

The Epistle of First Peter **Preparing for Persecution**

Dedication: Dr. Paul Eymann, President of Arizona College of the Bible, and my primary professor of Bible courses. During my first year at the school (1970), Dr. Eymann taught the book of First Peter. One of his requirements was the memorization of a number of texts from the book. I have never studied First Peter without remembering his teaching. When I returned to Arizona from Australia to speak at the chapel service, Mr. Eymann told me he had me on his prayer list, and had been praying for me every day, for over 30 years! Paul Eymann is now in the presence of our Lord.

Introduction

The book of First Peter is a primer on five levels of spiritual growth, and the corresponding levels of suffering to be expected at each level. **It is a systematic primer on how we can prepare for persecution.** When we first believe in Jesus Christ, though we may be an adult in years, but we now begin our new spiritual life as an infant. We need to “grow up” into spiritual maturity, so as to become an effective soldier in the invisible war being waged against us by Satan and his fallen realm. As we go through these stages of growth, we will experience increasing degrees of suffering and affliction. The following steps illustrate this process.

1. The newborn believer can expect to go through various trials designed to strengthen us in our faith (1:6).
2. At the “adolescent” stage, we will find that we often suffer unjustly, simply because of our faith. Unjust suffering teaches us that life is not fair, but that God is faithful to strengthen and sustain us when we face unjust sufferings (2:19).
3. As we come to the stage of spiritual maturity, we begin to reflect the character of Jesus Christ. This is when we begin to suffer for righteousness’ sake (3:14,17).
4. Spiritual maturity is not the end of our Christian experience. In many ways, it is the beginning, as we become a true spiritual warrior, and learn to share in the sufferings of Christ Himself (4:12-13). This is a great honor in our spiritual journey.
5. The final stage, that of personal attack from the devil, is reached by those who become a genuine threat to the kingdom of darkness (5:8). This is the “hero of faith” stage presented in Hebrews chapter 11.

1Peter Chapter One

This chapter is written with the new believer in mind, and reveals the Divine role of **various trials** (1:6) in the spiritual life of the child of God. It reveals how God is able to take the evils that we suffer in this world and turn them into great spiritual blessings.

Because of the entrance of sin and evil into the world, by means of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, life is inevitably tinged with sorrow, suffering, and afflictions. How we can meet, overcome, and even use these trials to our advantage is the subject of this first chapter. It contains truths the new believer must learn to accept and apply.

One of the first things a new believer needs to learn is about our new standing with God. Because we have been given the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have a permanent standing of grace and peace with the heavenly Father. **Romans 5:1-5** is a good introduction to this chapter. There are five great truths taught in this section.

1. We have been justified (declared righteous) before God forever.
2. Because of this, we have a permanent and eternal standing of peace with God. Peace with God is a fact, not a feeling.
3. This new position provides us access (an open door of invitation) into the grace of God. His grace provides everything we need to live life in a right relationship with God as His children.
4. We also have a perpetual cause for joy, in knowing that we will share in the glory of His future and eternal kingdom.
5. All of this provides us with the assurance that God designs and directs all the tests and trials of this life for our growth and maturity. The indwelling Holy Spirit is our constant reminder of the love of God for us, even in the midst of our trials, tests, and even our failures. If God is for us, then everything that happens to us can work for our growth, if we live by faith (Rom.8:31-39).

All of these truths are presented to us, and amplified, in this first chapter of 1 Peter. It is worth pointing out that the three great virtues of the Christian life; faith, hope, and love, are found not only in Rom.5:1-5, but also in 1 Peter 1:3, 5, 8, and v.21-22. If we focus our faith on the truths of God's word, and fix our hope on the promises of God, the indwelling Holy Spirit has the building materials to create within us an ever-increasing love for God, and for His children (see 2Peter1:1-7).

Our Living Hope

1Peter 1:1-5

First, We must have faith in the providential plan of God for us as stated briefly in Gen.50:20 and Rom.8:28. Election here is to purpose, not salvation!

In this section Peter writes of the living **hope** (v.3) we have because of our new birth in Christ.

1. Peter writes as **“an apostle of Jesus Christ”**, v.1. He speaks with authority, and what he writes here, under the inspiration of the Spirit, is the word of God, equaling the authority of the prophets (see v.11-12). Peter was gifted and called to minister to the Jews, as Paul was to the Gentiles (Gal.2:8) In this little epistle, Peter addresses the newborn believer (2:2), as well as the elder believers (5:1), thus fulfilling Jesus mandate given in Joh.21:15-17. Peter also identifies as an **“elder...shepherd...overseer”** in 5:1-4.

2. In v.1 Peter writes to the “**elect pilgrims**” who had been scattered throughout Asia Minor (Turkey) by persecution (see Act.8:1-4; 11:19), v.1. Here he is dealing with **election to purpose** following salvation. They are “**elect**” (chosen) because they are in Christ, the Elect One (Isa.42:1; Eph.1:4). But additionally, they are “**elect pilgrims**” in that God in His “**foreknowledge**” is orchestrating their present circumstances for both present and eternal good (v.7-9; Gen.50:20; Rom.8:28). Faith is proved as we do the will of God (Eph.2:10; 2Tim.4:7; Rev.3:2).

Note: compare principles and passages in the notes on 2:12 and 3:9 for the use of “**elect...called...calling**” by Peter.

3. Jesus clearly taught the doctrine of **election to salvation** in the parable of the marriage of the King’s son in Matt.22:1-14. The invitation went out to all, but only some received the invitation (just as with the gospel message). Jesus ended the parable in v.14 with the words, “*For many are called, but few are chosen (elect).*” The “call” (invitation) is potential for all, but only becomes a reality (a “calling”) when met with a faith-response. Thus the angel said to John, “*blessed are those who are called (kaleo: perf. pass. ptc.) to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*” (Rev.19:9). They were invited in the past and the call remains in effect, due to their faith.
4. in v.2. God in His “**foreknowledge**” put them in this time and place to effect “**the sanctification of the Spirit**” (spiritual growth), resulting in “**obedience and sprinkling (daily cleansing) of the blood of Jesus Christ.**” We now share His life, which can never end. Our faith rests on the faithfulness of God! The word “*sprinkling*” would bring to the minds of these Jewish believers the daily purification of the priests and the tabernacle by the sprinkled blood of the sacrifice (Exo.24:3-8; 29:19-21; Lev.1:5; 3:2; 4:6, etc.). The same figure is used of the believer being cleansed by confession when he/she approaches the throne of grace (Heb.10:22; 12:24). His point is that daily cleansing by both confession and feeding on His word equips us to fulfill His perfect plan.
5. The greeting “**Grace to you and peace be multiplied**” not only reminds us that the utilization of God’s grace provisions (His written word, our spiritual bank account (Eph.1:3) combined with the indwelling work of the Spirit (1Th.5:23). The phrase “**be multiplied**” to grow, increase, and is in the passive voice (God does the work), and the optative mood, expressing the will of God for our lives.
6. God should always be “**blessed**” (praised) because those who are “**begotten again**” by grace through faith (Eph.2:8) enter into a “**living hope**”, based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, v.3. The word “hope” in the N.T. means “confident assurance”, free from all doubt, based on the sure promises of God (Heb.6:13-20). This ever-living hope based on the faithfulness of God (Heb.6:13-20) brings both purification power (1Jo.3:3) and perpetual blessedness (Tit.3:5).
7. Every child of God has a share in the eternal “**inheritance**” of God (Act.26:18; Gal.3:29; 4:6-7), v.4. The words “**incorruptible and undefiled**” mean that no

failure on our part can diminish our inheritance. Our inheritance will never **“fade away”**, for the down-payment has been made by the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:14). This is not the same as eternal rewards, which can be forfeited through failure (1Cor.9:24-27; Col.2:8, 18; 2Tim.2:11-13; Rev.3:11).

8. The believer’s salvation is a past reality, a present possession, and a future expectation, v.5. In each case it is literally **“reserved in the heavens”**, even while we are **“kept (under military guard) by the power of God”**. Our eternal security, the same as our hope, is not based on our performance, but on the faithfulness of God (Joh.10:28-29; 1Cor.1:9; 1Th.5:24; 2Tim.2:13; Heb.13:5).

Summary

In these first five verses consider how Peter lays all his emphasis on the working of God on our behalf. To these persecuted and scattered believers, these words would bring great comfort. The heavenly Father who saved them in the past, and who reserved for them a future inheritance in His kingdom, was also working to strengthen and sustain them in their present circumstances and sufferings. This whole section speaks of being encompassed before, behind, and underneath, by the everlasting arms of God’s grace (Deu.33:27).

