

A  
Doctrinal  
And  
Devotional  
Commentary of  
1<sup>st</sup> Peter

Written by Rénaud Leroux Jr.

## INFO PAGE

A Doctrinal and Devotional Commentary of the First Epistle of Peter.  
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## Introduction to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter

### AUTHOR and DATE.

The apostle Peter identifies himself as the author (1:1). In 2 Peter 3:1, Peter writes concerning the first letter that he had written to them. Clement (a.d.95) seems to indicate in 1<sup>st</sup> Clement that he knows of Peter's letters. Polycarp (a.d.69-156), a disciple of John, makes a reference to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter in his letter to the Philippians. Finally Eusebius (fourth century) indicates that 1<sup>st</sup> Peter was universally accepted. It is believed that Peter wrote this epistle around a.d.62,63 during Nero's reign.

### PLACE OF WRITING.

In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter writes that he was in 'Babylon' when he wrote his letter. No one really knows what Peter meant by this unless he was speaking of a town called Babylon which was on the Euphrates. There is no hint either that it was meant to be taken figuratively. Tradition holds that Peter wrote this letter while he was in Rome.

### THEMES and PURPOSE.

Most of the letter deals with the theme of Christian life and duties. Peter himself tells us the purpose why he wrote his letter in 1 Peter 5:12 '...I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.' (NKJV)

### RECIPIENTS OF THE LETTER.

This was a 'general letter', although the recipients were noted in 1:1: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. They were all in northern Asia Minor which today is called Turkey. The letter was written for slaves (2:18-25) and free men (2:11-17). It was written to those who had not physically seen Jesus (1:8) and to those who were probably new converts (1:22; 2:2)

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1<sup>st</sup> Letter of Peter  
01 – Greetings  
1:1,2

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen who are residing temporarily in the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.  
(LEB)**

In the entire New Testament there is only one Peter. His name was Simon but after he met Jesus, the Lord changed his name to Peter. He calls himself '*an apostle of Jesus Christ*'. The word '*apostle*' (APOSTOLOS) means: a delegate, a messenger or he that is sent. Peter was one of the original twelve disciples, who at one point became apostles. Matthew wrote when the change of name from disciples to apostles occurred.

**Matthew 10**

**1 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.**

**2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;**

**3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;**

**4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.**

**(NKJV)**

Notice that it is only when Jesus sent the twelve on their first mission, that he called them '*apostles*', since this word naturally means 'sent ones'. They were the '*apostles*' of '*Jesus Christ*'. Jesus is the given name that he had received from his Father (Mat. 1:21) and Christ is the Greek term for 'anointed'. The words Christ and Messiah are interchangeable for Christ is in Greek and Messiah is in Hebrew. Peter says that he is the sent one or the messenger of Jesus Christ AND NO ONE ELSE. He carried the message of Christ to others. All believers should understand the importance of this. We carry the gospel message and NO OTHER. In the sense that true believers are witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8). They do not represent a church or a particular denomination – only Jesus Christ.

**(v.1) ... to the chosen**

The word ‘*chosen*’ (EKLEKTOS) means: select, chosen, elect. Words such as ‘*chosen*’ or ‘*foreknowledge*’ have brought a theological chasm within Christian families. This subject is too vast and wonderful works have been written on the subject of God’s sovereignty and man’s will. The author of this commentary believes what Dr. Thomas Constable wrote in his commentary on the First Letter of Peter.

*Election originates in the eternal will and purpose of God the Father. The foreknowledge (Gr. prognosin; cf. [Acts 2:23](#)) of God refers, of course, to what God knows beforehand. God’s foreknowledge has an element of determinism in it because whatever really happens that God knows beforehand exists or takes place because of His sovereign will. Therefore when Peter wrote that God chose according to His foreknowledge he did not mean that God chose the elect because He knew beforehand they would believe the gospel (the Arminian position). God chose them because He determined beforehand that they would believe the gospel (the Calvinist position; cf. [Romans 8:29-30](#); [Ephesians 1:3-6](#); [1 Thessalonians 1:4](#); [1 Peter 5:13](#)). [Note: For further explanation of the Calvinist position, see L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 7:158-60.]*

Peter writes ‘*to the chosen*’, people that had come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and had placed their faith in Him to become righteous before the Living God. If you are such a person, then, the theological teachings (in their proper context) are for you. If you have not repented of your sins and asked Christ to become your Savior, there is no better time to do so than right now (Heb. 3:7; 3:15; 4:7).

These Christian believers temporarily lived in the ‘*dispersion*’ (DIASPORA) meaning: dispersion, resident in Gentile countries. These believers had been dispersed throughout Asia Minor especially in the country that is presently known as Turkey. This occurred first in Pontus, which was an ancient district in northeastern [Anatolia](#) adjoining the [Black Sea](#). Pontus is named in Acts 2 as having people in Jerusalem witness the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Then it occurred in Galatia, which is in the northern part of the Asian plateau. It is not named in Acts 2. Third it happened in Cappadocia which is an eastern province of Asia Minor. It became part of the Roman Empire in a.d.17. Cappadocia is mentioned in Acts 2. Fourth is Asia which is a Roman province that embodies the greater part of Asia Minor. Asia is also mentioned in Acts 2. Fifth is Bithynia which is a province in the northern part of Asia Minor. It is not mentioned in Acts 2. Paul once tried to go there but the Holy Spirit did not allow him to do so (Acts 16:7). These believers in Christ either lived in Asia Minor for some time or had escaped the pressure of Rome and its surroundings. For Tiberius Claudius Caesar had expelled the Jews and Christians (Acts 18:2) from the city of Rome (a.d.52) because of the ever-ceasing arguments concerning a certain ‘Chrestus’.

**<sup>2</sup> according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

Peter writes that these Christians, living in the dispersion, were chosen of God '*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*'. The word '*foreknowledge*' (PROGNOSIS) means: forethought, to know beforehand. The Arminians teach that God looked into the future and saw who would accept Jesus as their Savior. They believe that man has total free will in accepting or rejecting Christ. Since God looked into the future he knows beforehand who will be saved. Unfortunately they forget that ALL THAT COMES TO PASS is given to be because God allows it to be. The Father does not 'find out' who will become a true believer, he actually grants that person to become his child.

### **1 John 3**

**1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.  
(NKJV)**

In his greetings Peter reminds his readers that they had been granted the grace of becoming a child of God the Father. He also describes the role of God the Holy Spirit in the process of the new birth: '*by the sanctification of the Spirit*'. The word '*sanctification*' (HAGIASMOS) means: purification, purity, holiness, set apart. In Titus 3:5 Paul writes concerning salvation and the Holy Spirit.

### **Titus 3**

**5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,  
6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,  
(NKJV)**

The '*washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*' in Titus and '*by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit*' in 1 Peter 1:2 describe the same spiritual fact. It is the Holy Spirit who brings a spiritual life onto the repentant believer. Finally, Peter brings in God the Son: '*sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ*'. Peter is speaking of the atoning blood of Christ on the cross, for without blood there can be no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). All of this knowledge is to bring the believer to understand the importance of '*obedience*'.

**(v.2) ...May grace and peace be multiplied to you.**

This is a blessing that Peter desires for all believers. The word '*grace*' (CHARIS) means: a graciousness, divine influence upon the heart. It gives the idea of something that is given by God to a person that is unmerited, like salvation (Eph. 2:8-10). The Father freely showers his children with grace and mercy because it is his character to do so. All the New Testament writers speak of the grace of God one way or another. The word '*peace*' (EIRENE) means: to join, peace, prosperity. It is the second blessing given to believers. We can understand that where there is no unity and no spiritual prosperity something is missing in the life of the believer or a congregation as a body. Grace and peace is to be multiplied (PLETHUNO). A Christian should look forward to having these two gifts abundantly in his life.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
02 – The believer's inheritance  
1:3-5

**<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> into an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for you <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,  
(LEB)**

This section can be called a doxology (a liturgical expression of praise to God, giving praise to God). After speaking of the wonderful grace that believers have received through faith in Jesus Christ, Peter explodes with spoken gratitude unto God. If he has blessed the children of God in our first section he now blesses God the Father. Peter calls him:

**(v.3) ... the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ**

Peter is not saying that God the Father is the God of God the Son. Rather he is saying that God is also the Father of Jesus Christ - the man (1 Tim. 2:5). Here we see the divinity of Christ. Throughout the bible the affiliation between the two is a father-son relationship. This may be difficult to understand. The relationship (Father-Son-Spirit) within the Godhead is a mystery. Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 329–390) was one of the greatest theologians of the early church. His teachings concerning the Trinity are part of the foundational Trinitarian theology. He reminds us that for us not to fall into heresy (from Oneness (Modalism and Arianism) to Subordinationism) there are five facts to keep in mind.

1. There is only one God (Deut 4:35; 6:4)
2. God is the Father of Jesus Christ our Lord (2 Cor. 1:3)
3. Jesus Christ is revealed as God (John 1:1&14; Titus 2:3, 2 Peter 1:1)
4. The Holy Spirit is God (Heb. 9:14; Acts 5:3,4)
5. Father-Son-Spirit are distinct (Mat.11:27, John 11:41,42; 15:26, 1 John 2:1, Luke 3:22)

**(v.3) ...who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope**

Here we see the beginning of 'why' Peter glorifies the Lord God. He spoke of God's grace and peace (v.2) now he speaks of *'his great mercy'*. The word *'great'* (PULUS) means: much, many and largely. The Father does not skimp concerning his *'mercy'* (ELEOS) meaning: active compassion. He is merciful (Ex. 34:6, Deut. 4:31, Ps. 37:26). The proof of this is the giving of his only begotten Son to be our substitute at the cross (John 3:16) or as Paul wrote it:

### **Romans 5**

**8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
(NKJV)**

His mercy has caused *'us to be born again to a living hope'*. Here, Peter presents the Father as the author of our spiritual birth. In Greek this phrase gives the idea of arriving or to be present (HEKO) at a *'living hope'*. The word *'living'* (ZAO) means: to live, life. The word *'hope'* (ELPIS) means: to anticipate usually with pleasure. Believers have a new life which gives them a living hope for their future. This hope is present, right now, in the believer's life. This hope never goes away because it has been implanted in the very heart of every new-born child of God.

**(v.3) ...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

This is what the *'living hope'* rests upon – *'the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'*. This is what makes Christianity distinct from all religions and philosophies. After his sacrifice on the cross God brought back to life his beloved Son. This was the ultimate proof that Jesus was the Messiah – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

### **Acts 17**

**30 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,**

**31 "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."**

**(NKJV)**

As long as Christ is alive (he always will be since he is God – the Son) the living hope that is given to believers through him is also present. Whatever hardships a believers may pass through he has a living hope by looking at the living Son.

**<sup>4</sup> into an inheritance imperishable and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for you <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,**

Peter describes the '*inheritance*' (KLERONOMAI) meaning: heirship, patrimony, inheritance that the Father gives to his children. He uses four words to define it.

It is '*imperishable*' (APHTHARTOS) meaning: un-decaying, incorruptible. Metal rusts with time but it is not so with the inheritance given to the redeemed.

It is '*undefiled*' (AMIANOTOS) meaning unsoiled, pure. The inheritance is 100% pure, there are no faults to be found. This is not a speck of decay for everything is a gift from God.

