail, and those who mock cannot expect anything other than perfect justice for their arrogant abuse.

The remnant will be preserved, his angels will be working to preserve his people, and there will be an “ark” for some of God’s people in the midst of great persecution. The church will survive the dark days and be victorious over the Empire that tries to kill it. Peter has already spoken of his coming death (his “exodus”), and he has really emphasised these points in this section to underline his belief in the holy character of God, and the certainty that the principle of deliverance WILL operate in this case, as it has at all times before in human history, it is just that his part in the plan is to die now!

Note Peter’s points in this last verse of this section. The context of this verse is the earlier part of the chapter, where he has already said that his part is to die at this point. How can the people who read this be assured of deliverance? Peter reminds them of the principles of deliverance here.

Firstly God has the power to deliver. He knows how to deliver, and he is not caught out by events, for they are all part of his plan from the beginning. He keeps on having the power, and the divine will, to deliver the remnant out of the troubles to come. The word for temptations is the word for testing to try metals in the furnace, to test their metal content, and purify them; it is a word used in a good sense, as the result of such action purifies the metal and makes it more valuable. This is how God sees the testing situations he allows to come upon us.

Secondly, God may have a different blessing in the deliverance he desires for us in this situation we face; He may deliver us into heaven. All too often we see them in terms of the physical losses they may involve, as painful, as worry filled, but from God’s perspective they have purpose that is eternal, and any losses we incur in them will be well and truly made up for in heaven. Peter does not see “loss” in the end of his life in his late 60s or early seventies, but gain – for he enters heaven with eternal rewards and the joy of the martyr’s crown to glorify the Lord forever. It was his time to be delivered in and through death itself; delivered into heaven’s joy and Jesus presence!

The Lord delivers the godly; those who are God's, and those who stand for his holiness. This is the life that Peter is calling all who will read these words, to live! Be holy, be obedient, and then, and only then, be confident in Him, and his deliverance of you. There is warning here; not just for the lost who are to be judged definitely in the end, but to those who, as believers, live in an ungodly manner. Ungodliness of life places you outside the, "deliverance of the remnant", principle; your sins alone will lead you into places where the Lord's hand will not go to deliver you. You will die in your sins (the so called, "Sin Unto Death" – **1 John 5:16-21, or 1 John 1:1-10**), but only if you persistently remain in them.

Lot had other children, brought up in his godly house, but they stayed in their sin filled city, for they did not heed their father's warning to leave with him. Live godly lives, Peter is saying, "be relaxed with the God who can deliver you from anything he allows to come upon the earth". As for those who persecute you, Peter urges, give them no thought, for their doom is as certain as Sodom's, and as the people of the days of Noah.

They may mock now, but they will see this truth too late! Do not mock them, nor get angry, rather feel pity for their determined hatred against the Truth, and the One who is The Way the Truth and the only source of Eternal Life. **Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:10-15**. Having read these texts related to determined unbelievers, then for believer's sins read, **Isaiah 59:1-15, Psalm 66:18-20, and Jeremiah 5:25**. Note that there is deliverance for the sin-filled believers **if and when** they repent and turn back to their God and their deliverer. **Isaiah 1:15-20, Acts 8:22**.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

Do we learn from the Old Testament saints, or do we fail to apply their lessons and live carelessly? "Noah was saved because he indefatigably preached righteousness in the midst of an ungodly world. Lot was deeply distressed by the godlessness and violence and licentiousness of his times, and was rescued because of his righteousness. Christians ought likewise to stand up against the tendencies of the seducers towards ungodly, violent and lawless living." (Reicke, 1964, p165).

It is not a matter of waiting for specific or dramatic guidance in most moral situations, for the guidance has been given in the Word of God. It is a matter of doing what is directed by the Word and the Spirit: it is a matter of obedience. As the Nike adds say it, "JUST DO IT!"

Cardinal John Henry Newman once said, "our great security against sin lies in our being shocked at it". (Quoted in Mounce, 1982, p 128). "It is customary for Christians today, living in a secularised society, no longer to be shocked by sinful things which they see and hear". (Green, 1968, p 101).

Note the three illustrations of God's grace and God's finality and completeness in his judgement:

1. Fallen angels, and the elect angels. The fallen angels are sent to Tartarus, the elect angels continue to serve the Lord, and saved mankind, right to the present day.
2. Noah's neighbours wilfully rejected his words of warning, too "busy" for God's holy demands on their lives. They are wiped from off the earth, Noah and his family are saved within the Lord's grace provision, the ark. Judgement falls by water. It was a total destruction of the wicked ones, as it will be again at the Lord's Second Advent. Being too busy for God is as evil as actively supporting Satan, for it is an insult to God's person/plan.
3. The remnant of Lot's family are saved by the elect angels, who lead them out of the doomed cities, before judgement falls by fire. It is a total destruction of the wicked ones.

There is no escape from a holy God; his judgement is final and complete. This is the "flip side" of the gospel message, but the lost must hear it from us, lest they say, 'we never knew how final this was'. Do we apply this truth to our daily lives, in our dealings with the lost, and our interactions with the "slack" believers we meet?

These three illustrations of judgement, and preservation, also underline other points for personal application.

1. God's preservation of the saved in the midst of times of judgement; the "ark" concept. Do we "rest" (**Hebrews 4:1-2**), in God's perfect provisions each day? Do we have faith or worry when we see

trials and troubles coming? The Lord provides an “ark” of safety in all times of trouble; it is the place where his will is done.

2. The fact that the majority of mankind will not respond to the truth, but will follow Satan in their self centeredness and rebellion; the “remnant” concept. Do we “need” to have the majority with us, or do we see that, “one with God is a majority”? Are we prepared to be a small group, despised, like our Lord, **Mark 13:13, Luke 19:14ff, 21:17, John 15:18**. We keep preaching the truth, witnessing as we are told to, but we are not to be disappointed when few respond, **Matthew 28: 18-20, Mark 16:15, 16, Luke 24:47**, because HE is with us, and we are with him.
3. The fact that there is a limit to God’s patience with mankind, and that when time runs out, he judges swiftly, and it is too late for the lost then; the “final judgement” concept. This is the flip side of the gospel and is often ignored, and it must not be; the unbeliever must know they have no hope if they reject so great a salvation. **Acts 4:12, Hebrews 2:3**.

If God could deliver Noah, and he did, then he will deliver us from physical destruction also, if it is his plan that is being followed. Peter will die, he knows that, but he also remembers as he tells this illustration, that God delivered him from prison twice, against all odds. **Acts 5:12-32, 12:1-19**. Whether he was to die or to live, it mattered not to Peter, for he calls us, like himself, to focus upon the Lord, who is with us, and we with him, in all things. God has the power to deliver, and he does in his way in accord with our part in the plan of God at that point, and he has the power to punish the rejectors of the truth, and he will!

Deliverance is certain for the believer who walks with the Lord, either in life or through death to glory, but it is as certain as the Lord’s presence with us forever. Judgement is also certain; the rejectors of the Lord (who gave his life for them), will have their days, “cut short”. The ungodly may feel they have won, but the truth is they are doomed. Be sure of both truths and let all your words and deeds be empowered by these two facts.

B. PASTORAL

Peter’s point throughout this section is that God’s standards have not changed, because they are based upon his holy character. His plan covers both the fate of the ungodly (those who reject his plan and character), and the deliverance of those who stand for him. “It would be unrighteous of God to refuse to save anyone who desired to avail himself of the result of the work of the cross. The very righteousness of God demands that faith be extended to all men. Romans 10:17.

Where men are ready to hear, God can be depended upon to see that they obtain this precious gift of faith. It would be unrighteousness in Him to do otherwise.” (Ironside, 1984, p 68).

Do our people receive this message each week? Do they hear the message of the righteousness of God’s provisions? Do they hear about the dependability and fairness of almighty God? This is our Saviour God and this is one of the many reasons we lift our voice in worship of Him; for he is righteous, just, and his character is loving and gracious. He is slow to judge, and it is his “strange work”, **Isaiah 28:21**. God takes no pleasure in judgement, but his character demands absolute elimination of evil, and he has already moved against it, with the final judgement of the cross, their doom is sure.

The cross and empty tomb are the “evidence” that the Saviour/Judge has spoken, and that all who follow evil rather than good will suffer the penalty that the ones who placed the Lord Jesus there will suffer. It has not been executed yet but it will be. It is as certain as there is an empty cross and an empty tomb. Preacher please let the world know this truth – sin and death are defeated, and with their defeat Satan is defeated – Christ is Lord and King forever!

False teachers have been around since the earliest days of the church. Deception/Heresy is Satan’s main weapon; he is a counterfeiter of the truth, so that by trickery he might lead astray those who are not careful, or remain in ignorance, when they should be growing up in God’s grace and strength. We are called to teach discernment, as God’s preachers and teachers. We do this by faithfully proclaiming the full counsel of God’s Word, so that all will know the truth, and by it’s application in their soul, spot the lies of Satan. Are we preaching this way?

Only as God’s people put on their spiritual armour will they be protected against falsehood. To put it on, means to be first taught about it by their senior officer in the Lord’s army upon the earth, and that is us as the Lord’s pastors (under-shepherds). Are we teaching enough? Is the systematic preaching of the Word of God going out enough?

How certain are the believers of the Lord's power to deliver them? Do they know of the power of God? Do they know the doctrines of the plan of God, and how to find and maintain a walk in his will for their lives? If the Lord can deliver a weak, yet righteous, Lot, then the Lord can deliver us all! Let the people rejoice in the power and plan of God, and by our teaching let them be encouraged to position themselves in the place of power and deliverance.

CONCLUSION

The Lord's power is not short, nor is his plan faulty at any point. He has a plan, he has a purpose for each of us at each moment of our lives. We have the solemn duty to stand where he calls us to stand, and serve him with a secure and stable mind, sure of his power, and the salvation that the Lord won for us. We stand in and through his mercy, grace and power. Let us all praise his name for these things, and be firm in our stand against evil men, knowing their doom is as sure as our salvation. God's Power, Plan and Purpose are our sole ground for stability in space-time.

DOCTRINES

RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgment, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26).
2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10).
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:
 - a) to confuse by false teaching (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) to appeal to pride (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) to promote idolatry (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
 - d) to promote legalism (1 Timothy 1:7-8).
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:
 - a) counterfeit gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) counterfeit pastors (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) counterfeit communion (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
 - d) counterfeit doctrine (2 Timothy 4:1)
 - e) counterfeit righteousness (Matthew 19:16-28)
 - f) counterfeit way of life (Matthew 23)
 - g) counterfeit power (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
 - h) counterfeit gods (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

SATANIC ATTACK Refer above Page 143-147

JUDGEMENT: GREAT WHITE THRONE Refer above Page 116

JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST Refer above Page 116

1. SCRIPTURE - Genesis 5:29 - 9:29.

2. BIOGRAPHY

Noah, whose name means "to rest", was born approximately 3000 BC. He was the tenth generation from Adam, being the son of Lamech in the line of Seth, the regenerate line. He lived to be 950 years of age and was a contemporary with Abram for some 50 years near the turn of the second millennium BC (Genesis 9:29). We are told of three sons of Noah: Ham Shem and Japheth (Genesis 6:10) who were all regenerate as were their wives. Noah was righteous (Genesis 6:9), having the righteousness that comes from faith (Hebrews 11:7) and close communion with God (Genesis 6:9). Noah attempted to evangelise in his area but completely without success outside his family (2 Peter 2:5). When Noah was 480 years old God informed him of the forthcoming judgment of the flood which was to occur 120 years later (Genesis 6:3, 7:11). During this period Noah constructed the Ark under God's direction and to His specification. He preserved the animal kingdom, ensuring continuity of the human race and animals on the earth. Subsequent to the flood, Noah prophesied the future of the human race as descendants from his three sons (Genesis 9:25-27). One of his greatest characteristics was obedience to God's will irrespective of human wisdom or ridicule.