The Necessity of Various Trials

1Peter 1:6-12

Next, he reminds them (us) that every believer will face “various trials” as part of living in the devils world.

In these verses the focus is on the testing and proving of our **faith** (v.7), which is essential for spiritual growth.

1. While we **“greatly rejoice”** in our future hope, in the present it is necessary for us to go through **“various trials”**, v.6 (Jam.1:2). These trials include everything from minor aggravations to major life crises. Suffering is a part of every life due to the fall of Adam (Gen.3:16-19; Job 5:7). As Paul points out in Rom.5:1-5, we need to face trials in order to grow in our faith. God uses sufferings in our lives to purify our faith and to build in us the character of Jesus Christ. Like a good father, He helps us in our trials, but He does not take them away.
2. The word **“genuineness”** literally means “proved by testing”, v.7. He illustrates this by the process of purifying gold. When raw gold is put in the fire, it melts and separates the impurities in the ore from the gold. Trusting God through our trials purifies our faith, so that the impurities of doubt, fear, and disobedience are removed, leaving pure faith. This faith, that sustains us in the trials of life, will bring **“praise, honor, and glory”** to Jesus Christ at His coming, and result in eternal reward for us (Mat.5:10-12; Rom.2:6-7; Jam.1:2-4, 12). **“At the revelation of Jesus Christ”** refers to His coming for His bride at the rapture (1Th.4:1`3-18) followed by the Bema seat (1Cor.3:11-15). The

point here is that faith that passes these earthly tests will also pass the test by fire at the Bema seat. What a difference it will make if we think on this in our daily trials!

3. Unlike Peter, these believers had **“not seen”** the Lord during His earthly life, yet, they believed and loved Him, resulting in **“Joy inexpressible and full of glory”**, v.8 (Joh.20:29). This is like Rebecca, who chose to love Isaac before she had ever seen him (Gen.24:58 – hat tip to Randolph O. Yeager in *The Renaissance New Testament*, on this verse).
4. The **“salvation”** spoken of in v. 9 is “phase two” salvation (deliverance in time/ sanctification). The three phases are Justification (moment of faith in Christ), sanctification (duration of life and growth), and glorification (resurrection). This is the same way James uses the word “salvation” (Jam.1:21; 2:14; 5:20).
5. This clarifies what Peter means by **“this salvation”** of which **“the prophets have inquired and searched carefully”**, v.10-11. Eternal salvation came the same way for Old Testament saints as for us (Rom.4:3; Gal.3:6, 16). However, the sanctification phase for them was according to the Mosaic covenant (Gal.3:21-29; Heb.3:1-6; 8:1-6). When the prophets spoke of the New Covenant (Isa.42:1-13; Jer.31:31-34; Eze.36:24-27) they were perplexed concerning **“what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ was indicating”** as they prophesied of **“the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”** This refers not to the glories of the Kingdom age, but of those who would live in the Church age, which remained to them a “mystery” (Eph.3:1-13; Col.1:26-27).
6. God revealed to them that **“Not to themselves, but to us, they were ministering”**, v.12. We are the *“people yet to be created”* (Psa.102:18) spoken of by David. Even Simeon realized that he would not see these things fulfilled (Luk.2:26-32). So much greater are our provisions than those of O.T. saints, that **“angels desire to look into”** what God is doing in the church age. The church is a living Bible Seminary for the angelic realm (Eph.3:10)! The phrase implies a stooping down with intense interest and attention.

Equipped to Overcome

1Peter 1:13-21

He then urges them (and us) to gird themselves mentally for action, as obedient children, for the purpose of practical sanctification.

Now we come to the outward expression of our **love** for Jesus Christ (v.8) as we demonstrate it toward our fellow believers (v.22). In v.21 and 22 faith, hope, and love are brought together, as in Rom.5:1-5 (1Co.13:13; Col.1:4-5; 1Th.1:3; 5:8).

1. The participle **“gird up the loins of your mind”** carries the weight of a daily command, v.13. The image is of a servant preparing to work in the field, or of a man preparing for a long journey (Exo.12:11), or of a runner preparing for his race (Heb.12:1). When we get to 4:1 we will have the same principle

- applied in a military sense. We approach the task of daily sanctification as we **“rest (our) hope fully upon the grace”** that will be revealed when Jesus Christ returns for us (Tit.2:13). That grace includes a resurrection body, eternal inheritance (1:4), and whatever eternal reward we have gained (2Tim.4:6-8; Jam.1:12; Rev.22:12). **Note:** The mind can be used in rationalism (philosophy), empiricism (science), or faith. Only when faith leads the way can the other two systems be accurate. True faith is objective, based on revelation, and is evidence-based, due to prophecy.
2. We are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and we all share an inheritance (v.4-5). However, we can gain additional reward, such as crowns, and become *“joint heirs with Christ”* (Rom.8:16-18). To do this we must become **“obedient children”**, v.14. This requires **“not conforming”** (Rom.12:1-2) to this present evil world in **“lust (and) ignorance”** (see 4:1-5).
 3. The call to **“be holy, for I am holy”**, v.16-16 (Lev.11:44-45), involves cleansing from sin (Joh.13:10; 2Ti.2:20-22; 1Jo.1:9; 2:1-2), and devotion to God in service (Rom.12:3-8; 1Cor.12:7; 1Pe.4:10-11). Our “calling” implies a divine purpose for our lives. That purpose is summarized as “the will of God (4:2).
 4. The knowledge that the Father **“judges according to each one’s work”** (Psa.62:12; Rom.2:6) ought to cause us to **“conduct (ourselves)...in fear”**, v.17. Peter is talking about living in reverence of our Heavenly Father. This is born out of gratitude for the great price that was paid on the cross for our so-great salvation, and the burning desire to be pleasing to Him (Col.1:10; 1Th.2:4; 1Jo.3:22)..
 5. In v.18-19 contrasts the perishing treasures of this world with the eternal treasure of **“the precious blood of Christ”**. This term includes the totality of our Lord’s sacrifice on the cross, which included His spiritual death on our behalf (Isa.53:12; Rom.5:12; 6:23). The word **“redeemed”** is *lutroo*, and speaks of the payment of a slave price, by which he is set free (Luk.24:21; Tit.2:14). This liberation breaks the power of inherent sinful **“conduct received...from your fathers”** (see Eze.18:19-23). The phrase **“as of a lamb without blemish”** would immediately recall to these Jewish believers the Passover lamb (Exo.12:3-11).
 6. In the eternal plan of God Jesus Christ was **“foreordained before the foundation of the world”**, to be the Savior of men, v.20 (Rev.13:8). His coming into history was at the perfect time (Gal.4:4-6).
 7. Through faith in Jesus Christ we **“believe in God who raised Him from the dead”** (Psa.2:7-8; 110:1-4). As Jesus said in Joh.14:6 *“No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* How interesting to see that just as Paul links **“faith...hope...and love”** in Rom.5:1-5, so Peter does here in v.21-22. **Note:** For the young believer “faith...hope...and love” (v.21-22, cf.1:4, 5, 8) are the foundational qualities on which spiritual growth and maturity are built.
 1. Faith is focused on the teaching of the word of God (Heb.11:1, 3, 6).
 2. Hope holds fast to the promises of God for the future (Heb.6:19-20).
 3. Love is the “kindergarten” of the school of Christ (2Co.5:14-15).

The Anchor of our Souls

1Peter 1:22-25

Here we are reminded that our new birth comes through the ever-abiding word of God, and is aimed at a life transformed from self-indulgence to sacrificial love of our fellow believers.

Only by clinging to, learning and applying God's word on a daily basis, can we find the strength and stability of having the word of God as the anchor of our souls (Heb.6:13-20).

1. In v.22-23 Peter brings us to the climax of this chapter. To put this in logical sequence, because we **"have been born again"** by **"obeying the truth"** (ie. the gospel message) our souls have been once for all **"purified...through the Spirit"**. The work of the Spirit in the life of the Christian is first of all to obey Jesus' new commandment, *"love one another; as I have loved you."* (Joh.13:34). It is the power of the indwelling Spirit that makes it possible (Gal.5:22-23) for us to **"love one another fervently with a pure heart"**. This is a love that is even greater than that of the second great commandment (Lev.19:18; Joh.13:34).
2. Here, Peter links our new birth to the effect of **"the word of God which lives and abides forever"**. In quoting Isa.40:6-8 Peter reminds us that *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (Joh.3:6). But, **"the word of the Lord endures forever"**. As we live in obedience to God's word, our thoughts, words and actions in this life will also live forever (the true meaning of 1Joh.2:17).
3. In v.25 It is interesting that **"word"** here is *rhema*, the spoken word. In v.23 it is *logos*, the written word. When the written word of God is spoken, in the power of the Spirit, **"the word which by the gospel was preached to you"**, then that witness, or Bible class, will also endure forever. Peter will touch on this again in 4:11 *"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God."* In other words, stick to the written word of God when you teach!