It is '*unfading*' (AMARANTOS) meaning: perpetual, everlasting. Some inheritances are dissipated with time. Not so with the Lord's, it will never cease to be there for you.

It is '*reserved*' (TEREO) meaning: to guard, to keep an eye upon. Believers will never lose their inheritance for the Lord God is the one who protects it. It also gives the idea that the inheritance is already there just waiting to be received by the child of God. One does not have to worry and wonder 'Is there an inheritance for me also?'

After speaking of the wonderful inheritance that awaits all children of God and how it is '*reserved*' for the believer in heaven, Peter turns his eyes towards the child of God and teaches an important fact concerning him.

**...For you <sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,**

The child of God is '*protected*' (PHROUREO) meaning: to be a watcher, to protect. It is God himself who is making certain that his child will eventually get his inheritance. Now this does not mean that the child will never have any difficulties in life – we all know the story of Job! We also know that the Lord God always set limits to what the devil could do to him (Job 1:12; 2:6). God watched over Job. As God watched over Job he also watches and protects the true believers. Jesus spoke concerning the protection of the children of God.

### **John 10**

**28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

**29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.  
(NKJV)**

It is the '*power of God*' that protects the believer. The word '*power*' (DUNAMIS) means: miraculous power. It's not a human power that protects as when Paul was transferred from Jerusalem to Caesarea with two hundred Roman soldiers! It is the power of God himself that guards his child through his voyage on earth. May this comfort the believer that not only his inheritance is untouchable but he is also under the watchful eye of his heavenly Father.

**(v.5) ...through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,**

It is the faith of the believer that is the 'human ingredient' in his relationship with God. God's power to keep the inheritance and to protect his child is present. That is not the question but rather 'Does the child keep his faith strong in what God says he is doing?' If I begin to lose my faith, if it dwindles or diminishes, if my hope and confidence in life is placed elsewhere than in the Living God I will automatically fall prey to the enemy. When the prodigal son willfully left his father's home he also walked away from his protection. It was not until he came back that the son was once more granted his full status from his father (Luke 15:20-14).

The 'full' '*salvation*' of the believer is '*ready to be revealed in the last time*'. The child of God has been given '*salvation*' but we know that as long as we live in the flesh or in '*this tent*', as Paul writes, we are still under the bondage of sin. We are like children who have not yet come of age to exercise the full inheritance that they have received. One day however when the child becomes of age, he then lives with all that his father had prepared for him. Believers have been sealed by the Holy Spirit ready for that blessed day of our full redemption.

## **2 Corinthians 1**

**20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.**

**21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,  
22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.  
(NKJV)**

Who believer shall truly become and what the good Lord has for each child will be '*revealed in the last time*'. I am not presently what I will be. I do not possess the body that I will have when I will be with Christ. My mind will also be transformed and I will reflect my Savior as I rightly should. This is a process called sanctification.

### **2 Corinthians 3**

**18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.  
(NKJV)**

All children of God will one day be fully transformed into the image of their blessed Savior – what grace they have received!

### **1 John 3**

**1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.**

**2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**

**3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.  
(NKJV)**

1st Peter  
03 – Trials, faith and salvation  
1:6-12

**<sup>6</sup> in which you rejoice greatly, *although* now for a short time, if necessary, you are distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith, more valuable than gold that is passing away, but is tested by fire, may be found to *result in* praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom, *although you* have not seen, you love; in whom now you believe, *although you* do not see *him*, and you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the goal of your faith, the salvation of *your* souls.**

**<sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace meant for you sought and made careful inquiry, <sup>11</sup> investigating for what *person* or which time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating *when he* testified beforehand to the sufferings with reference to Christ and the glories after these *things*, <sup>12</sup> to whom it was revealed that they were serving not themselves but you with reference to the same *things* which now have been announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, *things into which* angels desire to look.**

**Be Holy in All Your Conduct  
(LEB)**

In our last section, Peter wrote about the wonderful and indescribable heritage that awaits all children of God. This is what all believers should look forward to. It is this vision of the coming things that nurture our souls and build us up as Christians. This needs to be understood because the Disciple of Christ is but a pilgrim voyaging for a short while in this world (James 4:14).

The first of the three sections in this segment speaks of the trials that face the believer.

**<sup>6</sup> in which you rejoice greatly, *although* now for a short time, if necessary, you are distressed by various trials,**

Peter says that it is in our salvation (1:5) that '*you rejoice greatly*'. The idea behind the words '*rejoice greatly*' (AGAN) means: to jump for joy, exult or exceeding joy. Salvation is the greatest gift one could ever receive. It should never come to a place where salvation is taken for granted. The wonder and marvel of redemption should never cease to impress our hearts. Children of God should always be astounded that God has made them to become his children by adoption, as Paul writes:

### **Ephesians 1**

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,  
4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,  
5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
(NKJV)**

Believers will experience the full disclosure of their salvation ONLY once they are with their Savior. Until then we are to live in a world that has been infected by sin. It seems that the world has been 'handed over' to Satan until the Lord comes back to reclaim his rightful throne here on earth.

### **Luke 4**

**5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.  
6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.  
(NKJV)**

We are living in this '*short time*' (OLIGOS) meaning: a season, short, small, a while. I have full salvation that awaits for me, stored in heaven and guarded by the Lord God. I have not yet received it. There is a '*short time*' period that awaits me. Until then, this is what awaits the believer.

**(v.6) ...if necessary, you are distressed by various trials,**

The words '*if necessary*' may give the wrong idea for (DEI) means: must, be met, needful. There is a road that Disciples of Christ are called to walk upon. A narrow gate leads to a narrow path (Mat. 7:13,14). In life, believers will automatically be '*distressed by various trials*'. There are no other options! I will be '*distressed*' (LUPEO) meaning: to be sad, grieve, to be in heaviness. On the one hand we rejoice in our salvation, while on the other we live through '*various trials*'. The word '*various*' (POIKILOS) means: divers, manifold. The source of our distress will not be one fold but will have many facets. Remember what Peter wrote:

## 1 Peter 5

**<sup>8</sup> Be sober; be on the alert. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.**

**(LEB)**

Let us not be surprised when we are attacked from various angles in life. These are '*trials*' (PEIRASMOS) meaning: putting to proof, adversity, temptation. Trials are there for our benefit. Whether they reveal the true state of our faith, or they draw us closer to the Lord, they must be seen as something that benefits the believer.

The second subject of this section, is the faith of the believer.

**<sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith, more valuable than gold that is passing away, but is tested by fire, may be found to *result in* praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom, *although you have not seen, you love; in whom now you believe, although you do not see him, and you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.***

Here we see four aspects of our faith. Is it genuine, is it valuable, is it tested and what is the result of it. The first aspect speaks of '*the genuineness of your faith*'. The word '*genuineness*' (DOKIMION) means: a testing, fig. trustworthiness. These trials will manifest what type of faith a person has. We all know that crowds of many thousands came to hear and even sometimes followed Jesus but we also know that theirs was not (in general) a true faith in Christ. Jesus even talked about this in John 6:51-69. Has your faith transformed your mind? Has it changed the way you live? Has your faith brought a greater attachment to God? Has your faith brought you to your knees and brought you to repentance? Are you born-again and living in the light?

Second is the value of your faith. Is it '*more valuable than gold*'? The word '*valuable*' (TIMIOS) means: costly, honored, esteemed, and precious. Does it have any value before the Lord? Is the Lord pleased with how we walk in the faith? Remember the story of the three servants and how the value of their faith was manifested! Listen to what Jesus said about the third servant whose attachment to his master was not of any value.

## Luke 19

**20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.**

**21 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'**

**22 "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.**

**23 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'**

**24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'**

**25 ('But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')**

**26 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.**

**(NKJV)**

This servant's faith in his Master was not valuable for it did not push him to act in a way that would please him. This was not true of the first two servants who doubled the amount of money that was allotted to them while the Master was gone. So, is your faith valuable before the Lord? Is he pleased with the way you live your life as his servant? Will he also, one day, say to you:

#### **Luke 19**

**17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'**

**(NKJV)**

The third is the testing of your faith: *'but is tested by fire'*. The word *'tested'* (DOKIMAZO) means: to test, to approve, to examine. Would we able to say as king David wrote:

#### **Psalms 139**

**23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties;**

**24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.**

**(NKJV)**

Do we dare ask the Lord to search our hearts? If so what would this test reveal? A true lover of God? A sincere follower of the Messiah? One who has an open heart to the Holy Spirit's leading? What do our daily testing's disclose and what about the 'big' tests? What do they say about the authenticity of my salvation?

The fourth is the result of your faith.

**(v.7) ...may be found to *result in* praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**

The word '*result*' (HEURISKO) means: to find, obtain or perceive. So what is the '*result*' of the faith that I possess? The apostle Peter divides the result into three different aspects: praise, glory and honor. If a believer has a living faith the three following manifestations should be openly seen by all. First my faith should bring '*praise*' (EPAINOS) meaning: a commendable thing, laudation. Is my life a life of praise towards God? Are the things that I do done in such a way that I do not receive the praise but the Lord God does? Are we able to express ourselves as David did?

**Psalms 22**

**22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.**

**23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!**

**24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.**

**25 My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.**

**26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever!**

**(NKJV)**

The second result is '*glory*' (DOXA) meaning: dignity, glory, praise or worship. We are to glorify the Lord God through all that we do. It is the essence of our new life. It is our calling. The apostle Paul wrote about this to the Corinthians:

**1 Corinthians 6**

**19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?**

**20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**

**(NKJV)**

Body and spirit united together to bring glory to God. This is not only through your spirit and neglecting the body and not only through your body by an austere and rigid life refuting the good things that the Lord permits his children to have. This is rather by bringing glory to God with our body and our spirit joined in one cause.

The third result is *'honor'* (TIME) meaning: valuable, esteemed, precious, honor. Does my faith bring *'honor'* to my Lord? Is the Lord God ashamed when he looks down at me? Having given me a new life, a new understanding and victory over sin does he ask himself 'What is he doing'? Do I represent my heavenly Father well? Am I a faithful ambassador?

## 2 Corinthians 5

**20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.  
(NKJV)**

All of the works of faith brought forth by the believers will be openly manifested by the Lord himself!

### (v.7) ...at the revelation of Jesus Christ

It is at *'the revelation'* of Jesus Christ that God himself will bring praise to his children. The word *'revelation'* (APOKALUPSIS) means: disclosure, appearing, coming. When Christ will reveal himself at his second coming, then his Disciples will shine forth through him. To be recognized by our Lord will be an event never to be forgotten. Praise, glory and honor will then be given. An example of this could be the following in a parable of workers told by Jesus:

## Matthew 25

**21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'  
(NKJV)**

The subject of Peter turns from the faith of the believer to the object of their faith. Faith in itself has little worth unless its object is God. Actually faith in anyone else is blasphemy and idolatry!

**<sup>8</sup> whom, *although you have not seen*, you love; in whom now you believe, *although you do not see him*, and you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining the goal of your faith, the salvation of *your* souls.**

Speaking about Jesus here, we see that the recipients of the letter had never witnessed Jesus like Peter had and the other apostles. They had never actually seen Jesus: *'whom, although you have not seen'*. It is plain to see that they were like the modern believers for we also have not seen Christ with our own eyes.