3. EVALUATION

- a) The Lord gives a warning to the world that judgment would come on the earth in 120 years (Genesis 6:3).
- b) Noah was a believer and had a pure lineage from Adam, being not perverted by the wickedness of the world current at that time (Genesis 6:8,9).
- c) He had three sons: Ham, Shem and Japheth (Genesis 6:10).
- d) God advises Noah of the Ark's dimensions (Genesis 6:14-16).
- e) God makes a covenant with Noah through the provision of the Ark (Genesis 6:18).
- f) Noah obeys God and builds the Ark (Genesis 6:22).
- g) God instructs Noah regarding unclean and clean animals to be placed in the Ark (Genesis 6:19-21, 7:2-5).
- h) After embarkation God closes the door (Genesis 7:13-16).
- i) The storm breaks (Genesis 7:11,12).
- j) The judgment of the flood (Genesis 7:17-23).
- k) The flood abates and dry land seen (Genesis 8:1-5).
- l) The dove has three flights (Genesis 8:6-12).
- m) Noah builds an altar as his first act. God is pleased, with the offering (Genesis 8:20-22).
- n) Man given dominion by fear over the animal kingdom and allowed to eat meat (Genesis 9:1-4).
- o) God gives the first rainbow to show His faithfulness and covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:10-17).

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) God always gives grace before judgment. This is demonstrated clearly in the book of Revelation (Exodus 20:6).
- b) God has a special relationship with believers (Romans 8:16).
- c) God's instructions are the means of our eternal existence. Salvation (John 3:16) by faith alone; Fellowship (1John 1:9) by confession of sins, etc. We live by principles, promises, doctrines applied to our lives by obedience to God's will (Psalm 119:1-3).
- d) Ridicule by the world requires obedience rather than embarrassment (Romans 1:16; Matthew 5:11,12).
- e) God provides the obedient believer a way of escape. He protects us in our testing (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- f) God provides eternal security. He closed the door (John 10:27-30).
- g) God judges the unbeliever or disobedient believer (Hebrews 3:16-19).

h) Noah shows an obedient attitude in sacrificing to God as soon as he disembarks (Matthew 6:33).

i) God confirms His promise to His obedient servant with a perfect rainbow, one of seven colours, God's perfect number (Hebrews 13:5).

LOT – CARNALITY

1. Lot, the nephew of Abraham, left Ur with him (Genesis 11:31). His name means "secret self-seeking". He certainly lived up to his name.
2. Both Abraham and Lot had become very rich with so much cattle that they were unable to stay together because the land would not support the stock. (Genesis 13:6) This caused friction between the herdsmen of Abraham and those of Lot. (Genesis 13:7) which Abraham tries to defuse (Genesis 13:8). Abraham now offers Lot first choice of grazing land (Genesis 13:9)
Lot surveys the scene, sees the green valleys of the Jordan valley before him and decides to choose that area near Sodom. (Genesis 13:11)
Abraham decides to leave his choice with the Lord. Lot is selfish and self centred and eventually this causes his downfall. Abraham relies on the Lord and succeeds.

Principle: When you put your life in the hands of the Lord you will never be cheated or miss out. You never lose if you let God choose.

3. Lot becomes a judge in Sodom. This is shown by the phrase "he sat in the gate" (Genesis 19:1). He does not separate from the most degenerate city on earth at that time.
4. Lot as the carnal believer shows various characteristics in (Genesis 19)

a) He emphasises time rather than eternity. He emphasises reform rather than regeneration (social gospel). Most denominations preach a form of social gospel or reform rather than regeneration. Every time man tries to do this he falls. e.g. Communism. When man allows God to do it he has a time of revival and great prosperity. God stresses the individual.

b) A believer out of fellowship has an unpleasant household and poor domestic life.(v. 2,3). The angels do not want to stay with him.

c) A believer out of fellowship has no sense of responsibility. Because of the very low level of responsibility shown it shows low level of Christianity and establishment. (v.5-9) . Lot calls the men of Sodom "brethren" - they cannot be as they are unbelievers.

Principle: Believers imitate unbelievers when out of fellowship.

d) A believer out of fellowship has no testimony with the unbeliever. (v. 14)

e) The believer out of fellowship is disciplined but never judged (v.15-17, Romans 8:1, Hebrews 12:6)

f) The believer out of fellowship faints mentally due to fear and worry. (v. 18,19)

g) The believer out of fellowship has no resistance to any type of sin. (v.31-36). In this case it was the sins of drunkenness and incest.

PARAPHRASE

"Just as there were false prophets who rose up amongst the people of Israel, just so there will be false teachers who will arise from amongst you. They will smuggle themselves in bringing teachings that are totally destructive of spiritual life, even denying the Lord who paid the redemption price for them, but they will bring upon themselves sudden destruction. (Sadly) many will follow their self destructive ways, and by reason of (their actions and words) the way of the truth will be evil spoken of. (Beware, for) through their uncontrolled greed and plastic (lying) words they will cheat and defraud many. Regarding these people, (don't think they escape) they will be judged, there is no delay (in God's plan), nor is God asleep regarding this evil group. Their judgement is sure! For if God did not spare from judgement the fallen angels who sinned, but cast them into Hell to await in chains of darkness their final fate, (then he will judge them). If he did not spare from judgement the world in Noah's day, who was the eighth from Adam, the preacher of righteousness, but completely destroyed the world overthrowing everything by the great flood, (then he will judge them). If God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemning them in total destruction, making thereby an example for all to see what would happen if you lived following ungodliness, but delivered just Lot, (then he will judge them). (Consider Lot, and compare yourself with him), for that righteous man dwelt amongst the evil ones, and saw and heard their evil daily, being torn apart by their evil behaviours. (Remember these events), for the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of

temptations and he knows how to guard those who deserve judgement unto the day when that judgement will be fulfilled.”

VERSES 10 - 16

“ **But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 11 Whereas angels that 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 deceiving while they feast with you; 14 having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practises; 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, forbade the madness of the prophet. ”**

KEY WORDS

Chiefly	malista	most of all, especially.
Walk	poreuomai	present, middle, participle; who habitually go after, live a certain way.
Lusts	epithumia	strong lust, desires.
Uncleanness	miasmos	pollution; literally they follow after “lusts that pollute”.
Despise	kataphroneo	present, active, participle; they keep on “thinking down upon”, they despise.
Government	kuriotes	lordship.
Presumptuous	tolmetes	brazen they are, reckless daring that ignores the rules of God and man.
Self willed	authades	self pleasing, arrogantly self willed; caring for none but themselves.
Afraid	tremo	present, active, indicative; the do not tremble, are not afraid.
Speak evil	blasphemeo	present, active, participle; defame, blaspheme.
Dignities	doxai	glorious ones; possibly meaning angelic beings, certainly superiors by far.
Strength	ischus	indwelling strength.
Power	dunamis	dynamic power.
Bring not	phero	present, active, indicative; keep not bringing along.
Railing	blasphemos	defamation, blasphemy, angry denunciation.
Accusations	krisis	opinion, judgement.
Brute beasts	aloga zoa	without logic; like animals who operate on instinct rather than thought.
Made	gennao	perfect , passive, participle; born to be, never to be changed forever.
Taken	alosis	born for capture; their “role”, destiny, on earth is to be the prey of others.
Destroyed	phthora	corruption, death, destruction.
Understand not	agnoeo	without logic, understanding, and reasoning.
Utterly Perish	phtheiro	future, passive, indicative; they will, future time, but certain, be destroyed.
Corruption	phthora	corruption Third time used to emphasise their fate is certain.
Receive	komizo	present, middle participle; to receive. Other MSS have the verb adikeo which to commit injustice to win the wages of unrighteousness (adikia)
Reward	misthos	wages paid for work done.
Count it	hegeomai	present, middle, participle; consider, this is their viewpoint (cf, God’s viewpoint)
Pleasure	hedone	sensual pleasure for the body.
Riot	truphe	day time drunken partying, nothing better to do than live for pleasures.
Spots	spilos	Disfiguring spots, making the body ugly.
Blemishes	mosmos	Blemishes other than spots, all forms of ugliness.
Sporting	entruphao	present, active, participle; continuing to live in luxury.
Deceivings	apate	guile, deception, fooling themselves and others.
Full of adultery	moichalis	filling their time having sex with many partners.
Cannot cease	akatapaustos	without stopping for any break, without pausing, unable to stop, addicted.
Beguiling	deleazo	present, active, participle; to trap by using bait.
Unstable	asteriktos	without firmness, unstable, lacking a firm foundation.
Exercised	gumnazo	perfect , passive, participle exercised habitually, ongoing commitment to it – with eternal results.

Covetous Cursed	pleonaxia katara	covetous, seeking to grasp things that are not their own. cursed, accursed because of their standing in the place of cursing / sin.
Forsaken	kataleipo	present, active, participle; they keep leaving, abandoning (ongoing rejection).
Right way	euthos	the straight way.
Astray	palanao	aorist, passive, indicative; went astray, followed the wrong path.
Following	exakoloutheo	aorist, active, participle; they followed after.
Loved	agapao	desired.
Wages of	misthos	wages paid, reward for their stand for unrighteousness (the devil does pay!).
Unrighteousness	adikia	the opposite of God's standards.
Rebuked	elegxis	rebuke, correction.
Iniquity	paranomia	breach of a particular law within the law code.
Forbade	koluo	aorist, active, indicative; at that point the ass hindered him, stopped him in his tracks.
Madness	paraphronia	para- logic, the false way of thinking of a person who has lost their godly reason.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“Man, whose gaze was meant ever to be upward, is bowed down to earth, like the beasts of the field which are meant only for capture and destruction. On such perversion God will surely visit judgement.” (Lumby, 1893, p 303). In the last section Peter reminded us of the Lord’s judgements in the past, and the certainty of it in the future. In this section we see, what C S Lewis called, the “broken image”, of fallen humanity, which is never more broken and perverted than when we follow satanic lying deception.

Those who fall into error have the “fruit of evil” in their lives, and in this section, Peter encourages the believers to learn to spot the evil ones quickly so that they might be safe from them. This passage runs a parallel course to the words of Paul in **Galatians 5:19-21**, where Paul contrasts the fruits of the Old Sin Nature, with the fruits of the Holy Spirit, verses **22 - 26**. There are only two ways to walk; we are either on the devil’s path, or we are on God’s path. The Lord’s words in **Matthew 7:13, 14**, come to mind here. “Enter ye in at the straight (narrow) gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

While we live upon this earth there are two possibilities for us as to how we live. There are two paths, two sets of prophets, two results in the lives of the people who follow the paths, and finally two eternal destinies. Fruit is a powerful image used by the Lord to illustrate HIS demand that we be fruitful unto righteousness while we remain on the earth. If we are not producing fruits for him in the power of the Holy Spirit then there is only one conclusion; we are on the wrong path and the power that drives us is satanic. Refer to **Matthew 7:15-23, 12:33, 13:23, John 15:2-16, Romans 6:21-23, 7:4-6, 8:9, 9:16-23, Philippians 1:9-11, James 3:17, 18**.