Summary

In this first chapter Peter encourages the immature believer to find stability in suffering by focusing on four great truths.

1. We live under the providential care of God, v.1-3.
2. We have a sure and certain eternal inheritance, v.4-5.
3. The potential of eternal reward, v.6-12.
4. The power formula of faith, hope, and love, v.21-25.

In this first chapter we are introduced to the crucial issue of mental attitude. This is developed through the book as follows.

1. The girded mind, 1:13.

2. The servant mind, 2:18-19.
3. The one (single) mind, 3:8.
4. The armed (warrior) mind, 4:1.
5. The willing/eager mind, 5:2.

In this focus on mental attitude, First Peter is similar to Philipians, which also breaks down according to out mind-set.

1. The single mind, 1:21, 27.
2. The servant mind, 2:5.
3. The spiritual mind, 3:16.
4. The stable mind, 4:8.

In Scripture it is clear that the old sayings “attitude is everything”, and “your attitude determines your altitude” are so true

1Peter Chapter Two

Peter now advances his argument to include **unjust sufferings** (2:19). He is now addressing the next stage of our spiritual growth, that of what we might call an adolescent believer, or the “*young men*” of 1Jo.2:13-14. Beyond the everyday tests and trials we face, there are times we will also suffer wrongfully, as the world and the fallen realm attacks us for our faith.

God’s Spiritual Household

1Peter 2:1-8

Here his argument advances to the need for spiritual growth by “the pure milk of the word (Heb.5:12).

By understanding the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the “cornerstone...and stone of stumbling”, we see the cross as the point of separation for all men (1Cor.15:22).

1. In v.1-3 there are three requirements for spiritual growth. To put them in logical sequence is helpful: first, we must be born again: **“If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious”**. This same figure is used in Heb.6:5 for receiving the gospel and the regeneration that follows. Those who say this is “to taste” without receiving are in error, as the very same word is used of the saving work of Jesus; *“that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man.”* (Heb.2:9).

Next there is the **“laying aside of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.”** Until one becomes a *“new creature in Christ”* (2Cor.5:17), and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:9-11; 1Cor.3:16-17), there can be no victory over sin. We **“lay aside”** these things every time we confess our sins for cleansing (1Jo.1:9), receive the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18), and choose to *“walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”* (Gal.5:16). Any attempt to overcome sin in the energy of the flesh is doomed to failure (Rom.7:14-8:4). The verb tense here reminds us

that the *“laying aside”* of sinful conduct must always precede a hunger for the word of God. Sins of any kind harden the soul to delight in God’s word.

Now that we are born again, and understand the necessity of confession and reliance on the Spirit of God, we are able **“as newborn babes (to) desire the pure milk of the word”**. The word “desire” speaks of intensive craving for the word (Psa.42:1) which he just spoke of in 1:24-25. This strong appetite for the word is a spiritual *“diligence”* which we alone can *“add to (our) faith”* (2Pe.1:5, 10). We could call this strong spiritual motivation. It is at this point we begin to grow from the milk to the meat of the word, as we approach spiritual maturity (Heb.5:12-14). Those who fail to crave hearing and reading the word of God will always remain *“dull of hearing”* (Heb.5:12).

“That you may grow thereby” gives us the result of consistent feeding on God’s word, and the potential for every believer. The word used here (*auxano*) speaks of the natural steady growth of a healthy plant. Peter uses the same word in ending his second epistle (2Pe.3:18). The theme of his writings is **grow up!**

Note: James gives us precisely this same formula (Jam.1:18-22), but his emphasis is on becoming *“doers of the word, and not hearers only”*.

2. This spiritual growth is built on the finished work of Christ and our function as maturing members of His household, v.4-5. **“Coming to Him”** speaks of a continuous, daily practice of active fellowship and communion. It is the idea of drawing near found in Heb.4:16 and 10:22. In order to grow up into maturity, and to become a doer of the word, the believer must make the daily decision to feed on and apply God’s word to life. God will not do this for you automatically. It requires repeated decisions and spiritual discipline. It is this that separates the perpetual infants of the church from the mature saints. As the **“living stone”** He becomes to us what the Rock in the wilderness was to the Exodus generation (Exo.17:6; Num.20:8; 1Cor.10:4), a source of daily supply of the *“water of life”* (Joh.7:37-38; Isa.55:1-3). **“Rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God”**. To us He is the **“living stone”** (v.4), to God He is the **“cornerstone”** (v.6-7), but to those who reject Him He becomes **“a stone of stumbling and rock of offense (v.8)”**. The word “rejected” is very intensive, and means to first examine, and then to thrust away as useless. This is what every unbeliever does to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because we share His life, we are also **“living stones”** that **“are being built up (into) a spiritual house.”** The idea here is not just that of a building, but of an effective household (Heb.3:1, 6). In the household of the ancient world, every member had a part to play and a work to do. If we fail to do our part, we cease to be an active member of the household. What is our role in the household of God? We are **“a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”** We will see more on

this topic in v.9. For now we must recognize that every believer, every child of God, is given three ministries to perform as a member of His household.

The three ministries of every believer

- Priesthood – the ministry of effective prayer (1Pet.2:5-9; Jam.5:16; Eph.5:18).
- Ambassadorship – our witness to those who are lost (Mat.5:13-16; 2Co.5:14-21; 1Pet.3:15).
- Ministry – the use of our personal spiritual gift to edify the body of Christ (Rom.12:3-8; 1Cor.12:4, 7; 1Pet.4:10-11).
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Note: It is not by accident that Peter deals with these, in order, in this epistle. In Ch.2 we have **priesthood** (v.5,9), in Ch.3 we have **ambassadorship** (3:15), and in Ch.4 we have gifted **ministry** (4:10-11). Since the epistles of Peter are primers for spiritual growth, in obedience to Jesus' command (Joh.21:15-17), we would expect a logical development of the way of spiritual growth. We have these same three areas of ministry in the three exhortations of Heb.10:22-24.

Point: Believers who fail to grow into these ministries are not spiritually mature, and are failing to fulfill the will of God (calling) for their lives. We need to grow up and be effective on the battlefield of life (Eph.6:10-18).

3. Those who "*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (2Pe.3;18) will inevitably come into conflict with the unbelieving world, v.6-8.

"Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious..." The cornerstone was the guide and standard for the dimensions of the whole building. Anything that did not fit according to the cornerstone was cast out as useless. Note that Jesus is the **"Elect One"** of God (Isa.42:1). He is God's standard by which all men will be judged. No one is elect unless they are "*In Him*" (Eph.1:4). We are only "elect" because we share in the work He finished as the chosen One of God. The words "elect", "chosen" and "called" in 1Pet.1:1-2, 15; 2:4, 6, 9, 21; 3:9; 5:10; 2Pet.1:3, 10 all come from the same root word. In every case, it carries the idea of "called for a purpose" as in Rom.8:28. Just as the Father's purpose for Jesus was redemptive, through the work of the cross, even so we share in that redemptive purpose, as we fulfill the plan of God for our lives, in the three ministries mentioned above. **"And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."** Those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the gift of eternal life will never be disappointed!

"Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious." In other words, we see Him for who He is in God's sight (v.6). We share the Father's estimate of the

value of Christ. **“But to those who are disobedient...they stumble, being disobedient.”** It is important to connect v.7&8 here, because two words are used for “disobedient”. The first is *apisteo*, and means “unbelieving”, the second is from *apeitho*, meaning unpersuaded, unconvinced. According to the *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Rienecker/Rogers) “the word carries a strong sense of ‘to refuse to believe’”. In simple terms, they remain unbelievers because they refuse to believe the gospel message. They **“rejected”** Jesus Christ because they do not believe God’s estimate of His eternal value for their souls. This is why...**“They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.”** There is no idea of predestination to condemnation here. They were not appointed by God to unbelief, but because they rejected Christ they are appointed to a life of stumbling over the **“Rock of offense”**. Just mention Jesus Christ the next time you are in a social setting, and you will see people start “stumbling” because of their unbelief.

A Royal Priesthood

1Peter 2:9-17

The first area of ministry (one of three, Heb.10:19-25) for the growing believer is that of a royal priest, in the ministry of prayer and praise.