This however did not stop them from loving him *'you love'*. Their hearts were filled with gratitude, thankfulness and deep appreciation for their Savior. The same should be felt by all true believers, whatever age they are found in.

Speaking about Jesus, it is also written: *'in whom now you believe, although you do not see him'*. Remember that these believers were being persecuted not only from the Jews who saw them as a sect but mainly by the Romans who detested them. So many lies were written concerning the followers of Jesus! Some, not understanding the Lord's Table, spread lies saying that they actually drank blood and ate human flesh! Although they were persecuted they continued to believe in Christ – even though they did not see him. This is real faith, persevering during trials even if you had never seen the one you believe in.

Also speaking about Jesus it is written *'you rejoice greatly with joy inexpressible and full of glory'*. Here we see that their joy was not fixed on the things of this world! Their eyes were looking upward towards their Savior. It is true that this type of celestial joy is *'inexpressible'* (ANEKLATOS) meaning: unspeakable, unutterable. This reminds me of the apostle Paul and how he described his being in what he calls the third heaven:

## **2 Corinthians 12**

**3 And I know such a man--whether in the body or out of the body I do not know,  
God knows--**

**4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is  
not lawful for a man to utter.**

**(NKJV)**

Paul also was lost for words to describe what he was living. I believe it is the same today. Believers' witness the presence of God in such a way that they have difficulty using words to express what they have experienced.

**<sup>9</sup> obtaining the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**

Peter finally writes that when the person has this kind of faith he *'obtains'* (KOMIZO) meaning: to take care of, provide for, receive something out of it. In other words the believer's faith is not in vain. The Father will reward him. So we are told that the *'goal'* (TELOS) meaning: the point aimed at, in other words the whole point of faith is *'the salvation of your souls'*. A person repents of his sins, turns to Christ to receive righteousness and then obtains *'salvation'*. The word *'salvation'* (SORTERIA) means: rescue, safety, deliver, save. His *'soul'* (PSUCHE) meaning: spirit, life, mind is rescued from the judgment to come and is safe and sound because Christ has been his substitute at the cross.

The last part of this section speaks of the salvation that is given to those who have real faith in the propitiation of Jesus Christ.

**<sup>10</sup> Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace meant for you sought and made careful inquiry, <sup>11</sup> investigating for what *person* or which time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating *when he* testified beforehand to the sufferings with reference to Christ and the glories after these *things*, <sup>12</sup> to whom it was revealed that they were serving not themselves but you with reference to the same *things* which now have been announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, *things into which* angels desire to look.**

### **Be Holy in All Your Conduct**

From verse ten we can see that the salvation brought forth by Christ was foretold since '*the prophets who prophesied*'. The Lord God had revealed, long before it happened, his redemptive plan. We also see that this plan was bathed in '*grace*' (CHARIS) meaning: the divine influence upon the human heart, graciousness. Once more we see that all is done by God. Redemption is of God.

### **Psalms 78**

**35 Then they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer.  
(NKJV)**

These prophets sought to understand the grace given and they '*made careful Inquiry*'. The word '*inquiry*' (EKZETEO) means: to seek carefully, investigate. They searched the Scriptures trying to find clues they wanted in order to know '*what person or which time*'. Just as men of today search for clues to when the Messiah will come back or what events will lead to his coming – so did the prophets of old.

**<sup>11</sup> investigating for what *person* or which time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating *when he* testified beforehand to the sufferings with reference to Christ and the glories after these *things*,**

Here we see '*the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating*'. It was the Spirit who was guiding them, pointing to them the things of importance. The work of the Holy Spirit still has not changed, does he not also guide the modern believers in their spiritual walk?

**John 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.**

**(NKJV)**

Notice that in John, the Holy Spirit does exactly the same two things as it is written concerning the prophets of old. He '*guides you*' and also '*He will tell you things to come*'.

**<sup>12</sup> to whom it was revealed that they were serving not themselves but you with reference to the same *things* which now have been announced to you through those who proclaimed the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, *things into which angels desire to look.***

**Be Holy in All Your Conduct.**

There are two last interesting facts concerning salvation. The first is that these prophets realized that the salvation spoken of was '*not for themselves but you*'. In other words after the Messiah came, a different kind of salvation was given. An example of this difference would be that in the days of the prophets believers were rarely inhabited by the Holy Spirit. This came about only after the Pentecost experience. Today all true believers have the Holy Spirit in them. The second interesting fact is '*things into which angels desire to look*'. The redemption offered to those who repent fascinates the angels! It may simply be because redemption is not given to angels but only to the fallen race of Adam. When the 'great rebellion' took place and Satan and other angels protested God's rule they were banished and judgment fell upon them – there was no redemption offered! They may wonder at the grace offered by God to mankind!

**Be Holy in All Your Conduct.**

Understanding the unworthiness of our own selves and the immense grace given, the child of God should have an attitude of love and respect for his heavenly Father. His conduct in life should '*Be Holy*'.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
04 – Daily living before God  
1:13-21

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore, *when you have prepared your minds for action by being self-controlled, put your hope completely in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former desires *you used to conform to* in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as the one who called you *is holy, you yourselves be holy in all your conduct,* <sup>16</sup> for it is written, “You will be holy, because I *am* holy.”<sup>17</sup> And if you call on *him as* Father who judges impartially according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves with fear during the time of your temporary residence, <sup>18</sup> *because you know that you were redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors not with perishable things like silver or gold,* <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like *that of* an unblemished and spotless lamb <sup>20</sup> who was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has been revealed in these last times for you <sup>21</sup> who through him *are* believing in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**  
(LEB)

In our last section Peter ended with the subject of salvation and in this present section, he continues to speak on the same subject but with a different aspect. He will speak about active faith in one’s life.

**<sup>13</sup> Therefore, *when you have prepared your minds for action by being self-controlled, put your hope completely in the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

Understanding the great favour the Lord God has bestowed upon the believer, the Disciple of Christ has a new life and a new understanding (Rom. 12:1,2). He is to ‘*prepared your minds for action*’. He has to be ‘*prepared*’ (ANAZONNUMI) meaning: to gird afresh, gird up. Just as we need to prepare ourselves for the different aspects of life, the believer needs to have prepared ‘*your minds for action*’. What needs to be prepared is our ‘*minds*’ (DIANOLA) meaning: deep thought, to exercise the faculties. The idea that is given is that preparation for Christian life is not frivolous or to be taken lightly. It must be thought through. We need to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) so that our actions will please God. Many Christians act upon a moment of enthusiasm or because of their emotions.

They believe that it is a leading from the Holy Spirit and they fail and wonder why! It was not prepared, thought through with the mind of Christ.

Peter describes what is needed to be done before the believer acts. The first is *'being self-controlled'* (NEPHO) meaning: to abstain from wine, to be sober, discreet. There is a well-known verse from Paul's pen about this subject.

### **Ephesians 5**

**18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,  
(NKJV)**

Christians need to be sober-minded (1 Thes. 5:6,8; Titus 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8). Nothing should distort our thinking process. One may think that alcohol or drugs are the main substances that would do this. I believe that one of the main obstacles to a sober way of thinking is family and friends. Since they are close to us and intimately woven into our lives, it makes it difficult to think with the mind of Christ concerning them. We react differently when it is about a person close to us than someone else. As a result we need to remember what Jesus said.

### **Matthew 10**

**37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.**

**38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.  
(NKJV)**

So the first step is to 'think like Christ' and the second step before taking action is *'put your hope completely in the grace'*. The word *'hope'* (ELPIZO) means: to expect, confide, trust. Before living out our faith we need to place our confidence in the *'grace'* (CHARIS) meaning: graciousness, divine influence upon the human heart. The hope of the believer is not in new programs, techniques or the latest Christian 'fad'. It is not in our own wisdom, or our church budget or even in a well-respected bible preacher. Our hope needs to be in the grace of God upon us. Peter tells the believers that this hope needs to be *'completely'* (TELETOS) meaning: without wavering, to the end. In other words it must not be circumstantial but present every day.

**(v.13) ...that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

This is the second time that Peter places emphasis on the *'revelation of Jesus Christ'*. The first time was in verse seven and now in verse thirteen. The eyes of the true believer should always look towards the return of Jesus AND presently advance believing that the grace of the Lord is with them in everyday life.

**<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former desires you used to conform to in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as the one who called you is holy, you yourselves be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> for it is written, "You will be holy, because I am holy."**

Another aspect of our daily living before God is being *'obedient children'*. The word *'obedient'* (HUPAKOE) means: attentive, compliance, submission. A child of God can not please his celestial Father if he is not obedient. In his writings the apostle John writes FOUR times that loving God is directly linked with keeping his commandments or words (John 14:15,23,24; 15:10). A Christian can no longer live his life as he wished, simply because it does not belong to him anymore (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23)!

Being *'obedient'* means *'do not be conformed'* (SUSCHEMATIZO) meaning: to fashion alike, conform to the same pattern as. A Christian is not a copycat of the world which he lives. Can people see in you or on you that there is a net difference about you? Do you act, speak and look like what the 'trend' presently is? In other words who do you reflect: the world or the Lord? Believers need to be non-conformists in their ideology and philosophy of life. Don't allow yourself to be slaves of the dictatorship of the contemporary worldview. Paul wrote it this way:

### **Colossians 2**

**8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**

**9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;  
(NKJV)**

Believers should not be conformed to *'former desires you used to conform to in your ignorance'*. This is the second aspect of walking as a child of God. Peter says that believers are no longer to conform to their *'former desires'*. The word *'former'* (PROTERON) means: previously, before, former. Our previous human *'desires'* (EPITHUMIA) meaning: a longing especially for what is forbidden.

Since the child of God still lives in the flesh (has a physical body) there is a constant fight between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit living in him (Romans 6,7).

Peter tells his readers not to live the way they lived before being a child of God, and to stop longing for the things of the flesh but rather set their eyes on the things that are above.

### Colossians 3

**1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.**

**2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.**

**3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

(NKJV)

Peter also writes that believers walked that way because of '*your ignorance*' (AGNOIA) meaning: ignorance, unawareness. Before they did not know the true God but now since they have been born-again they personally know him and his commandments. In other words for all true believers there is no excuse for living in the flesh or as the world dictates, for you know God, you have his Spirit and his power to change is in you.

**<sup>15</sup> but as the one who called you is holy, you yourselves be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> for it is written, "You will be holy, because I am holy."**

Due to all of this Peter reminds them that daily living with God is a matter of holiness. He speaks of '*the one who called you*'. He once more refers to the calling before the foundation of the world. Even before believers were born they were destined to become children of God and to live a life of holiness (HAGIOS) meaning: sacred, pure, and blameless. This is God's desire for all of his children – there are no exceptions not even you and me!

**<sup>17</sup> And if you call on *him as* Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during the time of your temporary residence,**

**<sup>18</sup> because you know that you were redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors not with perishable things like silver or gold,**

**<sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like *that of* an unblemished and spotless lamb**

In verses seventeen to nineteen the apostle Peter gives two reasons why the conduct of the children of God should be holy. The first one is because God will judge you.