Given the eternal consequences of following a false teacher into a path of destruction, it is vital we know how to “spot” the false from the true. As Jesus had said, we will know them by their fruits! Peter’s list of the signs, or fruits in the lives of the false teachers include the following.

1. They live their lives “after the flesh (sarkos)”; that is, purely motivated by human concerns and drives. They live, much like animals. God’s will, purpose and plan, do not even get considered.
2. Their motive power is, “lusts of uncleanness”. Literally they follow after strong sexual emotional desires that pollute the souls and bodies of those who follow after them.
3. They “despise lordships”. They believe they are the equals of the angels, and have no respect, or fear for superior being’s powers. This may refer also to government authority but the context would indicate it refers to spiritual powers.
4. They are presumptuous. They are brazen, and reckless in their attitudes towards the rules of God and man; totally self centred, they ignore anything that does not suit them.
5. They are self willed; independent of any power of authority other than their own. Rather than seeking the will of their creator they act as if they made themselves!

6. They speak evil of higher spiritual powers (dignities). In this, they go way beyond even the actions of the fallen angels, who even though doomed by God's judgement upon them, wouldn't dare to do such things!
7. They are, to all intents and purposes, "brute beasts", and sadly for them, that is a reflection of their fate. They live in "corruption" and they will perish in it. If we live without morality we live like an animal and the fate of animals is death and decay, without eternal life. So it is with them!
8. They speak evil of things they do not understand. When you do not know of a thing, you say so, and are humble. Not so these people; they pretend they know all things.
9. They "riot in the day time". They "sport and deceive". Even the pagan Romans despised those who partied through the day. These people care not for social custom, for they believe that the rules are made by themselves. They are interested only in luxury living.
10. Their eyes are "full of adultery". Fidelity is not part of their belief system. They hate morality and spend their time seeking to seduce more and more partners, as if more sex will satisfy them!
11. They "cannot cease from sinning". They are addictive personalities, who do not stop for a break, but go from sin to sin.
12. They cannot stay alone in sin, but recruit unstable believers, "beguiling" them to follow their evil example. Evil loves company, and Satan's main objective is to deceive, distract and then destroy his own followers!
13. They "exercise" or train (as in the Gym) themselves in covetousness. They have the same on-going commitment to evil that an athlete has to training for sport.
14. They have forsaken the right way. They keep on rejecting the right/straight way to live, and take pleasure in the wrong way.
15. They have "gone astray", following the way of Balaam. They went away from the right path. They are like Balaam, covetous of other's goods.
16. They have become "mad", "crazy people", through their evil, and like Balaam they will be rebuked, but like him, they will not repent, and their insight into the truth will come too late. Number 31:8.

Peter then moves to describe their fate.

1. They will be "taken and destroyed". There are consequences for sin, and they will be met!
2. They shall "utterly perish". The results of a sin filled life are permanent; there is no escape from a holy and righteous God.
3. They shall "receive the reward of their unrighteousness". The wages of sin is death!
4. They are cursed children; they are born as God's children, but become children of the curse due to their rejection of godliness. They choose the way of evil / the curse rather than take the Lord's cure for sin.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

Kelly observes of the false teachers, "they have so lost moral self control that they cannot look at a woman without imagining or wishing themselves in bed with her." (Kelly, 1969, p 342). Also another commentator makes the same sobering point, "they lust after every girl they see, they view every female as a potential adulteress". (Green, 1968, p 111). Let us all be seriously fearful of lust, and resist all forms of it, lest we, in any way, resemble these evil people.

Peter uses the fishing metaphor to describe their attitude towards others. They seek always to "catch with bait" (Greek = delezao, verses 14, and 18), any they can to satisfy their lust with that person, be it, money,

power of sexual lust that drives them at that point. The problem with lust is that it is never satisfied! There is no end of their sinning, except death, and Peter tells us, that is what will happen to them! Let us be very scared of following such people in anything they do!

These men spoke things that angels dared not say. The old English saying, “fools go where angels fear to tread”, is well said. How careful are we of our speech and our daily steps? How conscious of the Lord’s presence with us at all times? “Angles so revere the Lord! . . . Peter is asserting that these men were more free with their language than the angels themselves, and it would be no bad thing if Christians remembered that any condemnations of others are necessarily uttered ‘before the Lord’. Consciousness of his presence tames the tongue.” (Green, 1968, p 106). Green’s words are true only of the believer.

Examine yourself believer, right now before the Lord! Are you still “in the faith”, or are you living like a pagan? **Proverbs 17:3, 2 Corinthians 13:5**. If your behaviour disturbs you, give thanks for such conviction proves you are still a child, although a carnal one. Repent and get back on the track that the Lord has ordained for you. Those who are careless of lust are “made” for disaster! As the perfect tense in verse 12 makes clear we “make” permanent temporal and eternal results for ourselves if we are casual about morality and lust!

Lust has it’s rewards, just like spirituality, and they differ markedly and they differ in eternity, for each path has eternal results for the person choosing! One commentator has observed, “lust is subject to the law of diminishing returns, you are never satisfied.” (Green, 1968, p 110). They cannot stop sinning, where-as the child of God does sin, but is smitten by the indwelling Holy Spirit and is brought to repentance and so they change their life pattern over time. The false prophets-teachers do not change over time for the good, rather they slip further and further into evil. Fruit = Evil.

Even the love feasts of the early church were being turned into drunken parties and places where immoral actions were occurring. This had happened in the Corinthian church at an earlier time, (**1 Corinthians 11:17-34**), and remains a danger to the church today. Sadly many adulterous sexual affairs begin in the church, where foolish believers fail to keep themselves safe from such temptations, and do not actively resist them when they come. Ask yourself believer, how safe are my protocols (my personal rules of conduct)? From my clinical practice as a counsellor-psychologist to successful people, who have had affairs, the following protocols are the minimum ones to keep your self safe. These are the three protocols that smart pagans follow! How much more careful ought we to be! The pagan protocols are:-

1. Put time and effort into your marriage to keep it warm, loving, and supportive in accordance with the clear instructions of Marriage Texts for us = God’s Word. **Ephesians 5:21 - 33, Colossians 3:14 - 19**.
2. Do not allow yourself to enter into any intimate (one on one) situations with any member of the opposite sex. No lunches, dinners, coffees, quiet chats, walks, drives . . . etc.
3. Do not touch another person’s partner in any way except with a warm handshake, or other traditional (within your society) public greeting. Do not tempt yourself with unnecessary touching or closeness.

The Lord’s precious name and reputation is defamed when believers commit adultery. This is a great shame on the church of today. All of us can be tempted, and no-one is exempt from danger! These protocols are the result of long experience, and failure to apply these has landed many of us in close proximity to disaster, or right in disaster! Be full of care for your own reputation, the Lord’s good name and your family reputation! Be fearful of the power of lust, for it is overwhelming once let loose. Don’t be loose in your protocols or you will be undone! Too many in our day, as in Peter’s, are “exercised in covetousness” (perfect tense – results of such a daily “workout” in evil is eternal disgrace). Let us rather be exercising in godliness!

The example of being “undone” by money lust is Balaam in the Old Testament. Let us be careful that we have the “Eternal Life Perspective” regarding wealth and it’s use while we are here. All things that cannot come with us to heaven ought to be seen as temporary and simply things to be used for the Lord’s glory. Check out your attitude towards your money, and towards the things that it has brought. Are they simply things to be used for the Lord’s glory, or do you cling to them as if they really matter to you? What matters to you believer? Where is your heart? **Matthew 6:24, Luke 12:16-31, 16:9-13**.

B. PASTORAL

“The false teachers do not hesitate to bring vituperative accusations against their superiors, whereas the angels do not even dare to impugn their inferiors in such terms in the Lord’s presence”. (Green, 1968, p 105.) We are always, in Christ, in the Lord’s very presence; how careful are we, as pastors, and as the men and women of God?

All too many pastors today insult, or down play the angels in their messages, attacking Satan and his followers, the fallen angels, in harsh or even humorous words, and even running down the power of the elect angels, who are our “ministering spirits”. **Hebrews 1:14.**

This passage makes it clear, that even though Satan and his team are our enemies, we are not to be disrespectful, even to them, for they are our superiors in power, and God’s order, to us. We stand superior to them only “in Christ Jesus”, and such positional superiority should make us humble in our battles with the enemy, never arrogant. Arrogance and inappropriate humour is the domain of Satan; any believer who enters that area is in danger!

The false teachers error is to, “confuse the thrill of animal instinct with the presence of the Holy Spirit”. (Green, 1968, p 107). In today’s world, like Peter’s, there is a desire to have excitement within worship. There is nothing wrong with this as such, but there is a danger if we emphasise emotion without discernment, for we can start to call things spiritual, which are really just natural enthusiasm, and pleasure.

A good sing along feels good to both pagan and Christian! We must ask ourselves as pastors of the Lord’s flock some serious questions about our worship services. We must ever ensure we do not call natural pleasure spirituality. Remember the old adage; “whatever the pagan can do is not the Christian way of life”.

To live in sin is “crazy”. You have to be a “crazy person” to live in disobedience to God. The logic of the sin filled life is “para-logic”, it appears to be true but it runs in a parallel universe, not the real one! Such false logic will eventually lead to disaster for those who follow it. Peter’s message is, “beware”, for those who follow after the false teachers are as doomed as they are. We must be sure in all our preaching that we ensure the Lord’s flock under our care is always fully warned of the dangers of the false teachers, and that they know how to spot them before they are “beguiled”.

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit produces “HOLY” lives, not any manuals and/or processes/rituals of men. The tree is known by its fruits. God’s work is only ever a good and holy thing, and the devil’s work is always immoral. “The Holy Spirit manifests his presence, not by ecstatic thrills and insubordinate action, but by moral renewal”. (Green, 1968, p 108).

DOCTRINES

SATAN’S STRATEGY [See page 147 above]

BALAAM

1. General Scripture. (Numbers ch 22-24)
2. Balaam means glutton, Balaam had a lust for money.
3. He lived in Pethor, 20 km. south of Carchemish. In Joshua 13:22 he is called a soothsayer.
4. He was hired by Balak, King of Moab, in Numbers 22 in order to rob the Israelites of their strength by his curses.
5. Balaam advised Balak of how to get the Jews out of fellowship. By Numbers 24:25 he had earned his fee.
6. He was shown as a true prophet as well as a miserable deceiver.
7. Even though in Numbers 24:25 Balaam left Balak, he later returned to live with the Midianites. He advised them how to lure the Israelites with the cult of Baalpeor (Numbers 25 cf. Numbers 31:16).
8. He was killed by the Israelites (Numbers 31:8)
9. In the New Testament Balaam's name is a symbol of greed (2 Peter 2:15, Jude 11) and participation in pagan cults (Revelation 2:14).