When we begin to meet persecution, our first line of defense is prayer. We need to learn to go to God and ask for strength, wisdom, and perseverance in the face of the world hostility (Act.4:23-31). Then, secondly, we need to praise God for His faithfulness to His word and to us (Act.16:25). Prayer and praise are the offerings of the believer priest.

1. In v.9-10 we are identified as a **“royal priesthood”**, because we serve under the Lord Jesus, who is our High Priest *“according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Psa.110:4; Heb.5:6; 6:20; 7:21; 8:1). As royal priests, we are “kings and priests” (Rev.5:9-10). The uniqueness of the Church age believer is further declared in that we are **“a chosen generation...called...out of darkness into His marvelous light”**. While there is great privilege in our standing in Christ, the emphasis here is that this also carries great personal responsibility. **“That you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you.”** Our commission here is very similar to that given Paul on the road to Damascus (Act.26:17-18). Certainly we are not apostles as he was, but we share the same goals as ambassadors of Christ (2Cor.5:18-21).

Though we, as gentiles from many nations, were **“once...not a people”** (see Deu.32:21; Rom.10:19-20), by God’s grace we **“are now the people of God”**. And because we **“have now obtained mercy”**, we are under obligation to grow up and become conformed to the image of Christ (Rom.12:1-2).

2. In v.11-17 we learn that while we are royal priests in the household of God, we remain **“sojourners and pilgrims”** in this world. This world is not our home, we are, along with Abraham, looking *“for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* (Heb.11:10). Those who are “aliens” are always under suspicion, and the inclination is to always suspect the worst of them. Therefore Peter exhorts us to three defensive postures to overcome this natural malice.
- Abstain from fleshly lusts.
 - Have honorable conduct.
 - Submit yourselves.

“Abstain...which wage war against the soul.” The word “abstain” means to hold yourself back, to resist the lure of something. The phrase “wager war” is from *strateuomai*, to carry on a military campaign. We get “strategy” from this word. The military analogy will be resumed in 4:1.

The first posture is that of purity of lifestyle, v.11-12 (Rom.8:12-14). **“Having your conduct honorable among the gentiles.”** Just as a lifestyle of private lusts wages a continual warfare against our own souls, even so dishonorable conduct publicly among the unsaved gives even more cause for slander, maligning, and persecution. Our witness by word must be backed up by the **“good works which they observe.”** The alignment of our words and works will inevitably lead some to Christ, with the result that **“they (will) glorify God in the day of visitation.”** That is, that when Christ returns they will be glorifying Him for His grace (Mat.5:16; 9:8; Phi.2:15).

The second posture is that of humble submission, v.13-14. **“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.”** This submission has obvious limitations, as illustrated by Daniel and his three friends (Dan. Ch.1, 3, 6), by the early apostles (Act. Ch.4-5), and by Paul and Silas (Act.16). The simple rule for Christian civil-disobedience is that we do not obey commands to do something contrary to what Scripture forbids, nor do we cease to do what Scripture commands. Furthermore, all human government is delegated authority from God (Rom.13:1-7) **“for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.”** When governments reverse this order, and praise that which is evil, and punish all who do good, that government has abrogated all right to obedience, for they are in a state of rebellion against God. All such governments, as in America today, will inevitably suffer the just judgment of God.

The third and final posture is that of liberated men, v.15-16. **“The will of God”** is always expressed in our lives by **“doing good”**. The good spoken of in v.14-15 always refers to the production of Divine good through obedience to the word of God in the filling and the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:15-21; Gal.5:16, 18, 22-23). As Paul says in Gal.5:23, *“against such there is no law.”*

He does not mean that corrupt and evil leaders will not seek to pass laws against Christian conduct, but that when they do, the authority of the word of God declares those laws “null and void”. **“As free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.”** Free men seek to liberate others. No man is truly free who can bear to see the slavery of others. Therefore freedom places on the liberated man a great duty and obligation. We use our freedom to liberate others (Rom.1:14-17). To the extent that we are able, in obedience to the Spirit, we show **“honor...love”** to men, as it is due (Rom.13:7-8) but always **“fear (reverence to) God”**.

The Flock of the Great Shepherd

1Peter 2:18-25

As “sojourners and pilgrims” (v.11, cf. 1:1-2), we are to live in the world, enduring “unjust suffering” (v.19), by following the example of Christ (v.19-25).

Note: The ability to equate the cross of Christ (v.6-8), to our “unjust sufferings” is to see how God uses the evils of this world to accomplish His redemptive purposes in and through us as, as we engage in prayer for those who persecute us.

“We serve a King the world did not crown, and look for a kingdom the world cannot overthrow.” – unknown

1. V.18-21 **“Servants be submissive”** introduces the theme of submission/surrender that runs to the end of chapter 3. Here we come to the concept of **“suffering wrongfully”** (v.19), or what we might call unjust suffering. In society, in work and in school, or on an athletic team, we will find people who are **“good and gentle, but also...harsh.”** We do not have the option of ordering our conduct according to theirs. This is nothing more than situational ethics. It is God, through His word, and not changing circumstances, that ought to guide our conduct. We are to make our decisions and order our conduct **“because of conscience toward God.”** In other words we live so as to please Him (2Co.5:9-10).

So as far as God is concerned, there is no **“credit...when you are beaten for your faults, (and) you take it patiently.”** There will be no eternal reward for any believer who is an insufferable jerk, who then patiently endures the natural social backlash. The reward will be given to that believer **“when you do good and suffer...this is commendable before God.”** This is what we can call unjust suffering due to the believer reflecting the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we grow in grace (2:1) and become more and more conformed to His image (Rom.8:29; 12:1; 2Co.3:18) those who reject Christ (v.7-8) will take out their hatred for Him on us. This is the beginning of true persecution.

“For to this you were called....that you should follow His steps.” The idea of **“called...calling”** in Peter’s epistles is that we are called to fulfill the providential plan of God for our lives (1Pe.1:1-2, 15; 2:4, 6, 9, 21; 2Pe.1:10; see Rom.8:28). God wants every believer to grow up in faith, become mature, to be effective in three areas of service (priesthood, ambassadorship, and gifted ministry), and to reflect the character of our Lord and Savior. In 1Jo.2:6 we are told, *“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”* If we choose daily to follow Him, it will inevitably lead to persecution. *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”* (Luk.9:23). **“Leaving us an example”** uses a word that speaks of a model given to a school child, by which they learn their “A B C’s”.

2. V.22-24 give us a synopsis of the life of Jesus Christ. Here we are given three distinctive marks of the life of Christ. It was sinless, it was faithful, and it was redemptive.

“Who committed no sin” reminds us of the purity of our Lord’s life. Neither evil thought, nor deceitful word, nor sinful act ever tarnished His life. While we cannot hope to measure up to this standard perfectly, we have been given provision to purify ourselves (2Tim.2:20-21). Daily spiritual washing takes place as we examine ourselves (1Co.11:28) confess known sins (1Jo.1:9), and apply the *“water of the word”* (Eph.5:26) in the power of the Spirit (Gal.5:16). Often our spiritual apathy and ineffectiveness can be traced back to the failure of these simple daily disciplines, because we forget the exhortation, *“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”* (Gal.6:9, see Heb.6:11-12).

“When He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” In His humanity, He *“made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men...He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”* (Phi.2:7-8). Jesus, as a man, lived by faith in His heavenly Father. One of the taunts thrown at Him on the cross was, *“He trusted in God”* Mat.27:43. When we commit ourselves unconditionally into the care of the Father, we have no need to vindicate ourselves, for He will vindicate us in due time (1Pe.5:6-7).

Not only was our Lord’s life one of absolute purity, and of incomparable humility, but it was redemptive in its effect. **“who Himself bore our sins...by whose stripes you were healed.”** It may seem that this aspect of His life is too great for us to **“follow in His steps”**. However, the Bible makes it clear that our lives are also to have a redemptive quality, as we join in the completion of His work. We are the body of Christ, and through us He continues to accomplish His work of saving souls. He has committed to each one of us a part to play in His work of reconciliation (2Co.5:18-21).

3. Finally, in v.25, we are given the secret to the power of the Christian life, to effective service, and to faithful enduring of persecution. **“For you were like sheep going astray.”** This would be especially true to the Jews to whom Peter is writing. They had been among *“the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* (Mat.10:6; 15:24). However, the principle applies to us as well, for He said, *“other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them I must also bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”* (Joh.10:16).