**<sup>17</sup> And if you call on *him as* Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during the time of your temporary residence,**

If you call God your Father you need to remember that it is not because he is your Father that you can live the way you desire! Being born-again is not a blank check to live a life of sin! Peter says that the father *'judges impartially'*. The judgment of God is not only on the non-believer at the judgment of the Great White Throne it is also for his children at the Judgment seat of Christ. The believers in Christ will also have to give an account of their life and Paul speaks of this.

#### **Romans 14**

**9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.**

**10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.**

**11 For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."**

**12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.**

**(NKJV)**

And also:

#### **2 Corinthians 5**

**9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.**

**10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

The second reason Peter gives the believers to remind them that a life of holiness is absolutely needed is:

**<sup>18</sup> because you know that you were redeemed from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors not with perishable things like silver or gold,**

**<sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like *that of an unblemished and spotless lamb***

Peter speaks of the redemption of every born-again believer. He speaks of Jesus Christ and reminds them the great price that he paid with his *'precious blood'*. He tells them of the sacrifice he made *'like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb'*. Remember what Christ has done on your behalf. Also remember why this was done in your favour, to redeem you *'from your futile way of life inherited from your ancestors'*. All that your ancestors gave you was a futile way of life. The word *'futile'* (MATAIOS) means: profitless, vanity, vain.

This was the inheritance given by our forefathers. It is never to be compared to the inheritance given by our celestial Father! All believers need to be reminded of these things so that these thoughts will compel them to live holy lives. Speaking once more of Jesus, Peter writes:

**<sup>20</sup> who was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has been revealed in these last times for you <sup>21</sup> who through him *are* believing in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

Once more Peter looks at time before time existed. Christ was there with the Father just as John teaches (John 1:1,2). Peter then writes that Jesus was '*revealed in these last time for you*'. This also goes perfectly with what John wrote (John 1:14). He who existed before time was manifest in the flesh at a certain time in mankind's history. It is almost unimaginable that God became flesh and manifested himself '*for you*'! God came to be with mankind and to manifest himself for all to see. Jesus was the instrument that brought men and women to a state of '*believing in God*'. Remember Thomas and his unbelief! It was only when he personally saw the resurrected Christ and touched him that he cried out:

**John 20**

**28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"**

**29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.**

**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."**

**(NKJV)**

The Christians Peter wrote to, were the ones that Jesus spoke about in his blessing when he said: '*Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed*'. If you are one of those who have not seen, yet have believed, you are called to a life of holiness. Remember the price Christ paid for your redemption, and be grateful, manifesting it by following the teachings of the Lord.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
05 – God's enduring word  
1:22-2:3

**<sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love, love one another fervently from the heart, <sup>23</sup> because you have been born again, not from perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup> For**

**“all flesh is like grass,  
and all its glory like the flower of the grass.  
The grass withers and the flower falls off,  
<sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord endures forever.”**

**And this is the word that has been proclaimed to you.**

**Therefore, ridding yourselves of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, <sup>2</sup> like newborn infants long for the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, <sup>3</sup> if you have tasted that the Lord is kind,  
(LEB)**

This section speaks of the believer's transformation and what brought this about. It talks about the natural result of the new birth.

**<sup>22</sup> Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love, love one another fervently from the heart,**

Verse twenty two manifests the absolute difference that exists between the children of God and all others. Peter describes it as *'Having purified your souls'*. First notice that the word *'Having'* is in the past tense. It is something that they had done and not something that they will do in the future. All born-again Christians have become children of God because of something that they have done. It is a one-time event in the history of their lives. What is it that they have done once and for all – *'purified your souls'* is the answer. The word *'purified'* (HAGNIZO) means: to make clean, sanctify or purify. They have answered God's call such as this one found in Isaiah:

**Isaiah 1**

**18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.**

**(NKJV)**

The believers came to God just as they were with all their sins. They looked for their cleansing and they received it but how was this done?

**(v.22) ...by your obedience to the truth**

The word '*obedience*' (HUPAKOE) means: compliance, submission and obedience. In other words they heard what was needed to be done to be cleansed and they responded to it. They obeyed '*the truth*' – God's truth of course! The word '*truth*' (ALETHEIA) means: verity, truth. Although man believes that there are many truths that it may be relative, believers know that there is only ONE truth. Jesus even said that truth had been embodied!

**John 14**

**6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.  
(NKJV)**

They obeyed God's truth. This is the only truth that will last forever. They were rewarded for believing and obeying it. They became children of God and heirs to his kingdom.

**(v.22) ...for sincere brotherly love, love one another fervently from the heart,**

This sincere truth which transformed their lives literally transformed their minds '*for sincere brotherly love*'. Their attitude changed for their minds had been transformed. They now had '*sincere brotherly love*'. The word '*sincere*' (ANUPOKROTIS) means: without dissimulation, unfeigned. This was a pure love, a love without any negative intentions brewing in the back of their minds. They saw the brothers and sisters with a new vision being inspired by the Holy Spirit. They loved each other '*fervently*' (EKTENOS) meaning: intently or fervently. There was a burning fire to reach out and manifest true attachment to one another. This gushed out from '*the heart*'. The word '*heart*' (KARDIA) figuratively means: thoughts or feelings. Loving others was not out of duty but freely flowed from their hearts.

**<sup>23</sup> because you have been born again, not from perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.**

All of this was possible because of their new birth. Peter writes it this way: '*because you have been born again*'. This term was originally used by Jesus when he spoke with Nicodemus (John 3) and tells/ him '*you must be born again*'. All men are born of the flesh but one needs to be '*born again*' to either see (3:3) or enter (3:5) the kingdom of God. Jesus paraphrases this thought by saying:

### **John 3**

**6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.  
(NKJV)**

Many Christian churches and denominations have forgotten the importance of the words of Peter. A great number have deviated from the truth teaching that salvation is available because of other means rather than Jesus alone.

**(v.23) ...not from perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.**

The idea of a '*seed*' (SPORA) means: a sowing, a seed. It is used by Paul for the descendants of Abraham either by the flesh or by the spirit (Rom. 4:13,16; 9:7,8; 11:1). The '*seed*' that made them born-again was not '*perishable*' (PHTHARTOS) meaning: decayed or corruptible but rather '*imperishable*' (APHTHARTOS) meaning: un-decaying, un-corruptible and immortal. What gave new birth to the believers was '*the living and enduring word of God*'.

Like believers today the ones who Peter was writing to, had not seen the Messiah nor had they heard him. It was through another means of communication that they received the Good News. It was through the '*living*' (ZAO) meaning: to live, life and '*enduring*' (AION) meaning: an age, perpetuity, eternal word of God. This same word, either in speech or written, is the power that can transform the lives of anyone who repents unto Jesus. The apostle Paul wrote it this way:

### **Romans 1**

**16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.  
(NKJV)**

Verse twenty five of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter one is taken from an Old Testament passage that Peter uses to emphasise what he is writing:

### **Isaiah 40**

**7 The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass.  
8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."  
(NKJV)**

This brings us to the second chapter of his first letter. Most of the times chapters are divided in such a way that it flows from one subject to another. In this case it is difficult to separate the chapters because the 'flow' of thought continues. The first chapter could have easily continued for a few more verses. One must remember that in the original Greek text, there are no verses and chapters.

It was in 1227 that a man called Stephen Langton, professor of the University of Paris divided the Bible into chapters. He later became the archbishop of Canterbury. Later in 1551 a man called Robert Stephanus divided the chapters into verses for his Greek New Testament. In 1555 the entire edition of Stephanus' Latin Vulgate was divided into chapters and verses. It was finally in 1560 that the publishers of the Geneva Bible published for the first time an English bible with chapters and verses like we have today (although minor changes have been made).

**And this is the word that has been proclaimed to you.**

**Therefore, ridding yourselves of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, <sup>2</sup>like newborn infants long for the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, <sup>3</sup>if you have tasted that the Lord is kind,**

Peter assures his readers that the living and enduring word he spoke about was *'the word that has been proclaimed to you'*. This must be the same living and enduring word that still should be proclaimed today. The word of God has been greatly diluted and weakened. Many 'key words' are rarely to be found when one evangelises another. Words such as: sin, judgment, hell, repentance and so forth are often absent due to this, the gospel has become a spiritual 'get well card' and not the proclamation that either John the Baptist (Mat. 3:2), Jesus (Mat. 4:17) or Peter (Acts 2:38) said in their first message to the people. All said the very same thing: Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand! So what are you proclaiming? What words are you using? Are you a herald of God are you his ambassador?

God's enduring word in them transforms them and brings them to be more Christ-like. The renewing of the mind that Peter has already spoken of continues to be explained in these verses. The obvious result of having been born again is the *'ridding'* (APOTITHEMI) meaning: to put away, cast off, lay apart of certain sins people have in general. Peter gives a list of five of them which all have destructive power within themselves.

Malice (KAKIA) means: badness, depravity, evil and wickedness. Paul often speaks of this sin (1 Cor. 5:8, Eph. 4:31, Col. 3:8 and Titus 3:3).

Deceit (DOLOS) means: to decoy, trick and vile craft. The book of Psalms has a lot to say concerning those who practice deceit (Ps. 10:7; 34:13; 36:3; 50:19; 101:7).

Hypocrisy (HUPOKRITIS) means: acting under a foreign part, deceit. Jesus faced many spiritual hypocrites and these are some verses concerning what he said to them (Mat. 6:2,5,16; 15:7; 16:3; 22:18; 23:13) and many more to look at.

Envy (PHTHONOS) means: ill-will, jealousy, envy. The bible teaches us that envy is a sin and can bring great destruction (Mat. 27:18; Acts 13:45; Rom. 1:29, 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3, 13:4).

Slander (KATALALIA) means: defamation, evil speaking. This sin is also mentioned in the following verses (Acts 23:5; Titus 3:2; James 4:11; Jude 1:8,10)

All these sins should be driven away from the believers' life by the new fruits of the Holy Spirit living in him. Are you entangled with these sins? Are you ready to confess them and turn from them?

**<sup>2</sup>like newborn infants long for the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up to salvation, <sup>3</sup>if you have tasted that the Lord is kind,**

Peter finally compares believers to '*new born infants*'. It may just be that they were babes in the truth, new believers or relatively new. He wanted them to search for the '*living end enduring*' word of God. This search should never be abandoned during the believer's entire life. The word of God is our food and our soul needs it to be fed daily. Far too many believers don't really know their bible and base their decision on emotions or what they are told rather than relying on what they know about God's will.

Believers need to '*long for unadulterated spiritual milk*'. Our desire should be to drink the '*spiritual milk*' given by the Lord God. Just as the Hebrews needed to eat the manna that was daily given to them for their physical survival so must all born-again children of God drink from God's word daily. The key word is '*unadulterated*' (ADALOS) meaning: un-deceitful, sincere. Believers need to be alert and be certain what cup of milk they are drinking from! A great many 'popular pastors' wrote books that are not truly grounded on God's '*spiritual milk*'. They are bought by the millions and they pollute the minds of God's children. Those who are born-again need to have a spirit of discernment to determine what is true and what are cleverly thought out lies. All believers are called to '*grow-up to salvation*'. The word '*grow-up*' (AUXANO) means: to grow, to enlarge, increase. All need to grow in wisdom and be able to separate truth from false teachings. All need to spiritually mature in their salvation.