UNBELIEVER

1. God is Holy and cannot compromise with sin or evil. (Psalm 22:1-3, John 1:5)
2. Sin is solved at the Cross for all. (1 John 2:2)
3. The way is therefore open to all who will believe. (John 3:16,36, Acts 16:31)
4. Those who reject Christ are without hope, promise and God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12, Romans 5:14,17, 6:23)
5. We are born dead to God. (Psalm 51:5)
6. It is only through Christ that we can be born again. (John 14:6)
7. The unbeliever spurns this grace offer and the Lord who died for him. (Hebrews 2:1-4)
8. God is Love, but when love is spurned, that person has chosen darkness rather than light. They are therefore judged on the basis of their works as they have rejected the Lord's work for them. (John 3:16-21, Revelation 20:11-15)
9. The first stop for the unbeliever after death is Torments in Hades or Sheol. This is a place of regret, torment and anguish. It is also called the bottomless pit. (Revelation 9:2)
10. Their ultimate state is the Lake of Fire after they have been judicially sentenced to it by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Judgment where they are judged according to their works. (Revelation 14:11, 20:11-15, Matthew 8:12, 25:41, Mark 9:44, Jude 13)

PARAPHRASE

"Especially note (these things), these people habitually live lives that follow the polluting lusts of the flesh, and they keep on thinking they are superior to the angels! Brazen and reckless they are, totally self centred, caring for none but themselves, they even speak evil of the angels. Even the elect angels, superior in might and power to them, would not dare to bring any angry accusations against the fallen angels before God. But these (mere) men, just like stupid animals, that are created to be used for food, they keep on speaking evil of things they do not understand. Their fate is sure; they will utterly perish in their own corruption. They think it fine to party all day (and night), well, they will get their reward for their unrighteousness. They are like ugly blemishes on the skin, and disfiguring marks on the body, yet they sit with you and feast with you, yet they care only for lives of luxury. They keep looking for opportunities to commit adultery; so addicted to sin they are, that they seek converts to evil, and lead astray any unstable souls who will follow them. They exercise themselves for the purpose of doing more evil, and seeking more goods than they can possibly use. They are cursed children, who have left the true way of living and gone after evil, following Balaam son of Beor, who, like them, loved the riches of unrighteousness. He was rebuked by God, through the words of a dumb ass speaking with a man's voice, who stopped him in his tracks, and made him see that he was mad!"

VERSES 17 - 22

" **These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. 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 has happened unto them according to the true proverb, 'the dog is turned to his own vomit again', and 'the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire'. "**

KEY WORDS

Wells	tege	springs. The source of life is water in the Middle East. They look as if they have this water of life.
Without water	anudros	water-less, like a desert place.
Clouds	nephalai	light fluffy clouds. Other texts have, omichle = misty foggy clouds.
Carried	elauno	present, passive, participle; driven along by the motive power of wind
Tempest	lailaps	storm, squall, strong wind that blows fiercely over a short time only.
Mist	zophos	gloomy, misty blackness.
Darkness	skotos	the darkness of fear and dread; the complete absence of light.

Reserved	tereo	perfect , passive, indicative; is guarded securely. It has ready for them forever.
Swelling	huperogkos	swollen, puffed up, over inflated.
Vanity	mataiotes	vanity, futility, the deep vacuum of a soul that has not meaning at it's centre.
Speaking	phthegomai	present, middle, participle; they keep on proclaiming with clarity.
Allure	deleazo	present, active, indicative; they entice with cleaver bait, and it works!
Wantonness	aselgeia	ungodliness, abandonment to evil, rejection of good, immorality.
Clean escaped	apopheugo	made their escape from.
Error	plane	the error of idolatry, and paganism.
Liberty	eleutheria	freedom, liberty. Their promise is like all politicians grand but false.
Corruption	phthora	of all that will die, rot and decay.
Entangled	empleko	aorist, passive, participle; entangled within their own polluting belief system.
Overcome	hettaomai	perfect , middle, indicative; they are made inferiors, overcome in battle and enslaved, results of this "defeat" for them go on forever.
Bondage	doulos	bond slavery, the lowest form of slavery, all captured war slaves were like this, they had no hope of being set free.
Escaped	as above	given the context, it may be Peter pictures a battle field here in this section.
Pollutions	miasma	all that defiles us and removes us from holiness.
Knowledge	epignosis	full knowledge.
Worse	cheiron	comparative, worse than the initial place they began.
Delivered	paradidomi	aorist, passive, participle; delivered by oral tradition, passed over to them.
Happened	sumbaino	perfect , active, indicative; dramatic perfect, it is accomplished, it has come!

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

"Go and talk to a pig, that he may wallow no more in mud!" (Epictetus, IV, XI, 29). This was said by the pagan philosopher of Peter's day, to underline the stupidity of continuing to speak to anyone who lives in uncleanness because they have chosen it, and will not clean up their life. They are living like a pig because they choose to, and so recognize their volition and leave them there! You cannot speak to a pig and have it understand, just so you cannot speak to a man who is determined to live in sin. Such activities are in the area of "time wasting". The false teachers are in that area! They waste your time, and that of any who listen to them.

Peter begins this section with a reference back to the prophet **Jeremiah 2:13**. "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water". God's words underline the stupidity of leaving his truth for the enemy's lies. You are in effect leaving pure, flowing waters from a good spring, in exchange for the stagnant water of a cistern, and as Jeremiah notes, the cistern is flawed in it's very foundation, and whatever water is keep in it, will drain away through the cracks in it. Just so are the false prophets of Peter's day. They promise to be springs of living water but they are broken down cisterns full of stagnant water or, due to the foundational flaws in their system simple damp, dark holes in the ground full of disease!

Note the series of descriptive pictures of the false teachers here:

1. They are springs without water. Water is life in a hot climate, and they promise life but cannot provide it for the thirsty.
2. Clouds without rain. The whole economy of the land depended on the rain coming. These men act as if they are the source of the refreshing rains, but they soon blow away. "Carried" is perfect tense, reminding us that the eternal results of following these fake teachers is fatal – they cannot deliver life giving water – and the results are eternal for them and any fooled by them!
3. They have great inflated words full of their own theological arrogance. With their long words and apparently "deep" concepts they fool some into thinking they have great minds, but they are simply fools out of touch with reality.
4. Like immoral fishermen, they bait their hooks with lust, and so catch the lazy, careless and foolish.
5. Like cunning enemy troops, they attack those recently joined the army, just out of their old life of paganism, and so try to bring them into behaviours that are worse than the ones they escaped from.

They are eternally “reserved” (perfect tense) for God’s judgment. The judgment of God will be upon them and it will be full and final!

6. They speak of liberty, but they are bond-slaves, never to be free themselves. They are themselves “overcome” (perfect tense) with the result that they lead others astray into life long slavery to nonsense. They cannot lift others up for they are themselves slaves to their false systems - they only enslave.
7. They are like pigs in the mud, content to remain there, for that is who they are. Their sloth is their life choice.

Each one of these pictures is a warning to us all. No one is so smart that they cannot be fooled by evil, and they will be if they become arrogant, and do not set their guard against the power of lust. The false teachers target the two areas of vulnerability for many people; they appeal to their pride, and also to their lust. They also target the newly converted, who are not sure of the truth yet, and so are able to be led astray into even worse evil than they had escaped from in their old paganism.

The false teachers who are most dangerous are within the church, not outside it. This is why Peter is so direct and “hot” in his words. The enemy is within; they have arrived in the church meetings, and are quietly targeting the weak through the services. They are driven by external power and forces, like the clouds, but unlike the clouds, it is not God who made their evil, but themselves – and they have chosen to follow after Satan. They have eloquence, they have power, they have money, but they are controlled by evil, and this is seen in their lust filled lives.

The whole process is deliberate. These people are motivated, or driven, men and women, and they seek the rewards that evil provides. They hate believers and they hate the demands of Jesus. **John 15:18ff**. This is war, and the language Peter uses alludes to that fact; it is a deadly serious game being played for the souls of people.

Note in Verse 22. “The false teachers had been bathed, they had joined the Christian flock, but now they are back wallowing in the moral squalor of paganism. All of which proves that they are still pigs at heart.” (Mounce, 1982, p 136). Once again we are referred, by Peter’s words, back to the words of the Lord in Matthew 7. Only by checking the fruit of the life over time can we ever know the nature of the person we are confronting. Peter draws attention to the need to do this, or else we are led astray by evil, and made fools and merchandise of.

These are all people who have heard the truth, but they have chosen to stay with their lust filled lives. The prodigal son proved he was indeed a “separated and now repentant son” by leaving the pigpen. None of the pigs joined him on the walk home to his father, for they were not related to him, as he by his sin, had been temporarily related to them!

The saddest thing about those who leave the evil of the world and join the church, only to leave it again later, is that they end up in a worse state than they were in before. **Matthew 12:43-45**. Having heard the truth, understood the “full knowledge” of the doctrines of God, and then become entangled again in evil, they have further to fall, and so they end up in more disaster than they were in as pagans. The believer who is “overcome” by the evil of the false teachers is truly defeated and enslaved, just like the prisoner of war in the ancient world; they lose everything! This is the disaster that Peter wants to avoid.

The false teachers may be just “make believers”, not genuine Christians at all, but those they destroy are often real believers, but with weaknesses. This section introduces his last words in the letter, “grow up in the grace and knowledge of Christ”. We grow by feeding upon and applying the Word of God, or we wilt and starve!

If a young believer does not “grow up” and become strong, they will be made merchandise of by the evil ones who seek their destruction. Not to grow and become strong in Christ is to become the prey of the devil’s workers! In this world we are either growing through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, or we are being defeated by Satan’s dogs and pigs. Peter isn’t very polite about these false teachers, is he! Jesus was not either! Remember **Matthew 12:43-45**.

Dogs do the disgusting things that dogs will do! Pigs, like dogs, can be clean and house trained, but they are still pigs. Peter asks all believers to choose their company; the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, or the

fellowship of the pigs and dogs of satanic deception. Things are often not as they appear to be; we need Holy Spirit discernment every day.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

Beware those who promise great things, but never perform half of it. There is an old saying that is very true. If something is too good to be true, that is because it is! Beware the false marketing of the false teachers. They look good, they sound wise, they appeal to the weaknesses of mankind, and they will often be in the majority, but they are still false and they can deliver only destruction! Beware so called “great teachers” who are too good to be true! Beware those who use big words and grand speeches but whose lives are not open, honest and holy.

We are called to be “fruit inspectors” of all who would stand up and teach the Word Of God. Young believers are to be taught discernment and are to be encouraged to be vigorous in their checking out of both the doctrines they hear and the people who teach them. How are they to check Bible teachers out? By reference to the Bible itself, **Acts 17:11**, and by examining the person’s life in obedience to the Lord’s warning, **Matthew 7:15 - 20**.

Peter is not polite in his language about the false teachers, for their impact is destructive and terrible for the lives of those they lead astray. They are like pigs and dogs; their nature remains the same even though they live in the house of God. Let us be vigilant and careful so that those we teach are kept safe from evil men. Let us daily choose our company, fellowshipping only with those who love and serve the Lord in truth.

B. PASTORAL

“To call darkness light, to call bondage liberty, is unforgivable sin; unforgivable not because God is unwilling to forgive, but because the man who persists in such self delusion refused to accept the forgiveness which God so patiently proffers to rebels.” (Green, 1968, p 119). Beware the sheep stealers, for they mean the destruction of individuals and churches. Our role is to keep the sheep safe, by sound teaching and clear warnings that all understand.

“Why has Peter expended so much powder and shot on the false teachers in this chapter? Because he is primarily a pastor, He is concerned to feed his masters sheep, and he is furious to find them being poisoned by lust masquerading as religion.” (Green, 1968, p 122). Satan’s main weapon has always been religion! Anything that makes people feel good without holiness, and keeps them away from God is his policy.

Satan has always been in the entertainment business. He specialises in providing everything to meet the needs of carnal men. Ask yourself pastor, the following questions. Given what I have taught over the last year, would young believers have heard enough solid Bible Doctrine to keep them safe from these evil men? If you cannot say “yes” to this question, review everything you are doing in the church, and then ensure the Lord’s people are safe!

CONCLUSION

Let us call a dog a dog, and spot the pig before it fouls the carpet! We are here to lead God’s people into truth, to protect and feed the lambs and sheep, not allow wolves to hurt them, or waste time entertaining the goats!