“But now have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.” As our Shepherd He guides us into the fullness and blessings of God (Psa.23; Eze.34:23-24), and as our Overseer, He superintends our provision, and provides correction and restoration (Heb.13:20-21). In His saving work on the cross, He is the good shepherd Who lays down His life for the sheep (Jo.10:11, 14-17). As our High Priest seated at the Father’s right hand, He is our intercessor (Rom.8:34) and our advocate (1Jo.2:1-2). As Paul says in the middle of his amazing victory song, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom.8:31).

Summary

Chapter two encourages the new believer to begin growing up spiritually (2:1-2). Here the believer needs to identify and accept the first area of Christian ministry, that of prayer as a believer priest (v.5-10). The pilgrim mindset (v.11) calls for a focus on these qualities.

1. Honorable conduct as a witness, 2:12.
2. Submission to governing authorities, 2:13-18.
3. A willingness to suffer unjustly, in the imitation of Christ, 2:19-25.

1Peter Chapter Three

The next level of suffering faced by the growing believer is that of **suffering for righteousness sake** (3:14, 17). This level of suffering is the experience of the believer who is growing into spiritual maturity. Here the suffering is directed toward those who are actively manifesting the righteousness of Jesus Christ to the world.

Christ Reflected in Marriage

3:1-7

This chapter moves us toward spiritual maturity, with the first testing ground being that of marriage.

The health and vigor of the local church will always reflect the condition of Christian marriages in that church. Satan knows that the defeat of the church is dependent on the destruction of marriage. The wife is to submit to the husband, even as he is to be in submission to Jesus Christ, his Head (1Cor.11:1-3).

1. In v.1-6 we have **instructions to the Christian wife**. “**Wives, likewise**” refers back to 2:18, picking up on the idea of submission. “**Be submissive**” The wife is not a “slave” to the husband, but a “suitable helper” (Gen.2:18; Eph.5:22-24; 1Co.11:3). When husbands “**do not obey the word**”, either as an unbeliever, or as a disobedient believer (Gen.12:10-20; 1Sam.25), they “**may be won by the conduct of their wives**”. The wife can have far more effect by her deeds than by her words.

This conduct is “**chaste** (*hagnos* – pure, clean) and **reverent**” (godly fear). The word “**adornment**” comes from *kosmeo* (see v.5), from which we get the word cosmetic. The same word is used by Paul in Tit.2:10, where he says that our conduct should “*adorn (beautify) the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*” The far greater beauty the wife ought to cultivate is “**the hidden person...incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.** (Rom.2:29; 1Th.5:23).” That which is prized by God should be eagerly sought by men.

Every Christian woman should look to the example of the great women of Scripture “**who trusted in God**”, and as a result “**adorned themselves being submissive to their own husbands**”. Sarah is selected as one example, who “**obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.**” This refers to the incident in Gen.18:12, a major turning point in Sarah’s life of faith. When Sarah realized that the strange Visitor knew her inner doubts, she realized that she was in the presence of The Lord, and from that moment she turned from doubt to faith. As a result “*By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised*” (Heb.11:11). Her spiritual transformation began with her attitude of submission to her husband.

The Christian wife becomes a **daughter** of Sarah initially by her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal.4:28, 31). However, practically, she reveals her family likeness through her character. The “**good**” here speaks of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23). In v.2 Peter instructs the wife to mingle **fear** with her conduct, but here to “**not be afraid with any terror**”. This is explained in that v.2 is speaking of reverence to God, whereas v.6 speaks of being fearful of her husband. The word “**terror**” is only used here in the N.T. The idea is that the fear of the Lord always overcomes the fear of man (Psa.56:11; 118:6; Heb.13:5-6).

2. In v.7 we have **instructions to the Christian husband**. “**Husbands likewise**” includes the attitude of submission from 2:18 (Eph.5:21). The word “**husbands**” is *andres*, used for “nobleman”. Though brief these instructions are so all-encompassing. There are two blessings a husband can confer upon his wife. They are “**understanding**” and “**honor**”. The first means to be considerate of the dependent nature of the wife, “**as...the weaker vessel.**” This in no way implies inferiority in the wife. It is simply a

statement of fact. Even more so in the ancient world (and in the third world today), the wife depends on the husband for provision and protection. More than this, she depends on him for spiritual leadership, emotional support, and sexual fulfillment (1Co.7:1-5). The husband is to love the wife as Christ loves and sacrifices Himself for the church (Eph.5:25).

In the case of “**honor**”, it means to recognize that husbands and wives are “**heirs together of the grace of life.**” This could refer back to the eternal inheritance spoken of in 1:4-5, in the case where both husband and wife are believers. It is also true that life itself is a gift from God and ought to be enjoyed together (Act.17:24-28; Rom.16:3-4). If the husband fails to lead spiritually in the marriage, it is because he is not living in fellowship with God, and the result is his “**prayers (will be) hindered**”.

Christ Reflected in the Church

3:8-17

From marriage we move to our conduct in the local church.

“These things I write to you...so that you may know how to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness...” – 1Tim.3:14-16

Those who grow into maturity, the “one mind” of Christ (v.8,) will inevitably “suffer for righteousness sake” (v.14). These sufferings are designed by God to open doors of witness (v.15).

1. **The mind of the church**, v.8-9. The “**one mind**” here speaks of a unity of attitude toward one another, based on our unity in Christ (Eph.4:3-6). This will lead us on to the “armed mind” of 4:1 (Phi.2:5). Here the attitude is expressed in sympathy, brotherly love (*philadelphia*), compassion, and courtesy. These positive qualities are in contrast to the negatives of v.9, as well as in 1Co.6:1-11; Gal.5:14-15 and Jam.4:1-6. Bickering and slandering in the local church are evidence of self-centered people. “**You were called to this**” once again reminds us that God has called us to fulfill His purpose for our lives (see notes on 2:21). When we give “**blessing**” instead of cursing, we show that we are heirs of the blessing of Christ (Mat.5:43-45; Luk.6:27-31), and that we are living by the filling of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23; Eph.5:16, 18). Verses 8-9 are now amplified in v.10-12. Our eternal inheritance includes both...
 - A. Unconditional inheritance (1Pe.1:4-5).
 - B. Conditional inheritance as reward (Rom.2:6, 11; 1Co.3:11-15).

Note: Peter places great emphasis on our “calling” (v.9, cf. 1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9) as being linked to Christ’s election by the Father (2:4; ,6; see also 2Pet.1:10-11), because we are united with Him in His redemptive plan. In the third chapter, we move from our **sanctification** in Ch.1, to the ministry of **prayer**

in Ch.2, and now to our ambassadorship through **witness** (3:15).

2. **The motive of the church**, v.10-12. Peter quotes Psa.34:12-16 in support of his instruction in v.8-9. This is easily broken down into three goals...
 - The personal desire to love life, v.10.
As we saw in v.7, life, with all its tests and trials, is a gift of God's grace. God intends that we enjoy all the blessings of life, but also that we live so as to lay up treasure in heaven (Mat.6:19-20; 1Tim.6:17-19). If we desire to **"love life and see good days"**, then we must choose to live life according to God's way. The chief means to this end is for a man to **"refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit."** Why is this so important? Because *"If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect (mature) man, able also to bridle the whole body"* (Jam.3:2b, 1:26). This is the kind of man Nathaniel the disciple of Jesus was (Joh.1:47).
 - The public desire to seek peace with others, v.11.
The mature believer who is able to control the tongue is also able to **"turn away from evil and do good"**, as James said. Every day we face countless decisions, and every one has the potential for evil or good. The man who is at peace with God (Rom.5:1), and at peace within himself, is then able to **"seek peace and pursue it."** The two commands here suggest a diligent search for something of great value. This is why Jesus pronounced His blessing on those who are *"peacemakers"* (Mat.5:9). The mature believer is like a healing balm in a world that is filled with envy, malice, and bitterness.
 - The preeminent desire to please God, v.12.
Here David uses anthropomorphism to make his point. To be under **"the eyes of the Lord"** suggests being under His providential care (Gen.16:13; 1Pe.2:25). **"The righteous"** spoken of here refers to those who are living in obedience to God's word, or abiding in Christ (Joh.15:1-10). What greater motivation could we have to walk by faith than that **"His ears are open to their prayers"**? Disobedience to God is a hindrance to our prayers (v.7). Every day each and every believer has the choice of living in fellowship and in obedience, under the watchful eye and attentive ear of the heavenly Father, or of the frightening alternative. **"But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."** The face of the Lord signifies favor and blessing (Psa.13:1; 22:24; 27:8-9; 44:23-24; 67:1; 80:3, etc.)
3. **The message of the church**, v.13-17.
God allows suffering in the Christian life for a number of good reasons. It works to refine our faith (Ch.1), it helps us grow up spiritually (Ch.2) and it provides opportunity for us to be witnesses of God's grace to those yet

unsaved. All of God's works have the redemption of souls and the glory of God as the ultimate goals.