When we are born again we are mere infants vulnerable to the schemes of the enemy. It is by growing up that we will save ourselves from many traps and snares, ruses and deceptions that lay on our path every day.

**<sup>3</sup> if you have tasted that the Lord is kind,**

This can be done only *'if you have tasted that the Lord is kind'*. In other words if you have tasted the grace and mercy of God's salvation in Christ Jesus it is then and only then that you will be able to grow spiritually. Are you born again? Have you tasted the kindness of the Lord? If so, are you growing?

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
06 – God's chosen people  
2:4-10

**<sup>4</sup> to whom you are drawing near, a living stone rejected by men but chosen *and* precious in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup> And *you* yourselves, as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup> For it stands in scripture, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a chosen *and* precious cornerstone, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”**  
**<sup>7</sup> Therefore the honor *is* for you who believe, but for those who refuse to believe, “The stone that the builders rejected, this one has become *the cornerstone*”**  
**<sup>8</sup> and**  
**“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,”**  
**who stumble *because they* disobey the word to which also they were consigned. <sup>9</sup> But you *are* a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* possession, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, <sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people, but now *are* the people of God, the ones *who were* not shown mercy, but now are shown mercy.**  
**(LEB)**

In this section of Peter's first letter there are four subjects that are spoken of. God – the Father, God – the Son, those who believe and those who do not. Peter describes who they are and what they do. In the case of those who believe and those who do not, he also speaks of what they have become. This section is intertwined together wool knitted together to make a sweater.

**<sup>4</sup> to whom you are drawing near, a living stone rejected by men but chosen *and* precious in the sight of God.**

When we read the text from verse one we see that the person '*to whom you are drawing near*' is the Lord Jesus. The idea behind the words '*drawing near*' (PROSERCHOMAI) means: to approach, to come near. Here we see the desire of any true believer – to come near his Savior and remain with him. No one can believe that he pleases his Lord when there is not a daily desire to live in his light and walk close to him! No one who lives in the 'flesh' can please him. This is why the apostle Paul wrote the following:

### **Philippians 4**

**7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

**8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.**

**9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**

**(NKJV)**

The next part of the verse gives a description of the Lord Jesus and how the Father sees him.

**(v.4) ...a living stone rejected by men but chosen *and* precious in the sight of God.**

Jesus is first described as '*a living stone*'. This may be a strange way of describing Jesus but when we remember that he is the cornerstone of our faith it all comes to light. The word '*stone*' (LITHOS) means: a stone! But what is fascinating is that this '*stone*' is '*living*' (ZAO) meaning: to live, life, living. The cornerstone of our faith is not DEAD or without life in him. Quite the contrary Jesus is the '*living stone*'! He is alive! It is because he lives that believers can approach him and receive from him. It is because he is alive that he can intercede for us unto the Father. Also because he is alive he will receive us into his Father's house.

Now this '*living stone*' was '*rejected by men*'. The word '*rejected*' (APODOKIMAZO) means: to disapprove, to repudiate. In other words the ones who should have rejoiced in his appearing actually turned their backs on him! John writes:

### **John 1**

**9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**

**10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.**

**11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. (NKJV)**

Rejecting the '*living stone*' has eternal consequences. The word of God is very clear concerning this. On certain theological issues there can be different views. However, the case for soteriology is not one of them. The apostle John wrote it very clearly:

### **John 3**

**36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."  
(NKJV)**

Where do you stand? Are you one of those who reject the *'living stone'* or are you one of those who happily receive the *'living stone'* as your Savior? If Jesus is not the stone that you are standing upon, if he is not the foundation of your righteousness, then you have nothing but yourself and you are a sinner (Rom. 3:23) and have come short of the glory of God.

**(v.4) ...but chosen *and* precious in the sight of God.**

If men, in general, have rejected Christ we see that God – the Father has a far different view of him. We notice two descriptive words from the Father. The first is *'chosen'* (EKLEKTOS) meaning: favorite, elect, chosen. Christ was the chosen one. He was the long awaited Messiah. There is no other *'chosen'* by the Father. Jesus bears the only name by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12) and there is no other foundation for salvation (1 Cor. 3:11). The Father personally declared that Jesus was his chosen servant:

#### **Matthew 12**

**18 "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.  
(NKJV)**

After speaking about the Father and the Son, Peter's attention will turn towards the children of God. They are those who have been washed by the precious blood of Christ at the cross, God's chosen people.

**<sup>5</sup> And you yourselves, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

Please notice that Peter describes the believers as *'living stones'*. The same words in Greek are used for the Son who is THE living stone and his disciples who are also living stones. Are they the same type of *'living stones'* or are they different? The answer is quite simple. They are very different *'living stones'*. Christ is the foundation upon which all believers build their lives upon.

Peter declares that believers are *'as living stones'* they are not THE *'living stone'*. Men and women who are in Christ are declared to be *'being built up as a spiritual house'*. We see

that Christians are under spiritual construction! God is forming the believers into something else. He is transforming men and women to become a '*spiritual house*'. This is a mystery and how can this be? The apostle Paul tells us the following:

### **1 Corinthians 3**

**16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?**

**17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.**

**(NKJV)**

Believers have become '*the temple of God*'. He also refers to them as the '*temple of the Holy Spirit*' (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16). We ARE the '*spiritual house*' of God because the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in the true believer. This is an unbelievable grace that has been bestowed upon the redeemed. The disciples of Christ are living tabernacles!

Believers are also described as '*a holy priesthood*'. Priests were people who stood between God and men. They were the ones who interceded for them and offered sacrifices in their stead. They were consecrated and called by God. They were the descendants of Aaron and later were the men from the tribe of Levy. By calling the believers '*a holy priesthood*' this refers to the ministries that all believers now have. They are presently called to intercede (by prayer) unto God in favor of men and women. They are called to represent the Lord God to the people in general. They are called to teach the commandments and oracles of the Living God. Notice that Peter called them '*holy*'. This is what believers have become, because of what Christ has done for them. It also refers to the fact that each disciple of Christ must live a holy life. Peter has mentioned this twice before (1:15,16). We must not neglect holiness in our lives, for believers represent God to all who see them. That is why Christ said that his disciples are the salt and the light of the world (Mat. 5:13).

**(v.5) ...to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

Like the priests of the Old Testament who offered up sacrifices to the Lord God so is the believer in Christ. There is one MAJOR difference this being that believers do not offer any type of sacrifice as in the Old Testament. Jesus is the last and ultimate sacrifice. He is the only true sacrifice. All the others were an image of Christ to come. The writer of Hebrews writes it this way:

### **Hebrews 10**

**10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

**11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**

**12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,**

**13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.**

**14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**  
(NKJV)

If Christ is the perfect and eternal sacrifice what type of '*spiritual sacrifice*' are we to offer? To be certain that everyone understand the answer, Paul writes the following in his letter to the Romans:

### **Romans 12**

**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

**2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

(NKJV)

The only '*spiritual sacrifice*' that we can present to God is ourselves. Our lives, the way we live and the service we occupy ourselves with is a sacrifice believers can offer. Paul calls this '*a living sacrifice*'. Our very lives are to be offered! When believers do this, when they offer up their lives and live for the Lord this will be '*acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*'.

**<sup>6</sup> For it stands in scripture,**

**“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a chosen *and* precious cornerstone, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.”**

**<sup>7</sup> Therefore the honor *is* for you who believe, but for those who refuse to believe,**

**“The stone that the builders rejected, this one has become *the cornerstone*”**

**<sup>8</sup> and**

**“A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense,”**

**who stumble *because they* disobey the word to which also they were consigned.**

Verse six is taken from Isaiah 28:16. Verse seven is from Ps.118:22. Verse eight is taken from Isaiah 8:14. They all talk about the chosen cornerstone of God (Jesus Christ). For those who believe in God's cornerstone of their faith these will *'never be put to shame'*. As for those who reject God's cornerstone, this will become *'A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense'*. This was not only for the living in the Old Testament but for all who now live, for Peter wrote *'Therefore the honor is for you who believe'* and also *'but for those who refuse to believe'*. Things have not changed, the attitude concerning *'living cornerstone'* of God will determine where we will be for eternity.

**<sup>9</sup> But you *are* a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's possession, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, <sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people, but now *are* the people of God, the ones *who were* not shown mercy, but now are shown mercy.**

Peter ends this section with another reminder of who believers have become. Peter is saying 'Don't forget who you are and the great privileges that have been given to you'. Living in the flesh distracts believers from their calling. We are pulled from every side and there is a constant fight in us. That is why we absolutely need to remember what God has done in our favor. Peter describes the believers in four different ways.

The first is *'a chosen race'*. Peter has touched on this subject in the first chapter. God has literally hand-picked those whom he will adopt (Mat. 20:16; 22:14; John 13:8; Acts 1:2; 22:14; 1 Cor. 1:27,28; James 2:5). If you know that you have passed from death unto life then be ever so thankful unto the Lord for this.

The second is *'royal priesthood'*. In verse five Peter talks about a *'holy priesthood'* and now he adds to this by saying that believers are also a *'royal priesthood'*. This adds another touch to what has already been written. The only true royalty in the universe is God himself for he is the only eternal sovereign. Since believers are called children of God (1 John 3:1,2,10; 5:2) and since God is our Father then his children automatically become Royal! Angels are called holy in certain verses (Mat. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Rev. 14:10) but they are never called *'Royal'*, only his children are. May all believers praise the Lord for his great gift.

The third is *'a holy nation'*. All men are sinners and have become enemies of God. All are unrighteous and none truly seek God. No one does any good and in everyone is found deceit (Rom. 3:9-18). All were destined for eternal punishment but God stepped in and did what man is totally incapable to do – become righteous and holy before him. That is why Christ has become our righteousness (Rom. 3:21,22).

It is his righteousness that makes each and every believer holy before the Lord God. This standing is UNATTAINABLE for man – no man can be holy because we are all sinners. So to be called a *'holy nation'* this sets believers apart from all other people who ever lived. I wonder if believers really understand what Christ has bestowed on his disciples.

The fourth is *'a people for God's possession'*. This gives the idea that we become his very own. There is a verse in the Old Testament which gives this idea of being his own:

### **Deuteronomy 32**

**9 For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.**

**10 "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.**

**(NKJV)**

Believers are not only his by creation but by spiritual birth. Because we are his, believers are protected and guarded from all eternal harm. Because we are his, believers can simply rest in the arms of their Father. What an amazing statement Peter gives. What hope and joy is received by those who have Christ as their Savior.

**(v.9) ...so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, <sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people, but now *are* the people of God, the ones *who were* not shown mercy, but now are shown mercy.**

As God's chosen people what are we called to do? Why are we here on planet earth? Being a child of God answers the most important philosophical questions such as: who am I, why am I here or what is the goal of all of this? Peter tells the believers that they are here to *'proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light'*. We are ambassadors of the All Mighty (2 Cor. 5:20), we are the witnesses of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). We are to announce the Good News, the favor of God unto all who repent. Believers do this because of what God has done in their favor *'who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light'*. Paul wrote it this way:

### **Colossians 1**

**12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.**

**13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**

**14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**

**(NKJV)**

Let all Disciples of Christ never forget what words Peter ends this section with. May they be written in our hearts and never be forgotten. May they compel us to walk in a way that pleases the Lord and cheers our hearts, being forever hopeful in his promises.