DOCTRINES

RELIGION [See page 196 above]

FUNDAMENTALISM

1. Fundamentalism requires belief in:-

- a) The deity of Christ and the virgin birth
- b) The miracles of Christ
- c) The cross of Christ on which He paid for the sins of the world as God's efficacious substitutionary sacrifice

- d) The bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ
- e) The certainty of the yet to come Second Coming of the Lord for His church and to judge
- f) The inerrancy of the Bible as the Word of God.

2. False teachers and liberal theologians will distort all or some of these doctrines.

PARAPHRASE

“These (false teachers) are like springs, without water, clouds without rain; they are driven along in their lives by the strong winds of emotionalism and passions. The darkness of Hell itself is reserved by God for them, forever! (They work this way), when they speak using big words, with inflated but empty meaningless phrases, and they entice the foolish by the well baited hook of immorality, and lust. They target those who have escaped from paganism but lead them back into even more immoral lusts than the ones they fled! They promise to set men free, yet they themselves are the total slaves of their lusts! For by the power that a man is defeated totally he is enslaved! For, (it is a terrible thing), if a person has escaped from the pollution of the evil world, and then gets tangled up again in evil, for they end up in far worse a place than they were before! It would almost be better if they had never known the truth, then to have known it and then turned away from God’s holy commandments that have been delivered to them. (Before they were just foolish, now they are directly rejecting the holy words of God; they are now without excuse). It has happened to them just like the old proverbs say. ‘The dog is returned to it’s vomit (to eat it again), and the clean sow has returned to the mud wallow to get dirty again.”

CHAPTER 3

VERSES 1 - 7

“ 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 commandments 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 since 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 judgement and perdition of ungodly men. ”

KEY WORDS

Stir	diegeiro	present, active, indicative; I keep on awakening you to reality. 2 Peter 1:13.
Remembrance	hupomnesis	putting you in mind of, reminding you.
Pure	eilikrines	pure, undefiled, unmixed with evil, ethical purity.
Minds	dianoia	thinking. “Your pure reason, uncontaminated by the seductive influence of the senses”. (Green, quoted in Reinecker, 1980, p 434).
Mindful	mimneskomai	aorist, passive, infinitive; with the purpose of reminding you.
Spoken	prolego	perfect , passive, participle; spoken before hand, with lasting results.
Knowing	ginosko	present, active, participle; keep on being in the place of knowing about this.
Come	erchomai	future, future, middle, indicative; will come.
Last days	eschatos	the last of what is spoken about, the end times.
Scoffers	empaiktes	those who make a serious thing look foolish by mocking, making fun of it.
Lusts	epithumia	strong lust filled desires.
Walk	poreuomai	present, middle, participle; they have the habit of walking.
Saying	lego	present, active, participle; they keep on saying, (they are held responsible).
Where	Pou	where?, what has become of?
Promise	epagelia	sure promise, based on the character of the person making it.
Remain	diameno	present, active, indicative; remain, continue, keep on being the same.
Asleep	koimaomai	aorist, passive, indicative; fell asleep, metaphor in ancient world for death.
Willingly	thelo	present, active, participle; the keep on being willing for this to remain

Ignorant	lanthano	true. present, active, indicative; they keep on shutting their eyes to the facts.
Of old	ekpalai	for a long time, long ago.
Standing	sunistemi	perfect , active, participle; has it's being, consists of, (tied to the word of God).
Perished	apollumi	aorist, middle, indicative; were ruined, destroyed.
Kept in store	tereo	present, passive, participle; guarded, kept.
Reserved	thesaurizo	perfect , passive, participle; set apart, set aside with a specific purpose for it.
Judgement	krisis	judging.
Perdition	apoleia	destruction, ruin.
Ungodly	asebes	ungodly, impious, those who despise and mock God. 2 Peter 2:5, Romans 4:5, 1 Timothy 1:9.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Peter is clear of the pressing need of the days in which he lived. He had to remind the believers then, as now, of the teachings of the apostles and prophets relating to end time events, and the dangers of the false teachers; the danger of being side tracked from useful things into inconsequential or even evil things. Remember the “days of Noah and Lot” were days when people were so distracted by the daily details of life that they didn't pay attention to spiritual/eternal things. As in chapter one verse 13, he uses the word, “diegeiro”, to express this thought from his perspective.

He wants them to be “stirred up”; to have all the teaching they have ever received to be stirred up from their mental depths, and be brought back to the surface of their mind and applied. He especially wants them to recall the warnings about the false teachers that were starting to make real inroads into the church, so that they spot them quickly and take avoiding action. The demand of the Lord upon our lives is for moral purity, mental clarity, and a focus that is eternal rather than temporal. We are to be “unmixed” with evil thought or deed, but pure and single minded for God's will to rule over our life.

We are to fully accept and apply the truth that what is “spoken of” (perfect tense – with eternal results) by the prophets and other scripture authors. This reminds us that the whole of Scripture needs to be known and applied. All that is recorded is there for us to take on board and utilize fully in our daily life. Remember, nothing in scripture is for heaven; it is for application here and now. It is our “Operational Manual” for Space-Time – Use it believer!

Verse two is revolutionary because of it's linking of three categories of teaching as of equal importance to the believers. The words of the apostles, the Old Testament prophets and the Lord himself, are all brought together as of equal worth for the believer's instruction. This is a reminder to us all, not to have a favourite set of books that we look at the outside covers only, but rather to keep all the counsel of God's Word before us, open at all times, so that we might be prepared for everything the enemy throws at us, and be equipped to stand against all pressures.

Verse three brings the believers back to their own day, and us to ours, for application. The reality of the Church Age is the reality of attack and mockery of the truth. Towards the close of the Church Age, Peter warns us, the attacks by mockery will increase, and the heart of them will be what we have called in our day the philosophy of “Uniformitarianism”; namely the belief system which says that everything keeps on being the same, there are no miracles, no major changes, but that all continues on in linear fashion.

This belief system is a basic part of Darwinian and modern Evolutionary Theory, even though it speaks of change, what it does not speak of is an end point! This is the heart of Satanic philosophy, it denies the reality of an end, and a judgement, and lulls mankind into a false sense of security. It teaches that they have endless time to make their decisions regarding the creator's demands on them. They go further, replacing God the creator with chance and “selection” as their deities, neither of which make any moral demands!

The unbeliever is in unbelief because it does not suit them to change their way of life; they enjoy their lusts, and don't want Christians to disturb them. Peter has already pointed out that this sort of thinking led the generation of Noah's day to their deaths, and he warns the hearers of this letter that casualness to the demands of a Holy God will lead to judgement for them also!

The mockers ask, “Where is the evidence that He is coming back to the earth?” They do not want to have a God that steps into history, they want the stage clear for their dance! This is the centre of all satanic lying

religion; it is self centred, and wants no other authority than the mind itself. These people argue that, “the stability of the created order precludes the notion of a catastrophic end”. (Sidebottom, 1982, p 119).

Such a philosophy is a comfort, but it is a false comfort. They may be sincere, but they are sincerely wrong, Peter states! Modern scientific theorists talk of the “Big Bang” that started the universe, Peter will be speaking of the “big bang” that will end it! Science clouds reality by focusing on the past, as they theorise it. In contrast to this, Peter has drawn our attention from the past, as God recorded it, and to the future as God has planned it. Science offers theories that side-track, but the Bible proclaims truth that is to be taken seriously by each person, or all will be lost for that person!

The contrast in attitudes towards the truth of judgement, is seen best in the attitude of the two viewpoints towards death itself. This is underlined by Peter’s words for the believer’s death in verse four. “Notice the lovely word for death, so characteristic of the post resurrection perspective, and so remarkable in a world that as a whole was hag-ridden [obsessed] with the fear of death”. (Green, 1968, p 129).

The unsaved world still is fearful of death; it is the last taboo subject, and everything will be done to avoid discussion of it. This is Peter’s strong point here; you cannot avoid death by refusing to face it. The truth about death is that it is either the final act in a process towards a meeting with your Saviour, Creator, God, or it is a farewell to all that you know and love! It is either as casual as a, “falling asleep”, at night, or it is the end of everything! Note Green’s words, “post-resurrection”. For the believer all is transformed by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His defeat of death changes everything, and from the time you see that, till you walk through death into eternity with him, you walk in fellowship with Him.

Death is as casual for the believer as falling asleep, or relaxing into the hug of a long lost friend! That is the reason for the use of this phrase to describe death. Don’t get side-tracked into debates about “soul sleep”, for that is not the issue here or anywhere in the Word. The words indicate a casual and accepting view of death as a simple transition, in contrast to the fear and loathing of the pagans without hope, for whom death is the end of all they know and love.

Verse five makes it clear that it is “wilful ignorance” that is the issue for the lost. They don’t want to know the truth, for if they admit it they must change their lives! As Lumby pointed out so many years ago, “the root of all evil is wilfully forgetting. They forget because they wish to forget.” (Lumby, 1893, p 335).

Equally powerful is the affirmation that, the negative will of man against God does not in any way stop the course of history, for, “the course of history is governed by God, who is both creator and judge of his world”. (Green, 1968, p 130). A great drama is unfolding before our eyes; it is the drama of redemption, and God is working amongst his creatures, saving those who will come to him in faith, and reserving for judgement all who reject his saving work and person. Those who do not want to believe have that right of rejection, and as the Creator-Saviour, the Lord has the right of judgement, and he will exercise that right.

Verse six is Peter’s reminder to mankind that the Lord has judged the world with water once in the past, and that he will judge the world with fire in the future. The water covered the earth at that time of Noah, and from this judgement the earth later re-emerged and prospered. As Peter has made clear by his use of the words to describe the final end of the world, this earth will not survive the second judgement; which involves the very unravelling of the elements of it, in “fervent heat”. Peter reminds us that the first flood judgment had the earth “standing” out from the water again and it went forward with results lasting forever for all of us upon it, but the next judgment will be of “fire”, and there will be nothing left that is not absorbed into the new heavens and new earth – this is no remodelling but a total re-creation, way beyond today’s universe. Pause and reflect upon that – the best is yet to come – eternity to explore.

Peter will describe a thermonuclear meltdown, almost an “implosion” of the elements of the present and very temporary universe, thereby contrasting the destruction of the days of Noah, with the last days of the earth, which are truly “last days” of the earth, for it’s very elements are dissolved and reformatted totally into the lake of fire, and then the new creation will be revealed. **Revelation 21:1ff**. The mass of the entire universe could be reduced to a very small sized object of infinite weight – that is what John will see 30 years later and record in Revelation – calling it the “lake of fire” in which the devil and his followers, angelic and human spend eternity.

Peter has taken us from creation to implosion – the “Big Bang” to the “Black Hole/Lake of Fire”, but he has gone way beyond what scientists say today. Peter has seen that the present space-time universe is just a curtain raiser to the “main event” – eternity beyond all we can even think of now within our space time limited minds. Peter is challenging us to look beyond space-time and see the ultimate destiny of this present

temporary universe, but the eternal blessedness of the believer with God forever, just as the unbeliever gets their choice also – eternity without God....

The end of this world, like the end of the civilisation of the days of Noah, will come about at the time of man's final rejection of God's will. It is rejection of God, the Creator and Saviour, that leads to the destruction of all things that the rejecters hold dear, but the loss of nothing that matters to the believer. This is the challenge behind these verses, and all the others that Peter uses to describe the judgement of the lost and the destruction of the present space time universe. Are we attached to the things around us, as if they will last? Do we love the world and all that is in it that we enjoy, or do we love the Creator who will make a new one? Are we attached to the present, or do we have our minds fixed on the future realities of eternity?