As a general rule, **"Who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good."** However, in the case of those who hate God and persecute Christians, **"even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed."** Those who persecute do not realize they are actually conferring blessing on us (Mat.5:10-12; Luk.6:22-23). It is a greater thing to suffer for righteousness than to suffer injustice (2:19), or to simply bear up under the trials of life (1:6). We have now moved into the realm of spiritual maturity, where the life of the believer in reflecting the character of Christ is evident to the world. The light of Christ is shining, and cannot be hid (Mat.5:14-16; Luk.8:16; Joh.8:12; 2Co.4:6-7; 1Jo.1:7). We need fear no persecutor, for...

*"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"*
Psa.27:1

Therefore we are commanded, **"Do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled"** (Isa.8:12, see Mat.10:28).

We **"sanctify the Lord God"** in our hearts, or as I prefer the alternate rendering, **"sanctify Christ as Lord"** in our hearts, means essentially to put Him on the throne of your life. It involves unconditional surrender to His word, and to the inner working of the Holy Spirit's guiding presence. Only when this condition prevails will we **"always be ready** (*hetoimos* – eager, equipped) **to give a defense...with meekness and fear** (reverence)". Meekness is highly prized by God (Mat.5:5) for it means "power under control". It is epitomized in the earthly life of our Lord, who said, *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle (meek) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* (Mat.11:29). The word translated "defense" is from *apologia*, and means a reasonable and logical testimony (Act.22:1; 25:16).

Note: No one is going to ask about our hope if it is not visible in our lives.

In v.16-17 we learn that if we maintain **"a good conscience"** (Heb.13:18) before God, all accusations of being **"evildoers"** will only bring shame to our accusers. The apostle Paul was accused of being an evildoer (2Ti.2:9), but his strength and comfort was, *"If we endure (suffer with Him), we shall also reign with Him."* (2Ti.2:12). The phrase **"if it is the will of God"** is critical (2:15; 4:2, 19). It indicates that our persecution was provoked by **"doing good"**, in obedience to the word of God (2:19-21).

Christ reflected in the ministry of Noah

3:18-22

Salvation in Christ is compared to deliverance in Noah's ark. Christ's victory over the fallen realm is the assurance of our ultimate exaltation.

The record of Noah's ministry is used four times in the New Testament, in each case to teach a different lesson.

- In Mat.24:36-42 it illustrates conditions prior to the second coming of Christ.
- In Heb.11:6-7 it teaches us to believe God regarding things not yet seen.
- In 1Pe.3:20-21 we see a parallel between deliverance in the ark, and our security "in Christ" because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- In 2Pe.2:4-5, 9 the flood of Noah gives us assurance that God's nature assures a future deliverance for those who believe, and a sure judgment of those who persist in their unbelief.

Thus from the story of Noah we can learn the doctrines of eschatology, soteriology, pneumatology, and Theology proper.

This passage has confused believers throughout the ages. It is most helpful to understand that Peter is building his case on two parallels.

1. **The "once for all" parallel, v.18-20.**

"For Christ also suffered once for sins" is our first hint. The word translated "suffered" is *apothnesko*, meaning to suffer apart. It speaks of spiritual death, separation from God. The word translated "**once**" is *hapax*, and means "once for all, never to be repeated" (Heb.9:12, 26, 28; 10:10). Be sure to note that the "**once**" of v.18 is paralleled with the "**once**" of v.20. As surely as the flood will never occur again (Gen.9:11-17), even so the judgment of the cross can never be repeated. When our Lord screamed His victory cry on the cross, "*It is finished!*" (Joh.19:30), He declared that the issue of all sins of all history was settled forever in heaven. The debt had been "paid in full". This once-for-all victory is evidenced by two magnificent results.

- **The reconciliation of sinners to God.** Unjust sinners who believe are able to stand before God free from all condemnation (Rom.8:1). The sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was vicarious and substitutionary, "**the Just for the unjust**" (2:21, 24), and had as its ultimate goal "**that He might bring us to God**", that is, reconciliation between men and God (Rom.5:6-11). That His victory was complete is evident in that He was "**put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.**" The resurrection is irrefutable proof of His victory over all sin (Rom.4:23-25; 1Co.15:1-4, 12-22).
- **The victory proclamation to the fallen realm.** During the time the body of Jesus laid in the tomb, our Lord "**went and preached to the spirits in prison (who)...were disobedient...in the days of Noah.**" It is not difficult to identify these spirits if we simply let Scripture speak.

- 1) In Gen.6:2 they are called "*the sons of God*" (bene ha elohim), a title used only four times in the O.T. (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), and always referring to angels.
- 2) Here, in 1Pe.3:19, we see they are spirits in prison, for their disobedience "**in the days of Noah**".
- 3) In 2Pe.24-5 they are called "**angels who sinned**" who are now in "**chains of darkness**", and again they are linked to Noah and the flood.
- 4) Finally, in Jude v.6 they are called, "**the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode**", and again they are "**reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.**" Paul says that we who believe will be instrumental in this judgment (1Co.6:3).

So why would Jesus "preach" to these spirits in prison? The word *kerusso*, and simply means to make a proclamation. This was a victory proclamation, for the reason these angels had invaded the human realm was to corrupt the human race so that the promised redeemer (Gen.3:15) could not come and crush the head of the serpent. (see "*Victorious Proclamation*" by R.B. Thieme; R.B. Thieme Jr. Bible Ministries). Jesus went by the Spirit into the spiritual prison of tartarus (2Pe.2:4 "hell" in the Greek) to proclaim to these fallen angels who sought to prevent His coming that He had won the victory on the cross.

2. **The type and antitype parallel, v.21-22.**

In Scripture, the word "antitype" (*antitupos*) is a word that speaks of the exact correlation between the stamp and the die. This correlation to the "**eight souls...saved through water**" is what "**now saves us**". What is that correlation? Noah and his family were "sealed" in the ark (Gen.7:16), even so we who believe are "*sealed for the day of redemption*", by the Holy Spirit (Eph.4:30; 2Co.1:22; Eph.1:13-14). This seal and security is due to "**baptism**", not of water, but of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (1Co.12:13; Act.1:5; Rom.6:3; Gal.3:27). Because by Spirit baptism we are united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom.6:3-5) we have "**the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.**" Because of Spirit baptism we are even now seated with Christ in heaven (Eph.2:5-7; Col.3:1-4). Finally, the proclamation to the fallen angels was confirmed by Jesus ascending "**into heaven and is at the right hand of God**" (Psa.110:1; Heb.1:13), **angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him** (Mat.28:18; Eph.4:8-9; Col.2:15)."

Point: Peter's main point in this argument, as it relates to our own suffering of persecution, is that just as Jesus won His victory through suffering, so may we, if we stand firm in faith.

Summary

As we grow in the likeness of Christ, the hatred of the devil's world for Jesus will be hurled against us. Our security and safeguard against this assault is found in this chapter in three areas of refuge.

1. The refuge of marriage, v.1-7.
2. The refuge of the local church, v.8-17.
3. The refuge of Christ our ark, v.18-22.

1Peter Chapter Four

An even higher form of testing is that of **sharing in the sufferings of Christ** (4:12-13). This is an evident sign that the believer has been truly conformed to the image of the Savior. The believer has now moved into the phase of a hero of the faith (Heb.11).

Spiritually Armed and Equipped

1Peter 4:1-11

Here, Peter amplifies and applies the truth of 3:18, declaring that our armor is a thing of the well-instructed spiritual mind.

Note that we have now moved into the **third ministry** of the believer, that of spiritual gifts (v.10-11).

1. The mind of Christ is our armor for the spiritual fight, v.1-6.
"Therefore, since Christ has suffered for us in the flesh." The context here refers back to 3:18. The "one mind" of 3:8 is defined in Eph.4:3-6, and is based on our positional unity. Here we move to a higher level of mental achievement/spiritual growth. **"Arm yourselves also with the same mind"**. The verb *hoplizo* occurs only here in the N.T. It is a command in the middle voice, "arm yourself" (personal responsibility). This word speaks of a seasoned warrior donning his battle armor, and includes a mind that is prepared to die in battle. It comes from the 6th century B.C., and is used by Homer in the Odyssey. The obvious allusion is to a willingness to be martyred for Christ's sake. **"He who has suffered...has ceased from sin."** Just as Christ's sufferings led to His death on the cross, and the defeat of all sins, even so we suffer, so as to come to victory over sin in our lives (1:6-9; Rom.6:6-14; 2Co.5:14-15).