**<sup>10</sup> who once *were* not a people, but now *are* the people of God, the ones *who were* not shown mercy, but now are shown mercy.**

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
07 – Living and the world  
2:11,12

**<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge *you* as foreigners and temporary residents to abstain from fleshly desires which wage war against your soul, <sup>12</sup> maintaining your good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in *the things* in which they slander you as evildoers, by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation.**  
(LEB)

Peter is going to begin a new section. It's all about how to live as a follower of Jesus while we wait for his return or are called to him. Today less emphasis is placed on the life of holiness of the believer. In some circles as soon as you highlight a disciplined life you are labelled a legalist. As you may know this is wrong. A person who is a legalist believes that righteousness can be obtained through works and the keeping of the Law. A person who desires to live in holiness (1:15,16) desires to please his Lord because he has given him eternal life through the righteousness obtained for him by Christ. So the first person works to obtain righteousness the second to be thankful because righteousness was given by grace. In true Christianity we see that a life of holiness comes naturally for the one who is born again because he has the Holy Spirit living in him.

Peter sees his fellow believers in Christ as being '*dear friends*'. He saw them differently since they were in Christ Jesus. They had become part of the family of God. In other words they were his brothers and sisters in the faith. He held them in esteem and cared for them (that is why he wrote to them). This transformation of the mind (Rom. 12:1,2) comes with the new birth. The Holy Spirit changes our thoughts and attitudes.

**Ephesians 4**

**22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,  
23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,**  
(NKJV)

What are your thoughts and feelings concerning those who congregate with you? How do you see them? Have they become close to you? Do you manifest warm feelings towards them? Are they special in your heart? Do you care and know them?

**<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge *you* as foreigners and temporary residents to abstain from fleshly desires which wage war against your soul,**

Being born again Peter urges them to see themselves differently. The word *'urge'* (PARAKALEO) means: to call near, to invite, to beseech. Like a teacher calls attention to his students, Peter reaches out and teaches them something new. All their lives they saw themselves as they themselves or others saw them. Now Peter desires for them to see themselves as the Lord God sees them.

The first thought is seeing themselves as *'foreigners'* (PAROIKOS) meaning: a by-dweller, stranger, alien resident. This reminds me of what Jesus said *'My kingdom is not of this world'* (John 18:36). He also spoke about the true residence of his disciples:

### **John 14**

**1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.**

**2 "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**

**(NKJV)**

Planet earth is not the home for believers in Christ. Our home is with our Savior and we will be living in the New Jerusalem which is described in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Peter also tells them that they are *'temporary residents'*. These two words in Greek (PAREPIDEMOS) mean: a pilgrim, a resident foreigner. He reminds them that they are just passing through life here on earth. James tells us the following concerning our life on earth:

### **James 4**

**13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";**

**14 whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.**

**(NKJV)**

We are but *'a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away'*. Believers are not to 'settle in' or feel too comfortable, to take root and relish in what they have. Everything we have is passing away. Knowing this, will change our attitude concerning our priorities in life. Remember what Jesus said:

### **Matthew 6**

**19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;**

**20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.**

**21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

**(NKJV)**

Knowing and accepting that we are foreigners and just passing through on planet earth what are disciples to do? This is the question that Peter answers in the following sentence.

**(v.11) ...to abstain from fleshly desires which wage war against your soul,**

This is one of the main focuses that believers should possess. They are to '*abstain*' (APECHOMAI) meaning: to refrain, to hold oneself off. To be able to live a life of holiness we need to see ourselves as just passing through but also as refraining ourselves from certain things. This is a daily fight and it is against '*fleshly desires*'. The word '*fleshly*' (SARKIKOS) means: pertaining to the flesh, carnal. The fight against the flesh is taught everywhere in the New Testament. No one who reads the Bible can say that war against the flesh is optional. No one can say that 'living in the flesh' isn't that bad after all! If you believe this then you have been tricked, for Paul wrote in Rom. 8:8 'So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.' Believers are to abstain from '*desires*' of the flesh. The word '*desires*' (EPITHUMAI) means: a longing especially for what is forbidden. The flesh of the believer will have strong desires for the things of the flesh. In accordance with what Peter is saying, Paul wrote the following:

**Rom. 8:5**

**For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.**

**(NKJV)**

That is why Peter writes to '*abstain from fleshly desires*'. The less we have them, the more we have victory over them, the more we will live, '*according to the Spirit*'. One should read Romans 6 – 8 to deepen his understanding of the war between the flesh and the Spirit and also between the Law and grace.

Peter writes that '*which wage war against your soul*'. These fleshly desires are actually at war against the believers. The word '*war*' (STRATEUOMAI) means: to contend with, warfare, go to war. The flesh is not our friend. The flesh does not desire our good. It seeks only to destroy us and will do all it can to satisfy itself at our expense! When a believer sins it breaks the fellowship with the Father but also weighs heavily in our conscience. The satisfaction of sin instantly vanishes once sin is consumed. All that is left is remorse, regret and sorrow. Believers are at war with their flesh!

**<sup>12</sup> maintaining your good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in *the things* in which they slander you as evildoers, by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation.**

What are believers to do during this 'war' of the flesh? The first thing that Peter refers to is steadiness in life. The word '*maintaining*' (ECHO) means: to hold, to possess. Too often a disciple walks very close to the line between good and evil. An example of this is someone who does not want to eat apple pie because he is on a diet but he sticks around the neighbourhood bakery just to smell how good they taste! Disciples are not called to walk on the narrow road for a few days then on the wide road for another few days. We are to maintain our stand against the flesh. Although this war will last as long as we are 'in the flesh' we also need to understand that victory is available to the believer.

**Rom. 8:12**

**Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.  
(NKJV)**

Believers are called to maintain a '*good conduct*'. The word '*good*' (KALOS) means: beautiful, good, virtuous. The word '*conduct*' (ANASTROPHE) means: behaviour. People surrounding us are looking at our behaviour. How we live and talk. How we act and react in life. What are our priorities and how we see things. This is called daily living. If our daily living is holy (as it should be) then we will be noticed by others. Some may react with disapproval and scorn but others with approval and acceptance. We are to maintain this good conduct among the Gentiles (unbelievers). The new idea that Christians ought to be just like ordinary people to win them to the Lord is foreign to the New Testament teaching. Disciples are called to live holy lives and not to imitate the fruits of darkness.

**(v.12) ...so that in *the things* in which they slander you as evildoers, by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation.**

Some will '*slander*' (KATALALEO) meaning: to speak against, because their eyes are closed to the testimony that is placed before them. They will laugh and mock believers and may even say that they are '*evildoers*' (KAKOPOLOS) meaning: a bad-doer, a criminal, a malefactor. This is like they did with Stephen when he said that he saw the Lord in heaven (Acts 7:54-60).

On the other hand Peter tells them that '*by seeing your good deeds they may glorify God on the day of visitation*'. This is the other side of the coin. Living a godly life will bring mockery and even danger to the believer's life.

On the other hand, if he does live a life of holiness there are some that *'by seeing your good deeds'* might *'glorify God on the day of visitation'*. Some will be struck by what they see in the believer. Some may ask questions and find the Lord! Some may come to repentance and their lives will also be changed. They will *'glorify'* (DOXAZO) meaning: to render esteem, magnify, to honor, the Lord God! One never knows if *'the day of visitation'* will come upon them. The word *'visitation'* (ERSKOPE) means: inspection, visitation. If you are truly born again then that day has come in your life, the day that the Holy Spirit visited you and inspected your heart and gave you eternal life because of your repentance.

Beloved, as long as we are living on earth, let us walk in holiness so that we will glorify the Lord and also have a beneficial effect on those around us.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
08 – Living and the governments  
2:13-17

**<sup>13</sup> Subject yourselves to every human authority for the sake of the Lord, whether to a king as having supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as those sent out by him for the punishment of those who do evil and the praise of those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For the will of God is as follows: by doing good to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as free persons, and not using your freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor all *people*, love the community of believers, fear God, honor the king.**  
**(LEB)**

For the greater part of the remaining epistle Peter will be speaking about the everyday life of the believer. This section deals with the authorities that govern us. Anarchy is certainly not the way that the Lord God governs and establishes his rule over the universe. The apostle Paul speaks of the importance of order in life (1 Cor. 14:33;40; Col. 2:5). Human tendency is to rebel and revolt against all authority simply we make ourselves the supreme authority in life. As for the Disciple of Christ, the Lord God is his supreme authority and this is what he says concerning human authorities.

**<sup>13</sup> Subject yourselves to every human authority for the sake of the Lord, whether to a king as having supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as those sent out by him for the punishment of those who do evil and the praise of those who do good.**

Disciples are to '*subject yourselves*'. The word '*subject*' (HUPOTASSO) means: to subordinate, to obey, to subdue unto. This speaks of the attitude that the believer should have. We are to willingly place ourselves under the authority of those who govern us. In other words, we are to comply with what the law says. We all understand that there is a limit to this wilful subjection. The limit is the following. When human authorities command that we do something against the will of God we submit to God and not man. As we will see, the SUPREME authority is the Lord and not man.

The subjection is '*to every human authority*'. The word '*every*' (PAS) means: all forms of decision. In other words, the believer can not choose which laws he will follow and which ones he will neglect - I like this one so I'll follow it and this one is not for me! Once we begin to pick and choose, it will become more and more difficult to remain within the law. To make a point of the importance to obey human and celestial authority and give each their due, Jesus said the following:

### **Matthew 22**

**17 "Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"**

**18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?"**

**19 "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius.**

**20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"**

**21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."**

**(NKJV)**

Peter tells us why it is important to be subject to the authorities *'for the sake of the Lord'*. It is for God's glory and honor that disciples submit to human laws. Not only are believers to reflect Jesus during their life-time on earth but we often forget that we are also seen by the angels.

### **1 Corinthians 4**

**9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.**

**(NKJV)**

Remember that in chapter one and verse twelve we are told that the angels are interested in the gospel. It also seems that they are interested in how believers live. Who believers have become and how they manifest their new life in Christ honors the Lord God. A perfect example of this is with Job. Remember how God was proud of Job and how he conducted himself!

### **Job 1**

**8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"**

**(NKJV)**

Even after Job had his first attack from Satan, his conduct still glorified his God!

### **Job 2**

**3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and**

**shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause."  
(NKJV)**

When Paul wrote that believers should be *'living sacrifices'* (Rom. 12:1,2) this is what he meant, living a life that pleases God. There is also a second reason that Peter states concerning 'why' to live a life of submission to authorities.