Peter challenges us to fix our gaze into eternity and see the things God has for us, but even then not be attached to "things" which are simply the works of our Creator God, rather we are to be loving and attached to HIM. It is the joy of our relationship with God which is to secure and stabilise us, not the things God does for us! "Get your eyes off things!", Peter commands, and onto the person of the your Creator-Saviour-God. Only the being of God transcends the heavens and the earth, and our security rests "IN HIM". Live and move and have your very being in Him!

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

Remember! This word is a key one of Peter's throughout the little letter. How vital a truth it is for us in daily life also! Let us ensure we remember the things that we have heard from the Holy Scriptures. "This verse shows that the apostolic traditions of the New Testament were already placed on a par with the prophets of the Old Testament as norm giving ideals for Christian living". (Reicke, 1964, p 173).

Are we keeping the "Lord's Commandments"? This is a question which must come to us out of this second verse, for the word Peter uses is meant to bring Moses and the Lord together and remind the believers that the "Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus" is now our standard and is to be followed daily, in the same spirit of seriousness as the Law Of Moses was by them in ages past. Do we meditate on the words of Jesus daily?

The rejection of the notion of a creator goes hand in hand with the rejection that there is a judge. The two go together. This is why belief in the theory of evolution with out any reference to a creator, tends to be the handmaiden of the liberalism that rejects any notion of a judge of mankind also. We need to check out our hearts on this matter. Have we moved away from the clearly biblical concepts of creator and judge, and if so what has it done to our lives, to the sense of accountability for each moment that the Lord wants us to have always before us?

B. PASTORAL

Are we doing the job of, "good stirrers", as the Lord's pastors? Do we stir things up enough? Do people hear enough of the doctrines of the Word of God to be kept safe?

"The general Jewish Christian expectation (2:1), was that the approach of the end will be marked by moral breakdown and the emergence of saboteurs of sound religion". (Kelly, 1969, p 355). Our role as pastors of the Lord's flock is to warn them of the dangers, and prepare them for discernment, that they might know the truth and that the truth might set them free from deception. Are we doing it?

There are "last days" and there are many signs of them that through biblical study we can discern. Do our people hear this from us and do they have enough information from us to take action? Do those who hear our messages have a daily sense that there is an end point to history, and that they are approaching it very fast?

Death and dying are the last taboo subjects and very few churches teach about the subject in anywhere near the detail that is required. It is the one reality that should be as central in our teaching as defeating sin is, for with sin it is the thing defeated by Christ on the Cross, and triumphed over through his empty tomb. Let the people hear the biblical perspective on death and rejoice. There is no room for fear on this matter.

DOCTRINES

1. Limits: Pentecost to Rapture

2. Divided into Two Sections:

- a) Pre Canon to 100 AD Period of temporary and permanent gifts. (1 Corinthians 13:10)
- b) Post Canon - period of permanent gifts only where the whole Bible is complete.

3. Characteristics:

- a) Length of Age - Unknown - but possibly about 2,000 years
- b) Means of Salvation - Faith in Christ (Acts 16:31)
- c) Written Scripture - Old Testament - Pre Canon; Whole Bible - Post Canon
- d) Evangelists - all believers (Matthew 28:18-20 2 Corinthians 5:20)
- e) Major Judgment -- Nil
- f) At death (believers) - Heaven, face to face with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8)
- g) At death (unbelievers) - Torments, Hades
- h) Priesthood - all believers as priests (1 Peter 2:9)
- i) The Law - grace, the law having been fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17)
- j) Holy Spirit - indwells all believers (John 7:39, 1 Corinthians 6:19)
- k) Environment - sinful
- l) Satan - in Heaven or on earth
- m) Rebellion - Apostasy (2 Timothy 3:1-6)
- n) Many languages - (Genesis 11:9)
- o) Many races of people - (Genesis 11:9)
- p) Spirituality - filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)
- q) Every believer in union with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- r) Every believer indwelt by Christ (John 14:20).

4. The Church Age is not mentioned in the Old Testament.

- a) The Church was a mystery to Old Testament writers. (Colossians 1:25-26)
- b) The Old Testament Scriptures include everything such as the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, Ascension and Session of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament Scriptures then skip over the Church Age to the Tribulation, Second Advent and Millennium.
- c) Examples of scriptures in the Old Testament where the great parenthesis occurs are: Daniel 2:40,41, 7:23,24, 9:26a,26b, 11:35,36, Hosea 3:4,5, Isaiah 61:2a,2b.

SPIRITUALITY [See page 20 above]

RELIGION [See page 196 above]

1. In essence, death means "separation".

2. Types of death:

- a) Physical death - is the separation of the soul from the body (Genesis 35:18).
- b) Spiritual death - is separation from God, having no relationship with God (Ephesians 2:1,12, Genesis 2:17,3:8).
- c) The second death - this is the Great White Throne judgment followed by the lake of fire for unbelievers - separation from the presence of God, punished forever (Revelation 20:12-15, 21:8).
- d) Positional death - Christians are identified with Jesus Christ in His death (separation from sin) and in His resurrection (living in righteousness) Romans 6:3-14 Colossians 2:12-14.
- e) Sexual death - inability to procreate (Romans 4:17-21, Hebrews 11:11-12).
- f) Operational death - faith without works is non operational (James 2:26).
- g) Temporal death - a carnal believer, out of fellowship with God (Romans 8:6-8,13, Ephesians 5:14, 1Timothy 5:6, James 1:15, Revelation 3:1).

3. Reasons for death:

- a) The work is finished (John 19:30 cf Luke 23:46, 2 Timothy 4:7).
- b) For the glory of God - martyrdom (John 21:19, Acts 7:55-60).
- c) The sin unto death - extreme discipline for believers with hardened hearts against God (1 John 5:16).
- d) Suicide - superimposing your will over God's will for your life (1 Samuel 31:4, Matthew 27:5).
- e) The unique death of Christ - committing His own spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46).

PROPHECY: SEQUENCE OF END TIMES

1. Note: Some of the events in the Tribulation may occur in a slightly different sequence.

2. CHURCH AGE

- a) Rapture of the Church (1 Corinthians 15:51-58, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- b) Judgment Seat of Christ (believers only - purpose is rewards) (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

3. TRIBULATION (first 3 1/2 years)

- a) Revival of Roman Empire, Ten Nation Confederacy (Daniel 7:7, 24, Revelation 13:1, 17:3, 12, 13).
- b) Rise of Middle East Dictator (Daniel 7:8, Revelation 13:1-8).
- c) Temple rebuilt in Jerusalem
- d) Seven seals judgments (Revelation 6:1ff) and seven trumpets judgments (Revelation 8:7ff).
- e) Two witnesses preach from Jerusalem until killed.
- f) Peace treaty with Israel (Daniel 9:27).
- g) World church established (Revelation 17:1-15).
- h) Russia attacks Israel about four years before the second coming of Christ (Ezekiel 38, 39).

4. GREAT TRIBULATION (second 3 1/2 years)

- a) Peace treaty with Israel broken
- b) Antichrist sets up Abomination of Desolation and demands worship (Matthew 24:15,21).

- c) World government, world economic system, world religion begins (Daniel 7:23, Revelation 13:5-8, 17:16, 17).
- d) Seven trumpet judgments (Revelation 16:2ff).
- e) Martyrdom of many Tribulation Saints and Jews (Revelation 7:9-17, 13:15).
- f) Catastrophic divine judgments poured out on the earth (Revelation 6:17).
- g) World war breaks out in Middle East; battle of Armageddon (Daniel 11:40-45, Revelation 9:13-21, 16:12-16).

5. SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

- a) Second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:27-31, Revelation 19:11).
- b) Tribulation surviving believers proceed into the Millennium (Matthew 3:12).
- c) Unbelievers cast off the earth (Ezekiel 20:33-38, Matthew 3,12, 25:31-46, Jude 14, 15, Revelation 19:15-21, 20:1-4).
- d) Satan bound (Revelation 20:1-3).
- e) Resurrection of Old Testament saints and Tribulation martyrs (Revelation 20:4).

6. MILLENNIUM

- a) Millennial kingdom begins (Revelation 20:5, 6).
- b) Christ reigns on earth for 1,000 years in perfect environment and peace (Revelation 20:4-6).
- c) Satan released at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-9).
- d) Rebellion of Gog and Magog at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7-10).
- e) Resurrection of all unbelievers (Revelation 20:5a).
- f) Great White Throne Judgment (unbelievers only - purpose is judgment) (Revelation 20:11-15).

7. ETERNITY

- a) New heaven, new earth, new Jerusalem (Revelation 21, 22).
- b) Believers blessed forever with Christ (Revelation 21 - 22:5).
- c) Unbelievers punished forever with Satan (Matthew 25:41).

LAWS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE LAW WHICH WE ARE NOT UNDER - THE MOSAIC LAW

Christ fulfilled the requirements of the Mosaic Law (Matthew 5:17). If the Holy Spirit has control over us we automatically fulfill the righteousness of the Law.

2. THE LAW OF LIBERTY

This law is directed towards oneself. Biblically speaking you have the right to do certain things that will not cause you personally to fail the Lord in any way (1 Corinthians 8:8).

3. THE LAW OF LOVE

This law takes other believers into consideration. In effect this law says that because of your love for the weaker brethren and in order not to offend or upset them you refrain from doing certain things which you have the liberty to do. You refrain not because they are wrong in themselves but rather you wish to help other believers rather than hinder them (1 Corinthians 8:9).

4. THE LAW OF EXPEDIENCY

This law concerns the unbeliever. It is expedient that your life tells the world of Christ. The unbeliever has set up standards of conduct for the Christian. Therefore you refrain from or do certain legitimate things - not because they are wrong but because they may offend an unbeliever and prevent him from seeing the real issue that CHRIST DIED FOR HIS SINS (1 Corinthians 9, 20-23).

5. THE LAW OF SUPREME SACRIFICE

This law is directed towards God. It involves the believer forsaking a completely legitimate function in life in order to more perfectly serve the Lord. Missionaries often function under this law when they live in primitive conditions on the mission field. This law can also operate under Australian conditions (Matthew 3:1-6).

6. PRINCIPLE:

As Christians we have liberty, but total freedom for ourselves may enslave others. We have to use our liberty in such a responsible manner that it does not infringe on the liberty of others. As Christians we must act responsibly (Ephesians 5:15).

PARAPHRASE

“This is the second letter, my much loved ones, that I have now written to you. In both of them my purpose has been to stir up your minds, (awakening you to the realities of God’s truth), so that you remember the things that will keep you safe. You need to remember all the scriptures, the Old Testament, the words of the Lord, and the commands of us, the Lord our Saviour’s apostles. Know this first of all! There will come in the last days (of this church age), mockers (people making serious things appear foolish), people who live according to their own standards(not God’s), following their own lusts(not God’s spirit). They will keep on saying, ‘where is he?’ ‘You told us he was coming again, well where is he?’ ‘For since our ancestors died the world has continued on, (and it will continue on, there is no end in sight!) This is the subject they wilfully remain ignorant of; (they don’t want to know! There is an end point.) (Remember), that by the word of God the creator, the world was made, and by the word of God it was totally overwhelmed by the waters of the great flood. The world civilisation of that time was destroyed totally, and the world today is also set aside for a later judgement, when the ungodly men will be destroyed (with the world they think is going on forever).”