In v.3-5 Peter deals with sins common among the Gentiles. **"In doing the will of the Gentiles"** identifies these as common pagan sins. While most Jewish people would avoid these sins, Peter makes it clear that many had fallen into them. **"They think it strange"** the word implies entertainment at the novelty of a thing, but also to be offended by something. The *"sojourner and pilgrim"* (2:11) is always "the other" and is mocked by the native residents.

“They will give an account to Him who is ready” indicates that God is always watching and keeping accounts (Joh.5:25-29; Act.10:42). **“To judge the living and the dead”** can be applied spiritually (1Co.15:22), or to both living and dead people. The next phrase **“the gospel was preached...to those who are dead”** suggests the first meaning. When unbelievers respond in faith to the gospel, they are **“judged according to men in the flesh”**, in other words, they suffer the judgments of men, even to persecution. **“But live according to God in the spirit”** anticipates our ultimate resurrection. This relates back to 2:12, where Gentiles who are won to faith in Christ will *“glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

2. The motive of spiritual love is the impetus for ministry in the midst of battle, v.7-11. **“The end of all things is at hand”** is simply an end times expectation (Jam.4:13-15). However, it could also have the dual implication of the fall of Jerusalem and the final destruction of Israel as a nation in 70-73 A.D. Peter may have had Jesus’ final sermon (Mat.24-25) in mind. **“Be serious and watchful in your prayers”** reminds us that while prayer is our first line of defense, the content of our prayers ought to be guided by a sober and vigilant spiritual awareness that is able to relate Scripture to external events, and pray accordingly.

“Above all things have fervent love for one another.” The word “fervent” (*ektenes*) means intense and strenuous. It means the kind of love that extends itself to the point of sacrifice. This is why **“love will cover a multitude of sins.”** The quote comes from Pro.10:12, where the antithesis is *“hatred stirs us strife, but love covers all sins.”* Those who are intolerant of the failings of others divide the body of Christ.

In the O.T. the main word for love is *ahab* which was used very generally to cover everything from family love to friendship and even intense sexual desire. In ancient Greek, the word *agape* was a general term for love. According to Kittles Dictionary of N.T. words, “Its etymology is uncertain, and its meaning weak and variable. Often it means no more than ‘to be satisfied with something.’” It was Jesus who redefined the meaning of this word in Mat.22:37-39. This new meaning was picked up by the apostle Paul, who used *agape* to define the love of God for men (Rom.5:8; 1Co.5:14) and the love produced in us by the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22). We need to distinguish the love spoken of here from mere human love. It is love of a divine quality, and is possible only to those who are filled by and walking in the Spirit (Eph.5:18; Gal.5:16, 22).

This love makes us **“hospitable to one another”**. In Heb.13:1 this implies hospitality to travelling teachers or evangelists. Here the meaning, determined by context, is different. It means to graciously accept those fellow believers whose standards and conduct may differ from our own. This leads us naturally into the importance of spiritual gifts. **“As each one has received**

a gift”, like 1Ti.4:14 and 2Ti.1:6 implies that each believer receives one spiritual gift. This is also implied in Rom.12:3-8, 1Co.12:7-11, 14-18, 29-30. **“Minister it to one another”** All spiritual gifts are intended for the edification of others in the body (1Co.12:7; 14:26). **“As good stewards”** uses the word for the most elevated of household servants. **“If any one speaks...if anyone ministers.”** Here Peter divides all gifts into either speaking or serving gifts. **“As the oracles of God...as with the ability which God supplies”** All Christian ministry is to line up with the word of God, and be empowered by the Spirit of God. **“That in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”** Self promotion and exaltation is always contrary to true spiritual motivation, which is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Present and Future Glory

1Peter 4:12-19

In the Christian warrior stage, we begin to “partake of Christ’s sufferings” (v.13).

Maximum spiritual effect and impact is now evident through the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit working in and through us (v.13-14, 19).

Note: In the stage of sharing Christ’s sufferings (v.13) we not only have maximum impact on our world, but are actively laying up eternal reward (2Tim.2:11-13).

1. V.12-14, For those believers who enter into the spiritual combat arena, the sufferings will become much more intense. **“Do not think it strange”** (4:4). The **“fiery trial”** comes to the believer who reflects the character of Christ to the world (Dan.3:25). The reaction of severe persecution will have varying degrees, **“to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings.”** This may include everything from verbal and physical abuse, to imprisonment, torture, and death. Those who merit this level of attack from the devil’s realm should **“be glad with exceeding joy”** (Mat.5:10-12; Luk.6:22-23).

Peter gives two reasons for this response. The first relates to time, **“blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”** One of the greatest temporal blessings we can receive is to grow spiritually, to become so effective in our ministry, that we are attacked from the devil’s kingdom. The second reason to rejoice in this situation is that **“when His glory is revealed”**, that is following the rapture of the church, there will be great joy at the Bema seat of Christ, as the relevant crown is received.

- The imperishable crown, for spiritual self-discipline (1Co.9:24-27).
- The crown of joy, for faithful witness to others (Phi.4:1; 1Th.2:19).
- The crown of life, for enduring trials faithfully (Jam.1:12; Rev.2:10).
- The crown of righteousness, for living expectantly (2Ti.4:6-8).
- The crown of glory, the pastors crown/faithful ministry (1Pe.5:4).

2. To **“suffer as a Christian”** means to suffer as one who reflects Jesus Christ in a hostile world. Jesus clearly warned of the cost of following Him (Luk.9:23; 14:25-33). Today we have lost the sense of what it means to count the cost of discipleship. Any believer who suffers for being a **“murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody”** will receive no blessing, no reward, but only divine discipline. This is why Peter says here, **“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.”** God judges His children in this life, for there is no judgment for us in heaven (1Co.11:31-32; Heb.12:3-11; Rom.8:1). We can escape disciplinary action from God if we judge ourselves, and keep short accounts with God (1Co.11:31; 2Ti.2:20-22; 1Jo.1:9). **“If the righteous one is scarcely saved...”** This quote from the Septuagint differs slightly from the Hebrew of Pro.11:31. The idea remains the same. God’s standard is always holiness. If believers who fall short in this life are disciplined, often severely (Psa.32, 36, 51), how could the unsaved, who have rejected the gift of Christ’s righteousness, hope to stand at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev.20:11-15)?

Summary

To share the sufferings of Christ (v.13) is called here a “fiery trial” (v.12). Peter is here anticipating severe persecutions, which are about to begin. To some degree, we share the sufferings of Christ by simply bringing Him into our daily sufferings. Here, however, we are talking about more severe afflictions. Whatever the case may be, to the degree that we enter into His sufferings, we will reign with Him in His kingdom (2Tim.2:12). Peter gives the following counsel for facing these trials.

1. Arm your mind in readiness to do the will of God (v.1-6).
2. Be disciplined and serious in your prayer life (v.7).
3. Demonstrate your love for one another by your gifted service (v.8-11).
4. Learn to rejoice in being counted worthy to suffer for His sake (v.12-19; Act.5:41).

1Peter Chapter Five

In this chapter we reach the highest level of suffering in the personal spiritual attack of the devil himself (5:8-9). This is the level of attack illustrated in the lives of men like Job, David, and Daniel and the prophets, and women like Eve, Esther and Mary Magdalene.

Warning to Spiritual Leaders

1Peter 5:1-4

This level is especially pertinent to spiritual leaders. This is because the equipping of believers to face the devil’s attacks falls to them.

These attacks can come in the form of severe temptations, intense personal trials, and persecution to the point of death.