**(v.13) ...whether to a king as having supreme authority,<sup>14</sup> or to governors as those sent out by him for the punishment of those who do evil and the praise of those who do good**

It is because God has given authority to rule over people, to kings *'a king'* or *'governors'*. It is written that they were *'sent out by him'*. So in his wisdom the Lord God has established human authorities to rule over men. The men in authority are there for two things. The first is *'for the punishment of those who do evil'*. They are there to make certain that chaos, disorder and confusion are not the rule. If people rebel they will receive a *'punishment'* (EKDIKESIS) meaning: vindication, retribution. Usually there is a price that is high enough that it will persuade people not to commit crimes. On the other hand the authorities are also there to bring *'praise of those who do good'*. The word *'praise'* (EPAINOS) means: a commendable thing. Authorities should encourage those who live justly and discourage those who might think that it is a good idea to rebel against the authorities. So what type of person am I? Do I usually follow the set of given rules in my community or do I try to go around them? Do I follow them only when I receive a benefit or is it to please the Lord God and honor him in my life?

**<sup>15</sup> For the will of God is as follows: by doing good to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as free persons, and not using your freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor all people, love the community of believers, fear God, honor the king.**

There are three last recommendations that Peter gives to the followers of Christ. When I write that Peter gives his recommendations, we must not forget that it is through his pen that this was written, but the actual author was not Peter – it was the Holy Spirit! It is the Holy Spirit that inspired all the 'writers' of the Holy Scriptures. This did not come from man himself.

### 2 Timothy 3

**16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,**

**17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

(NKJV)

### 2 Peter 1

**21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**

(NKJV)

The first recommendation is found in verse fifteen.

**<sup>15</sup> For the will of God is as follows: *by doing good to silence the ignorance of foolish people.***

Our submission to the local authorities means that believers should be '*doing good*' (AGATHOPOLOS) meaning: a well doer, virtuous. This is the standard that is laid down by God. Don't forget that he said 'Be holy for I am holy' and being holy means to live a life filled with virtue. Believers are called to do this '*to silence the ignorance of foolish people*'. The word '*silence*' (THIMOO) means: to muzzle! Sometimes the only way one can shut a person up is by his good behavior. If we are good in our thoughts and actions, who can actually place a blame on us? Our actions will speak for themselves and God will be glorified. God calls these ignorant people '*foolish*' (APHRON) meaning: mindless, stupid, unwise. It just may be that the behavior of the disciples will open their eyes and they might see the Living God in them!

The second recommendation is found in verse sixteen.

**<sup>16</sup> *Live as free persons, and not using your freedom as a covering for evil, but as slaves of God.***

Live your life '*as a free person*'. The word '*free*' (ELEUTHEROS) means: unrestrained, not a slave. If Disciples of Christ have been freed from the bondage of sin (Rom. 8:15) they should listen to the recommendation of Paul:

## Galatians 5

**1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (NKJV)**

This is what Peter is saying - if you have been freed, do not act as if this had never happened! When we do this, believers need to be very careful and not use their new found freedom *'as a covering for evil'*. Don't say: 'I can now do this or go there or act like what I want - I am free!' This would only be a *'covering for evil'*. The word *'covering'* (EPIKALUMA) means: a pretext, a covering. When you do this, it becomes a great sin. For the Lord God did not save you to act in an evil manner. Too many so called "Christian preachers and teacher" are covering up their sinful desires under the cloak of ministry! Peter opposes two words *'free persons'* and *'slaves of God'*. Christ has brought freedom to the believers. It is the freedom to become *'slaves'* (DOULOS) meaning: a slave, in subjection, of God. Before salvation we were enemies of God (Rom. 5:8,10; Col. 1:21) but now believers have been bought by the precious blood of Christ and we do not belong to ourselves any longer (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23).

The final recommendation is found in verse seventeen.

**<sup>17</sup> Honor all *people*, love the community of believers, fear God, honor the king.**

The word *'honor'* (TIMAO) means: to prize, to honor, to value. This speaks about our outlook on others. Believers live in a world that is filled with different types of people, with different backgrounds and traditions. Sometimes it is difficult to live among people who are so different from us - so what should I do as a believer? I should prize and give value to people around me. When I do this, it will certainly have an impact on my witnessing. People will see what type of God the Lord really is. Notice the word *'ALL'*: not just the people that go well with my viewpoints but ALL people. Second, the believer should *'love the community of believers'*. If the first section deals with ALL the people around me the later section deals with people within my congregation. I should *'love'* (AGAPAO) meaning: to love in a social and moral sense. In other words I should love them in my activities and in my mind. It's one thing to say 'I love you brother' but quite another to prove it by our lives. This reminds me of what James wrote:

## James 2

**15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,  
16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you  
do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?**

**17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

(NKJV)

So how is my relationship with the other believers in my church? Does it amount to a nice smile on Sunday morning and a warm handshake? Or am I truly manifesting love to them?

The final recommendation is *'fear God, honor the king'*. Once more we are reminded the dual status of authority earthly and heavenly. To *'fear'* (PHOBEO) means: to be frightened, to be alarmed, to be in awe. That should be the attitude of the believer, a mixture of fright and deep respect for God. As for the king *'honor'* (PHILOPHRON' meaning: friendly of mind, to be kind, is what is expected of a Disciple of Christ towards the leader(s) of his community or country.

This is how believers are called to live in relation to all authorities.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
09 - Living and our masters  
2:18-25

**<sup>18</sup> Domestic slaves, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to those *who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unjust.* <sup>19</sup> For this *finds favor, if because of consciousness of God someone endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.* <sup>20</sup> For what credit *is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this finds favor with God.* <sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps, <sup>22</sup> who did not commit sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth, <sup>23</sup> who *when he was reviled, did not revile in return; when suffering, he did not threaten, but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly,* <sup>24</sup> who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that *we may die to sins and live to righteousness, by whose wounds you were healed.* <sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like sheep, but you have turned back now to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.  
(LEB)**

This section can easily be divided in two. The first part (v.18-20) concerns unjust suffering that a Christian slave (or servant) may endure because of his faith. The second section (v.21-25) speaks about Jesus being the perfect model of unjust suffering and how he handled it. Slavery has officially been abolished and you may think that this does not concern you. However all you need to do is change the word slave to servant and you will probably fall into this category. See this section as your relationship with your superiors at work.

**<sup>18</sup> Domestic slaves, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to those *who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unjust.* <sup>19</sup> For this *finds favor, if because of consciousness of God someone endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.* <sup>20</sup> For what credit *is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this finds favor with God.***

We must remember what type of society that Peter was living in. Slavery was common and one could buy people at the market like one could buy fruits and cattle! It is believed that in the city of Rome there were far more slaves than free men! So for Peter to write concerning the life of a slave was not something out of the ordinary. The words '*domestic slaves*' (OIKETES) means: a menial domestic, a household servant.

These were ordinarily the lowest cast of slaves. It seems that Peter was talking to them since, they may have been the most mistreated of slaves, but there is no technical proof of this in the text. He may have written concerning them as a way of encouragement.

We first of all have the general teaching: *'be subject to your masters'*. This reminds me of the letter of Paul to Philemon where he writes about Onesimus a run-away slave who landed up in Rome, met Paul and became a Christian. Onesimus was not subject to his master – he fled from him! The word *'subject'* (HUPOTASSO) means: to subordinate, to obey, put under. The context tells us that this must be done willingly. Without the help of the Holy Spirit this is rarely done. It would be natural for the human heart to hate one's master and to wish him ill. Certainly one would work for him but there would be no rejoicing in doing so. When a new birth comes along, this changes our hearts and minds and then it is possible to actually love and care for one's master. Paul wrote concerning this subject to the Corinthians:

### **1 Corinthians 7**

**20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.**

**21 Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.**

**22 For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.**

**(NKJV)**

The command was to obey *'your masters'* (DESPOTES) meaning: absolute ruler, lord, master. The believer was not called to obey every person (as though all were his masters) but to obey his own master and whomever he gave authority over him (wife, children, etc.). In the structure of the world in Peter's lifetime, some (the masters) had complete authority over their slaves and this must be accepted. Today we may not have slavery but workers do have people who have authority over them. This authority must also be accepted.

Now, how should the slaves be subordinate to their masters? Peter writes *'with all respect'*. The word *'respect'* (PHOBOS) means: to be put in fear, alarm or fright. This gives the idea of a respectful attitude towards them. When we remember that it is the Lord God who established all authority, we understand better where Peter is coming from. Paul writes concerning this in his epistle to the Romans:

### Romans 13

**1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**

**2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.**

**3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.**

**4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.**

**5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.**

**(NKJV)**

One might say that being under the authority of a good master is one thing but what about a master that takes advantage of you! Certainly God doesn't want you to be in such a predicament, surely that's a good enough reason to flee from this master!

**(v.18) ...not only to those *who are good and gentle*, but also to those *who are unjust*.**

That's not what Peter wrote! Our modern philosophy of wanting life to be a never ceasing river of happiness and freedom is not only unattainable but it is also dangerous. Remember Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They thought they would have absolute freedom from the Lord's subjection by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree – so they ate. What was the outcome of this foolish desire? Banishment from the presence of God, physical death and a life of immense hardship.

Peter says that a slave must subject himself '*not only to those who are good and gentle*'. The word '*good*' (AGATHOS) means: good or benefit. There were those masters who had a good character and cared for their slaves. It was easier to work for them because of the goodness they manifested to them. The word '*gentle*' (EPIEIKES) means: mild, gentle and patient. A slave would probably be happy to work for such a person. He may have even been better off than a free man who was poor and had very little to live by.

Unfortunately there were other masters and they were '*unjust*' (SKOLIOS) meaning: warped, perverse, or crooked. These were mean, cruel and unkind. They treated their slaves badly seeing them as their own possessions and being able to do as they wished to them.

Actually it was not a crime in the Roman Empire to kill a slave if you wanted to! After all you bought him and if you were not satisfied with him you could dispose of him as you wished. Slaves had no rights as humans. They were seen as sub-human, just a piece of property.

**<sup>19</sup> For this finds favor, if because of consciousness of God someone endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this finds favor with God.**

In this section, Peter begins to develop rational thinking concerning the reasoning ‘WHY’ one should willingly be under the authority of his master. His first thought is the following: ‘*For this finds favor*’. The word ‘*favor*’ (CHARIS) means: graciousness, benefit, favor. In other words, Peter is saying that this kind of suffering finds favor in the eyes of the Lord simply because it is unjust. As we have seen in verse eighteen some masters are unjust. Are all people who suffer unjustly looked upon with favor – no! Peter tells us why ‘*because of consciousness of God*’. Here we have a hint telling us that the person is suffering because of his conscience before God. The word ‘*consciousness*’ (SUNEIDESIS) means: co-perception, moral consciousness. Something in the believer’s heart tells him not to do this and since he does not do it he ‘*endures sorrows while suffering unjustly*’. In other words he pays a price for not obeying his master. The word ‘*endures*’ (HUPOPHERO) means: to undergo hardship, bear, endure. This gives the idea that it is a repeated occurrence. While the word ‘*sorrows*’ (LUPE) means: sadness, grief and heaviness. One can imagine how difficult life has become under the master’s wrath. This person is ‘*suffering unjustly*’. He is experiencing a sensation of suffering or vexation ‘*unjustly*’ (ADIKOS) meaning: wrongfully. All of this has a great price in the eyes of the Lord God - being willing to stand up and suffer because of our conscience before him.