VERSES 8 - 12

“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 long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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?”

KEY WORDS

Ignorant	lanthano	present, active, imperative; let it not be hidden (see verse 5, same word).
Slack	braduneino	(strong negative ouk) delay here, no slowness in God's plan.
Count	hegeomai	consider, reckon, count.
Long suffering	makrothumia	long burning fuse, slowly working to his purpose, in his timing.
Willing	boulomai	present, middle, participle; on-going will, wish, and desire on God's part.
Perish	apollumi	aorist, middle, infinitive; perish under judgement,(refer verse 7).
Repentance	metanoia	change of mind, direction of life.
Come [v 9]	choreo	aorist, active, infinitive; to make room for. They must make room for repentance, and also make room for God.
Come [v 10]	eko	future, active, indicative; very powerful placement of the verb at the start of the sentence, emphasising, this will happen.
Great noise	roizedon	hissing noise, whizzing of an arrow close to the ear. Danger and disaster.
Pass away	pararchomai	future, middle, indicative; will pass away totally, so nothing remains of the old.
Elements	stoicheion	the basic elements, chemical structure, of the world.
Melt	kausoomai	present, middle, participle; burning to the point of melting, like lava from a volcano.
Fervent heat	luo	future, passive, indicative; will be loosened, will disintegrate. The very atomic structure of the elements of the world will be taken apart, or explode. It is very tempting to see an atomic explosion / implosion here, and that is what it may be.
Burned up	katakaio	future, passive, indicative; will be burned to the ground (military defeat metaphor) with nothing left from those who lived there before.
Seeing		no word as it is understood; “these things being true”.
Dissolved	luo	present, passive, participle; dissolved with fervent heat, as above.
Manner	potopos	what kind of.
Conversation	anastrophe	life style, habits of living, manner of life.
Looking for	prosdokao	present, active, participle; looking forward to, waiting expectantly.
Hasting	speudo	present, active, participle; to desire, be eager for, to accelerate

On fire	puroo	towards. present, passive, participle; set on fire, receive burning.
Dissolved	luo	as above.
Melt	teko	present, passive, indicative; melt down, made into liquid like molten metal.
Fervent heat	kausao	present, passive, participle; be burned up.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

“Time is God’s gift, and he has bidden us to watch, pray, and work!” (Green, 1968, p 134). **Ephesians 5:15-18.** “Alert, and Active not Passive”, is to be our motto! We are called to pay attention to our situation, the Lord’s Word, the Lord’s will, and then, once we understand the commands of the Lord we are to put them into action.

The worst thing for a soldier is to be ignorant of his commanding officer’s orders, for he will soon find himself before his CO for failure to follow his orders! How slack so many of us are on this matter. Paul and Peter are both keen for us not to be ignorant! Ignorance is dangerous, given our active and malevolent enemy. Nothing that is needed for our time on earth is hidden; all we need has been revealed in the Holy Scriptures, but we must take advantage of the information, put ourselves in the places where we hear it, and then exercise our will and obey.

There is no slowness with the Plan of God, for it is advancing in space-time, and we are a part of it. If we sense there is delay, then we are wrong, it is just that the Lord is waiting for us to catch up with Him. He waits for man to respond, he is patient in order that all may have the opportunity to respond to the gospel. God’s Plan is perfectly on time, for it was developed before space-time and has every fact factored into it.

God’s will is that all come to repentance regarding their sin and turn to the only one who can save them from the midst of it, the Lord Jesus Christ. The free will of man and the sovereignty of God are here brought together, and we face a mystery, for how can these two things be reconciled this side of eternity? The answer is, they cannot, for we cannot even have a thought that isn’t limited by space and time, and we certainly cannot understand this mystery. But Peter has even more mysteries in store for us here when he speaks of “hastening the coming” of the Lord in verse twelve. Peter is confronting us again and again with our limits as human beings and the need, even though we cannot understand all things, to obey what we are told, and apply it in faith. Peter’s call is to humble and immediate obedience.

How far do we take Peter’s words in verse eight about the thousand years? The starting point is “context” - so read all of Psalm 90. This Psalm of Moses, records the correct attitude to space-time for the believer, and it forms a commentary on this section of Peter’s letter, and was very likely open before Peter as he wrote these words. Some Jewish traditions appear to record that the world’s history is drawn in three periods of two thousand years; two thousand years before Abraham, then two thousand years to Messiah, then two thousand years until his return to rule.

It is not clear that Peter had any intention of referring to this, but the period of time that was the largest round number used regularly in daily usage was a thousand, and it is Peter’s way of saying, God sees things as different from us as a day is to a thousand years. Having brought us to the place of humility (not theological debate), Peter moves us to the place of the awesome contemplation of the destruction of the present space-time universe itself, but without any horror or worry that is generated by the Hollywood blockbusters that sensationalize the end of this present world.

In verse ten we confront the awesome thought that the world we see and touch will be one day dissolved in a thermonuclear (or greater!) explosion (or implosion). On that day the universe will be seen for what it is, a temporary, limited creation of our Almighty Creator God, who has even better to show us and that we are part of. The choice that every man and woman has, is to worship the creation, or to worship the creator. Those who worshipped pagan gods in the days of old saw them all fall, and those who today, in their “scientific minds”, worship the creation, shall see it fall apart also. All we see will pass away, only those who do the will of God will live forever. In that day the nature of the universe will be discovered by all, but it is there for us to see now. Peter says to us, look up and see that all this is but God’s work, His creation and it is temporary, and so, do not let yourself become attached to any of it.

The picture of a thief in the night in verse ten is one that modern readers often misinterpret. Thieves in the night in our day come quietly; they are ‘cat burglars’, who come unseen steal and leave unseen, but that is not the picture from the days of Peter. The thief came suddenly, never alone, but with large numbers and great noise, intent on creating fear like a tsunami, then executing the total destruction of the house and the

theft or all goods within, and the death or capture and slavery of all within it. The picture is of shock, surprise, loss, and total devastation. **Matthew 24:35-44, Luke 12:35-49, 1 Thessalonians 5:1- 8, Revelation 3:3, Revelation 16:15.**

“It is a picture which in an astonishing degree corresponds to what might actually happen according to modern theories of the physical universe”. (Green, 1968, p 139). Note when Green says this, for it is well before Professor Hawking’s work on Black Holes, and his “Short History of Time”. It is a more awesome vision that Hawking’s, that is the cataclysmic picture that Peter paints here, and parallels are found in the Old Testament.

We forget how consistent God’s Word is in these matters, because we often simply don’t know the Word well enough. David Stern, the Messianic Jewish Commentator notes some of the passages. “The heavens will disappear (**Isaiah 13:10, 34:4, Ezekiel 32:7, 8, Joel 2:31, 3:15**), with a roar, (**Isaiah 29:5b, 6**), the elements will melt and disintegrate, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up (**Isaiah 30:30, 66:15, 16, Micah 1:4, Nahum 1:5,6, Zephaniah 1:18, 3:8, Psalm 97:3, 5**). Compare also similar pictures in such Jewish writings, dating from before Yeshua, as Sibylline Oracles 3:83 - 92, 4:171 - 182, 1 Enoch 1: 6, 52:6-9, 4 Ezra 13:10,11.” (Stern, 1992, p 764).

Verse eleven reminds us that the early believers had a daily expectation of the Lord’s return, and it was no “fluffy vision”. They lived in the reality of his presence and the expectation of his judging the world. Reicke may go too far, but he is moving in the right direction with the following comments. “Holy living in godly fear. It is important therefore to live with the final events of history and the day of reckoning before ones eyes, as a permanently threatening possibility.” (Reicke, 1964, p 181, 182).

We need to modify Reicke’s words, as we are not called to live in psychotic fear, but in fear as “AWESOMENESS”, for we are saved and delivered from the “wrath to come”, and are not to be in servile fear at all. **2 Timothy 1:7**. Each time we look up to the heavens however, it is good to say, ‘all this too will pass away’, and so be overcome again by the awesome power and plan of God, rather than stand in awe of the creation, or in fear of its dissolution. Atheism focuses on the present creation as “all there is”, but on the basis of Scripture we must cry out the challenge – “all this will indeed go, but the best is yet to come, and it is more awesome!” God, and His Plan, is way more awesome than most think!

Verse twelve appears to indicate that the conduct of the church may actually “hasten” the coming of these events. This is a “novel” belief to most today, but pause and reflect upon Peter’s words, for they come out of Jewish tradition and have biblical sanction. “The idea of working to hasten the coming of Messiah is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition, but it often surprises both Jew and Christian to find it in the New Testament as well. Many Christians want to sit back passively and wait for the Day of the Lord; it is hard to motivate them to work to hasten his coming; and learning that they are supposed to surprises them. On the other hand Jews, who think the New Testament is fatalistic and other worldly are equally amazed to discover Shimon Kefa’s orientation towards action and ethical behaviour. Moreover there is reciprocity; not only are we to hasten the end, but as we learn from Hebrews 10:25, (“and let us do this all the more as you see the day approaching”), the end hastens us!” (Stern, 1992, p 765).

How can this “hastening” concept of Peters be applied to daily life? God’s plan is unchangeable, so how can we by our behaviour change it? We do stand before this verse with an unanswered question, but believe that even though the full answer to this will only be seen in eternity, there is enough in scripture to make application now. There are more than ‘hints’ in Scripture, that our actions change things, for is that not what prayer does?

How do our actions change things in the Eternal Plan of God? We don’t know, but we must not let our lack of knowledge stop us doing the things commanded, for that is the faith test the Lord God sets us in these matters. We are creatures of space-time communing with eternity in prayer, and so without full understanding how we can change things, we are to confidently apply God’s Word and see things changed! Let us be prepared to leave full understanding until later, but get obedience right, now!!! To hasten the coming of the Lord, we can be obedient, by preaching the gospel to every creature, by loving each other, by serving each other, by showing Christ to all we meet!

By living in the light of His Soon Coming, we in a way, yet not fully known, hasten His Coming!

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

God has a plan and we are a part of it. We often judge things on the basis of our assessments of great and small, but Peter reminds us, there are far different criteria to be applied. "He would have us know that of great and little God's work makes no account. With Him there is no short or long in time." (Lumby, 1893, p 346). Are we living in a way that reflects the reality of God's assessments of what is valuable and what is not? Do we see the time of our life as we are encouraged to here, as opportunity for service?

On March 5, 1979 a gamma radiation explosion occurred in galaxy N-49. In one tenth of a second more radiation was released than by our own sun in 3000 years. If it had occurred in our galaxy it would have vaporised the earth. Since that time astronomers have witnessed other such stellar events. This is what is being referred to here. It is important that these things are being seen in our day, when some scientists are magnifying the universe – it is not permanent – and God is giving us evidence to see, and the time to accept that.

The whole universe is the temporary space-time limited creation of our God, and the creation exists for his purposes to be worked out with mankind. That purpose will come to its conclusion after the Lord's Return and reign upon the earth for another "limited period" (one thousand years according to Revelation 20). Let us be "on board" with his purposes and rest content "in Him", rather than trust the false god of science, which is in effect simply the deification of the universe and it's processes, all of which have an end point.

Are we living in the light of his presence, and in the reality of the end of the universe and his prior return to judge this world and rule over it for a time? "Disbelief in the Lord's return, all too often produces indifference in behaviour. (This is to be contrasted to the mind of those who hold this reality in their consciousness). The quality of the lives we lead in the light of this coming dissolution is of supreme importance." (Green, 1968, p 139, 140)."