1. It is important to see that three titles are used interchangeably for the same office of the pastor. **“Elder...Shepherd...Overseer”** speak of three aspects of the pastoral ministry (v.1-2). These same three titles are used in Act.20:17, 28. Today these are often divided in the churches, often with disastrous results (I know of ministries that have appointed an “overseer” over the pastor. This is totally unbiblical!).
 - A. **“Elder”** is a term of authority, and calls for wise judgment.
 - B. **“Shepherd”** speaks of watch-care and protection of the flock.
 - C. **“Overseer”** indicates the task of mentoring and supervision of the spiritual lives of God’s people.
2. Those like Peter who share in Christ’s sufferings as leaders can look forward to also sharing in **“the glory that will be revealed”** (v.1, 4). Endurance in the trials of this life will be graciously recompensed in the eternal kingdom (Rom.8:18; 2Co.4:16-18).
3. Faithful ministry is a combination of many qualities (v.2-3). The command here is to **“shepherd the flock of God”**. The ideal of the Good Shepherd is found in Psa.23, and was the blueprint David sought to follow in his shepherd days. Take note of the following contrasts.
 - A. **“Not by compulsion but willingly”**. The first danger to an under-shepherd (pastor) is to become grudging under the heavy burden of ministry. To be called by God into the ministry is an incredible and undeserved privilege. There ought always be an attitude of eagerness to serve well the Lord who includes us in His care for the flock.
 - B. **“Not for dishonest gain but eagerly”**. The thought of financial gain should never motivate the true and faithful minister. While the Bible declares that those who teach and lead ought to be recompensed for their service (Mat.10:10; Luk.10:7; 1Ti.5:17), money should never motivate the minister of God’s word.
 - C. **“Nor as lords...but being examples to the flock”**. The phrase used here in the Greek means to dominate or to subjugate others. No pastor can be an example to other Christians unless he is following the example of Jesus Christ (2:21-25).
4. Jesus, as the **“Chief Shepherd”** will personally reward those who are faithful with a **“crown of glory”** (v.4). This is often called the pastors crown.
 - A. The Lord Jesus is the **Good Shepherd** who lays down His life for the sheep (Psa.22; Joh.10:11, 14).
 - B. Jesus is the **Great Shepherd** who provides all the needs of the sheep (Psa.23; Heb.13:20).
 - C. Finally, He is the **Chief Shepherd** who will come with reward to those who serve Him faithfully (Psa.24; 1Pe.5:4; Rev.22:12).

Note: See the five crowns under 4:12-14.

Preparation for Personal Satanic Attack

1Peter 5:5-11

Humility before God (v.5-6) results in victory over the devil (v.8-9) and power among men (v.10)!

We now enter into the “Hero of faith” territory of the spiritual life. Our ability to “**resist (the devil) steadfast in the faith**” is the result of steady and consistent spiritual growth over a prolonged period of time. “**That He may exalt you in due time**” (v.6) reminds us that there is no crown without the cross.

In this section we are given **five commands** for spiritual warfare (v.5-9), resulting in the final victory of fulfilling the plan of God for our lives (v.10-11).

1. Five imperative actions for the Hero of faith (v.5-9).
 - A. “**Submit yourselves...be submissive**”. The military term *hupotasso* means to take your proper place in the ranks. No believer is going to become a hero of the faith who is unable to submit to authority and spiritual leadership. Submission is essential to learn and apply sound doctrine from the word of God.
 - B. “**Be clothed with humility**”. The idea here is to put on the “working clothes” of a slave. Learning to submit to spiritual leadership is a step toward learning how to humble ourselves before God. Since “**God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble**” this is a critical step in our spiritual growth (Jam.4:6).
 - C. “**Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God**”, suggests the acceptance of whatever situations and circumstances He allows in our lives (always for our benefit). The “**mighty hand of God**” refers to God’s absolute rule over all powers and events. Only by humble obedience can we truly anticipate that He will “**exalt (us) in due time**”. As we wait for His timely promotion, both in time and eternity, we must be daily “**casting all (our) care upon Him, for He cares for you.**” The word “casting” is the same word used in Luk.19:35 for the disciples casting their garments on the donkey. When we cast our cares on Him, we are preparing for His triumphal entry into our lives and circumstances.
 - D. “**Be sober, be vigilant**”. We take these two commands as one. The fact that we “cast our cares” on God does not lead to spiritual carelessness. Rather, it frees us from our own concerns to be able to focus on the spiritual battle at hand. These commands mean to be focused and awake to the dangers of enemy attack. “**Your adversary the devil walks about (Job 1:7) like a roaring lion**”. Unlike the lions of the African plains, who always drag down the weak, Satan always attacks the strong and the effective. Consider Job, Joseph, David, and Daniel as examples of his attack. Esther is a good example for the ladies to study. “**Seeking whom he may devour**”. The devil knows our weaknesses, our unprotected flanks. He exploits these gaps in our armor, especially when we are most a threat to his plans and goals (Dan. Ch.3&6; Job 1&2; Luk.22:31-32).

- E. **“Resist him steadfast in the faith”**. The word used here in the command is the same Paul uses in Eph.6:13 *“that you may be able to withstand...”*. When the devil attacks our weaknesses, only our faith in the power of God can sustain us. As David said, *“Whenever I am afraid (my weakness) I will trust in You (my victory)”*. (Psa.56:3). We must never feel that we stand alone, for **“the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”** All of our temptations and trials, however severe, have been endured and overcome by fellow-believers. This is why the study of Hebrews 11 is so valuable!
2. Winning the victory and attaining the prize (v.10-11).
“One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus...” (Phil.3:13b-14).

Five things that bring us to the victors stand in the spiritual life.

- A. We must always remember that our heavenly Father is **“the God of all grace”**. And, His grace will always be more than sufficient for us (2Co.12:9).
- B. We must never forget that He has **“called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus”**. As the example of the Lord Jesus shows us (1Pe.2:21-25; 3:18), there is no crown without the cross. All our sufferings and trials are under the providential plan of God for our growth, service, and eternal glory.
- C. We must never forget that our trials are temporary. **“After you have suffered for a while”** is a reminder that all sufferings have a “use by” date, when they will all be over. That is why Paul, who suffered greatly, reminds us...
“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2Co.4:17-18).
- D. We must never forget that, in this fallen world, and with our sinful nature, it takes sufferings to **“perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle”** us spiritually. These words imply, in order, to mend what is broken, to stabilize what is in danger of falling, to strengthen what is weak, and to set a firm foundation where none existed. All these precious spiritual benefits come to us through sufferings, which force us to lay hold of the grace of God through faith in His word (1Co.1:9).
- E. We must never forget that our lives are instruments used by God to bring **“to Him...the glory and the dominion forever and ever”**. So humble is our God that He chooses to win His ancient war against

Satan by using frail human instruments as His weapons (Psa.145:4-7, 10-13)!

Farewell

1Peter 5:12-14

3. **“By Silvanus, our faithful brother”** This is Peter’s secretary or amanuensis for the writing of this letter. He is likely the “Silas” of the book of Acts, and a faithful companion of Paul (Act.15:22-40; 16:19-29; 17:4-15); 2Co.1:19; 1Th.1:1; 2Th.1:1). Along with **“Mark my son”**, the same John Mark who deserted Paul on his first missionary journey (Act.13:13; 15:36-40). Peter, who knew what it was to fail terribly, took Mark under his wing. To him we owe the writing of the gospel of Mark, which apparently was written at his dictation. **“She who is in Babylon”**, is a reference to the church in Babylon, where there was a large Jewish population. **“I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.”** Some manuscripts read, *“stand firm in it”*, as a closing command. The word is the same used in Eph.6:14, and refers to a warrior seizing and holding strategic ground. In this final challenge Peter takes us right back to Romans 5:1-5, the standing we have in God’s grace, which is able to sustain us through all the trials of life.

Summary

1. God has gifted spiritual leadership for the teaching of God’s word, and the leading of God’s people, to bring us to spiritual maturity and effective service, v.1-4.
2. Submission to this leadership is an evidence of humility before God and surrender to His plan, v.5-6.
3. Entrusting ourselves to the care of God sets us free to be alert to the attacks of the evil one, v.7-8.
4. When we resist the enemy (the devil) through our times of affliction, we are on the path to winning future exaltation (v.6) and eternal glory (v.10), while at the same time growing ever stronger and more secure in the unfolding of the perfect plan of God for our lives. **We are moving from the cross to the crown!**

Note: Thus we see in First Peter...

1. Five levels of spiritual growth and development.
 - A. The newborn believer, Ch.1 (Heb.5:12-13).
 - B. The “young man”, or the growing believer, Ch.2 (1Joh.2:13-14).
 - C. The mature believer, Ch.3 (Phi.3:7-14).
 - D. The Christian warrior, Ch.4 (Eph.6:10-18; 2Ti.2:3-4).
 - E. The “hero of faith” believer, Ch.5 (Heb.11).
2. Five corresponding levels of suffering and affliction.
 - A. Various types of sufferings endured by all men, Ch.1:6.
 - B. Suffering unjustly, Ch.2:19. (i.e. you did nothing to deserve it).

- C. Suffering for righteousness, Ch.3:14. (i.e. you suffer for reflecting the character of Christ. This is true persecution).
- D. Sharing Christ's sufferings, Ch.4:13. (Your sufferings have a redemptive purpose in the lives of unbelievers).
- E. Personal attack by the devil, Ch.5:8 (Your impact is too great to be ignored by the fallen realm).