Application of prophecy to produce a holy life, this is the author's point; prophecy is not intended to simply produce excitement at what it says! "Many believers preoccupy themselves with future events, seemingly enjoying the proclamation of apocalyptic doom as an escape from the command to concern themselves with living holy lives in the "holam hazeh" (this world), rather than 'pie in the sky' in the "holam haba" (the world to come)." (Stern, 1992, p 764).

This world and the entire universe it is a minute part of will END with space-time itself, Peter says, and with the realisation of that must come change in our daily lives, or else we clearly have not got the message! The concept of an "end" produces, "an urgent moral and spiritual challenge". (Kelly, 1969, p 366).

B. PASTORAL

Much ink is still spilt on the subject of human will, salvation, and the sovereignty of God. As preachers it is easy to become theological but lack basic logic and humility! We can start to discuss theological terms and issues in such a way that is internally consistent given our starting point, but fail to examine that starting point. No matter what the position, the starting point of all theological discussion is the ignorance of man and his limits, not our knowledge and powerful ability!

John Calvin was a very young and over-confident man when he wrote his Institutes, and following Augustine of Hippo accepted a view of man and God that was fatally flawed – a **philosophical "category mistake"**. Many people still accept the category mistake of both Calvinist and Arminian, for they fail to see that their "space-time" limited words and thinking cannot ever this side of eternity understand the interface between eternity and infinity and space-time! They will always end up speaking of God as if he is a "big man" – HE is not limited as we are! We are creatures of space and time, discussing, when we enter this subject area, the things that are only finally seen from eternity, when space and time are no more. Let us be humble and silent on things we cannot understand.

Green sums up this issue well when he says of verse nine. "The plain meaning is that although God wants all men to be saved, and although he has made provision for all to be accepted, some will exercise their God given free will and exclude God. Some will indeed 'perish' (verse 7), but this is not because God wills it." (Green, 1968, p 136).

How well do we preach this aspect of the will of God? If we fail to be clear in our preaching on this subject we open the door for the arrogant and foolish hyper-Calvinists to enter and lead astray our sheep into an internally consistent but ridiculously wrong theology. Equally dangerous is the false universalism of the liberal wing of the church.

Let us be clear and concise, so that none fall into the error of believing they understand the will of God where it meets the free will of man; for this side of eternity we do not, because we cannot, because we do not have the mind equipped to understand eternal things. Let us leave such debates as Calvin entered into with murderous force, until we see the Lord, "face to face", for then, and only then, will we understand.

Until then let us ensure that we will not let our arrogance, lead us into angry denunciations of our brethren.

DOCTRINES

SALVATION Refer above Page 30

PROPHECY: SEQUENCE OF END TIMES [See page 213 above]

PLAN OF GOD Refer above Page 75

PARAPHRASE

"(Given the surety of the end of all things), I do not want you to be ignorant of this next fact. (God's view of time is not the same as ours), for a day with God is as a thousand years with us, and a thousand years is as one day to him. The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promises, (he is working according to his planning and timetable), he is not slow as men think of slowness, rather he is waiting for mankind, not willing that any should perish in their sins, but that they all might come to repentance, (changing their mind about Christ). For the end, the "day of the Lord" will come, (in his time), and it will be like the sudden and shocking arrival of thieves in the night, (it will occur when the unbelievers least expect it, and it will overwhelm them). At that time the heavens will pass away totally with a frightening sound and the very elements of the universe will melt away, their very structure dissolving and disintegrating. Everything we see now will be wiped away, like a city after an enemy army has burned it to the ground, there will be nothing left! Seeing this clearly then, what sort of people ought we to be? Surely we ought to be people who live in a godly manner, with purity of behaviour, looking for the Lord's coming, and by our behaviours actually hastening his return. On that day the heavens will be on fire, and will dissolve, and the very elements of the universe will disintegrate being burned up so that nothing remains."

2 PETER CHAPTER 3 - VERSES 13 - 18

" 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 and without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given to him has 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 steadfastness. 18 But grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and forever, AMEN. "

KEY WORDS

Nevertheless	de	but, contrast to the earlier group discussed in verse 12.
Look	prosdokao	present, active, indicative; we keep on looking for, anticipate, wait for eagerly.
Dwelleth	katoikeo	present, active, indicative; keeps on living permanently, as being "at home".
Look	prosdokao	Present, active, participle; keep on eagerly anticipating.
Diligent	spoudazo	aoist, active, imperative; at every point in time, be alert, put all your effort into.
In Peace	en eirene	in the sphere of peace/prosperity in your soul.
Spot	aspiloi	without any spots that spoil the appearance/reality.
Blameless	amometos	without blame being able to be given justly.
Long suffering	makrothumia	literally "big souled", long burning fuse of emotion, not soon hot (thumos). A word used of the military virtue of patient endurance under fire.
Wisdom	sophia	
Wrote	grapho	aoist, active, indicative; at some point Paul has written in the past to

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The first verse of this section contrasts the mental attitudes of the believer with that of the unbeliever, and the carnal believer. As believers who are obedient to the Word of God we are focused on the future with confidence, seeing the new heavens and new earth, rather than either being fearful or in denial about the end of this world. Peter is underlining that there should be a visible difference between us, and those around us. Our confident focus forward is a statement.

Our mental attitude should be stable and focused into the future; eternal realities should be more real to us than the things of time. Sin is at home in this world, righteousness is at home in the world to come. Where are we at home? The unbeliever and the carnal believer is at home with sin, but the believer who is advancing in maturity with the Lord is at home with righteousness, and is looking forward to living in a place where this is the norm rather than the exception.

If we are in the place the Lord wants us, we are “eagerly expecting” the future within His plan. If we are in carnality we are fearful of the future. This is what is behind John’s words, “perfect love casts out fear”. **1 John 4:18**. If we are occupied with the Lord in daily life, and are focused on his future for us, then we have no fear for the future, for we are part of his plan and we are relaxed with where he takes us.

This mental attitude does work out in action however, in a diligence, or alertness to be living every day without sin spoiling our witness. There are three marks of the mature believer given in verse fourteen. We will be at peace, with rest in the soul, without the spot of sin in our lives, and be living so that none can blame us justly for anything wrong.

Verse fifteen reminds us of the character of our Almighty Saviour God. He is long suffering towards us, and it is just as well, isn’t it! The Lord has a “slow burning fuse” towards our sinful lives. He is patient with us; he remembers we are but dust. **Genesis 2:7, Psalm 103:14, Ecclesiastes 3:20**.

Peter’s comments on the writings of the apostle Paul in verses 14 through sixteen, are truly important indicators of the accepted canonicity of Paul’s writings. Peter’s comments here show us that Paul’s Letters were accepted at the time of Peter’s writing as the words of scripture on a par to the words of the prophets of old. The way that the letter writer speaks here is also fresh and straight, not stylised and stiff, as later pseudapigraphist (letters written “as if written by” an apostle but dating to the second century) writing are – these fakes feel like rubbish because they are fake, not real.

“Rather than pointing to a later origin this self candour of Peters is a factor in favour of authenticity. It is surely not very surprising that Peter, or any of the other original apostles for that matter, found Paul difficult. Has anyone ever found him easy?” (Guthrie, 1962, p 157). It is refreshing that even Peter found Paul hard to understand at times. Let us draw courage from this and press on in our studies as Peter did with his.

In Verse 16, Paul’s letters are referred to as, “hard to be understood”. One commentator notes, “men’s difficulties arise in part because they look on these subjects as studies for the intellect (nous) alone”. (Lumby, 1893, p 371). Let us ensure we are open to the Holy Spirit in our study, and even if the going is tough, persevere, for the words of Scripture are the words of life for us. **John 6:68**.

Of Verse 17, Mounce observes, “Once the decision has been made to disobey, human nature searches out some basis to support it’s wilful acts. At this point truth is twisted and pressed into service for a deviant lifestyle. They need to rationalise a prior decision to disobey.” (Mounce, 1982, p 148). A sign of a false teacher is their ability to twist a scripture to make it mean something other than it’s plain sense. Remember the old saying of Dr David L Cooper, “If the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense lest you find nonsense”. Beware of the twisters of the Word of God. Satan loves to twist words, and so do his men and women.

Beware of the dangers of being led astray by those who will rob you of reward and the peace that the Lord promises. Peter uses two military words here to underline the seriousness of the situation of a believer who starts to listen to the false teachers. They are in danger of falling from their secure position, being dislodged from their mental security. Stability is the result of hearing and applying the Word of God, and nothing must move us away from that place of security that we have in obedience to God’s Holy Word.

The challenge Peter ends the letter with is appropriate; grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Keep on feeding on his Word, Peter urges. These may have been the last words he wrote before being taken out

to be killed, and note them; grow believer, grow! How do you grow? By feeding on and applying the Word of God to daily life.

APPLICATION

A. PERSONAL

What is most real to you believer? Do you consider the things of this world, or are you fixed upon the things of heaven? Do you see this world in terms of eternity or are you “short sighted”? Peter challenges us to have the “eternal life perspective”.

“Verse fourteen faces us directly with the question, “how will he find me?” It is a question we must ask each day to ensure we test each action by it’s force and power. Are we at peace, without spot of sin, and without things in our lives that others could justly blame us for? If not, we are not where the Lord wants us to be. Have we praised him for his long suffering nature? It is only his mercy, love and “big souled” heart that keeps us alive upon the earth. Let us praise him for who he is and what he does for us.

Of Verse 18 Green observes, “The Christian lifestyle is like riding a bicycle, unless you keep moving, you fall off”. (Green, 1968, p 150). We keep moving by daily feeding on the living Word of God, and by daily applying that living word to our experience. We are stabilised under pressure by our belief in the Lord’s words, and those of the prophets and apostles, and we become strong as we believe and apply them, so that they are more real than our experiences. Only then do we have the reality of the living faith that the Lord wants us to have.

B. PASTORAL

The Lord’s words, “Feed my sheep Peter”, ring loudly in this last section do they not! Peter reminds all pastors of the need to apply the word of God to life, and teach it often and well so that all hear the truths that will set them free from sin, and give them the peace of God that passes understanding. **Philippians 4:7.**

Where is our preaching centred; on the things of this world, or do we give our people the glimpse of heaven through the Lord’s Word, that they need in this weary place?

Protecting the flock of the Lord against the “twisters” is a big part of our teaching methodology. By teaching soundly, with clear hermeneutics we protect the flock from the perverters, for they will spot the difference quickly. Our sound teaching acts as an inoculation against evil. It is vital we teach our people how to learn and how not to learn the things of God. That we are clear and simple in all we cover, so that the youngest there can draw the encouragement and spiritual growth which the Lord wants them to gain. Let us ensure that the Lord’s people are able to grow under our ministry. To Him be the glory forever and ever!

DOCTRINES

SPIRITUALITY [See Page 20 above]

ATTITUDE Refer above Page 61

MATURITY [See page 20-21 above]

PARAPHRASE

“In contrast to those who are fearful of the future, we actually eagerly look forward to the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness will be at home(just as sin is now in this present earth). For these reasons then my beloved brethren, be alert in all you do, so that you may live lives characterised by the peace that only God can give, with lives unspotted by sin, and unable to be blamed justly for any evil. Keep on being thankful for the Lord’s patience with you, for it led to your salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul has written to you before. He has often spoken of these things, in places very hard to understand, and so the unstable, twist his words, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, knowing this beforehand, be alert, lest you also fall from your secure place, into the error of the wicked ones and so lose your firmness and stability. Rather keep on growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory, both now and unto the time when time is no more. AMEN (so be it!)”

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