**<sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this finds favor with God.**

Peter is very logical in this verse and desires his readers to think things through. Is there anything good if you sin and you pay the price for your sins? The answer is – NO. Is it a good thing that one endures his just treatment for breaking the law or the will of his master? Again the answer is NO! On the other hand ‘*If you endure*’ the word ‘*endure*’ is the same as the one when you do some wrong. If you undergo hardships because of some ‘*good*’ that you do (because of your conscience before God) and you ‘*suffer*’ again (this is the same word as when you sin) ‘*this finds favor with God*’.

In other words Peter is saying that as a slave when you sin towards your master and suffer it is the natural consequence. On the other hand, when you suffer because you do good in the eyes of the Lord then it is favourable in his eyes.

**<sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps, <sup>22</sup> who did not commit sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth, <sup>23</sup> who *when he* was reviled, did not revile in return; *when* suffering, he did not threaten, but entrusted *himself* to the one who judges justly, <sup>24</sup> who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that *we* may die to sins *and* live to righteousness, by whose wounds you were healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like sheep, but you have turned back now to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.**

This is the second part of this section. It manifests how Jesus was the perfect example of a person who suffers unjustly.

**<sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps,**

Suffering unjustly should not be a surprise to the believer who walks with a pure conscience before God. Paul also reminded the believers of the same thing in his writings:

### **2 Timothy 3**

**10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,**

**11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra--what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.**

**12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.  
(NKJV)**

Peter writes '*to this you were called*'. Why is unjust persecution part of a believer's life? The answer is readily given '*because Christ also suffered for you*'. Believers sometimes suffer because Christ has suffered for them. This is what Jesus had to say concerning the subject of suffering because you are his disciple:

### **John 15**

**18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.**

**19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**

**20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.**  
**21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.**  
**(NKJV)**

So Peter points to Jesus and reminds his brothers and sisters the sufferings that Christ suffered for their sake. This should be the catalyst that brings our hearts to surrender to the fate of suffering for the glory of our Lord. I am persuaded that Peter would have done anything to take back his unwillingness to remain identified with Jesus. How awful he felt when on three occasions he denied his Master. This is what is written concerning this very event:

**Mat. 26**

**74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!"  
Immediately a rooster crowed.**  
**75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.**  
**(NKJV)**

Continuing verse twenty-one Peter also wrote the following: *'leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his footsteps, 'When Jesus said 'come and follow me' (Mark 1:17) it also meant suffering for his name sake. Notice that Jesus was the example for the believers. He did not just say to persevere even in unjust accusations and hardships. He actually lived through them for his followers. So Jesus has become our model to follow. The BIG question is whether you are willing to suffer for Christ! Are you standing up for him and refusing to act the way the world wants you to? Jesus is the model for all true believers to follow.*

In verses twenty-two to twenty-four Peter describes how Jesus reacted while being unjustly mistreated.

**<sup>22</sup> who did not commit sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth, <sup>23</sup> who when he was reviled, did not revile in return; when suffering, he did not threaten, but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly, <sup>24</sup> who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we may die to sins and live to righteousness, by whose wounds you were healed.**

Since Jesus is our perfect model to live by, what follows should also be how all believers are to react under suffering for the glory of God. Verse twenty-two speaks about his general attitude. First of all *'who did not commit sin'*. It would be a natural reaction to sin against the persons bringing harm because of our faith but not so with Christ. He remained totally under the influence of the Holy Spirit – he did not sin. He did not sin internally neither externally because it is written *'nor was deceit found in his mouth'*. The word *'deceit'* (DOLOS) means: to decoy, trick or subtlety. Nothing wrong or impure was spoken. He did not even curse his torturers. Quite the opposite for this is what he said at the cross:

### **Luke 23**

**33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.**

**34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."  
And they divided His garments and cast lots.**

**(NKJV)**

The second model that Christ gave was *'who when he was reviled, did not revile in return'*. Jesus had full control of his emotions. On the cross people were mocking him and taunting him: 'come down from the cross if you are the Son of God' or 'he has saved others let him save himself'. He was *'reviled'* (LOIDOREO) which means: to reproach, vilify, revile. Jesus did not retaliate. He could have called fire from the heavens to destroy all those who were mocking him. He could have called for twelve legions of angels to come and fight for him. But he did not! He *'did not revile in return'*. Once again this is the supreme model for all of his disciples. This is how we should act in adversity. The third model is the following:

**(v.23) ...when suffering, he did not threaten, but entrusted *himself* to the one who judges justly,**

It is when people suffer that the worst come out of them. It may not be at the very beginning, but often as time passes and we continue to suffer or when the suffering continues or increases, then it is revealed who we truly are. This is the context of Peter's writings concerning Christ. *'When suffering'* (PASECHO) means: to experience suffering. When Christ was in the midst of his physical pain and the placing of our sins on his shoulders, when he was suffering *'he did not threaten'*. The word *'threaten'* (APEILEO) means: to menace. Jesus was suffering so that his righteousness could become the righteousness of all who would repent and believe in him.

### **Romans 3**

**20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

**21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being  
witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,  
22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all  
who believe. For there is no difference;  
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
(NKJV)**

Jesus did not threaten others. What he did was the following: *'but entrusted himself'* to the one who judges justly. In other words, Jesus placed his life into the hands of his Father. He *'entrusted himself'*. The word *'entrusted'* (PARADIDOMI) means: to surrender, to yield. Being unjustly brutalized, Jesus turned to the Father. How many times have believers refused to simply 'let it go' and place things in the Father's hands? I have seen this over and over again. People trying to find justice by their own means instead of relying on their heavenly Father. Jesus placed his life in the hands of his Father because he knew that he *'judges justly'*. He relied on his Father's impeccable justice knowing that he could have confidence in Him. Beloved, when we try to attain our own justice, this only manifests that we do not trust in God.

**<sup>24</sup> who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we may die to  
sins and live to righteousness, by whose wounds you were healed.**

The conclusion is that Christ (our perfect model) *'bore our sins in his body on the tree'*. This is a direct reference from Deut. 21:22,23. Paul says that this curse was pointing to Christ who hanged on the cross.

### **Gal. 3**

**13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us  
(for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),  
(NKJV)**

Christ did this so that the power of sin may leave the believer and that once this is done that person may live for *'righteousness'*. In other words, live for the Lord God.

I would like to end with what Peter writes. This has caused a great many misunderstandings in certain Christian circles: *'by whose wounds you were healed'*. This is used by some to prove that the wounds of Jesus heals the believer of all sorts of physical illnesses. This is taken from Isaiah:

### **Isaiah 53**

**5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. (NKJV)**

The context deals with our sins being placed on the shoulders of Christ at the cross. Read the words: transgressions and iniquities. They are our transgressions and iniquities. Look at other words: wounded, bruised, chastisement. This is what Christ suffered in our place. Finally look at still other words: peace and being healed. These words speak of the outcome of the sufferings of Christ for us at the cross. It is his righteousness that is given unto the believer – to make peace with the Father.

### **Ephesians 2**

**13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

**14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,**

**15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,**

**16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.**

**(NKJV)**

This has nothing to do with our bodies being renewed. This will be done at the believer's glorification (Rev.21:4). It is our spirit that is renewed – that is born again (John 3:3,7; 1 Peter 1:23). All of this is because of what Christ did on the cross. Can God heal – ABSOLUTELY, but 1 Peter 2:24 does not teach this.

**<sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like sheep, but you have turned back now to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.**

Peter ends with a general picture of who believers were before their new birth. They were '*astray*' (PLANAO) meaning: to roam, err, wander. We were going astray and living our lives as we wished just like the prodigal son who walked away from his beloved father. Something happened '*but you have turned back now to the shepherd*'. The Holy Spirit opened our minds and we saw our filthiness and the grace offered by Christ at the cross. Believers '*turned back*' (EPISTREPHO) meaning: to revert, come again, turnabout. This refers to the actual repentance of the believer. He turned away from his sins and desires to follow his Shepherd '*and guardian of your souls*'. The word '*guardian*' (EPISKOPOS) means: overseer. What great joy it is to know that Jesus is overseeing us.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
10 – Living and your husbands  
3:1-6

**In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see your respectful, pure conduct. <sup>3</sup>Let your adornment not be the external *kind*, braiding hair and putting on gold jewellery or putting on *fine* clothing, <sup>4</sup>but the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable *quality* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is highly valuable in the sight of God. <sup>5</sup>For in the *same* way formerly the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves *by* being subject to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup>like Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you have become *when you do good and are not frightened with respect to any terror.***

(LEB)

This section speaks about the personal relationship of a wife towards her husband. Verses such as these are considered foolish in our modern western civilisation. Rebellion has always been in the heart of man ever since the Garden of Eden, whether it is a man who desires to live the way he wants to or a woman who also has this yearning to be master of her life. When we look at the outcome of rebellion towards God in our society one needs to understand that there is a great price for rejecting the Lord's view on human living. Peter, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, will give several reasons why godly women are to take in consideration the will of the Lord in their lives.

**In the same way, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see your respectful, pure conduct.**

Peter continues his thoughts concerning living a holy life in a devastated world. We saw how Christians should live before God (1:13-21), live in the world (2:11,12), live with the governments (2:13-17) and live with their masters (2:18-25). He will now turn to personal relationships between wives and their husbands (3:1-6).

A first consideration is the subjection of a wife to her husband. The word '*subject*' (HUPOTASSO) means: to subordinate, to obey, and to put under. In his wisdom God has created an order of authority which Paul describes:

**1 Cor. 11**

**3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.**

**(NKJV)**

The order of authority is as follows: the Father is the ultimate authority, Jesus is under the authority of the Father, every man is under the authority of Jesus, and every woman is under the authority of man. Notice that it is a question of headship. Paul uses the word 'head' on three occasions in one verse. Just as Christ willingly submitted himself to the Father, so man willingly submits himself to Christ, so women willingly submit themselves to man.

Now Peter writes that women should be subject '*to your own husbands*'. This clearly limits the authority over a wife, to her own husband. This teaches that women are not under the authority of ALL men. A woman is not accountable to EVERY man. No man can tell her what to do or how to do things – EXCEPT her own husband. This is simply because she is 'one' with him and only him. This destroys all the teachings that every woman is under the 'boot' of every man. Unfortunately there are many teachers out there who are pleased with the idea of total submission of every women to all that is man-centered. This is NOT the will of God for women, it never has been! Now there is a reason for this personal submission to their husbands:

**(v.1) ...so that even if some are disobedient to the word, they may be won over without a word by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup>when they see your respectful, pure conduct.**

The aim given (although there are other aims) is in regard of the salvation of the husbands that are '*disobedient to the word*'. The word '*disobedient*' (APEITHEO) means: to disbelieve, disobedient. There are women who are married to husbands who are non-believers. This is either by forced marriages or because they have come to faith after they were married. Peter teaches that a woman who is married to a non-believing husband is to be under his authority '*that they may be won over without a word by the conduct of their wives*'. It is the '*conduct*' (ANASTROPHE) meaning: behavior, conversation. It is how they live that will make a difference. Peter opposes: word with conduct. It is said that 'Talk is cheap' and it's true. That is why Peter writes that it is the '*conduct*' that will make a difference. Let your husbands see what the Lord God has done in your life. Peter speaks about a '*respectful and pure*' conduct. These two words '*respectful and pure*' (HAGNOS) means: innocent, modest, chaste, clean or pure. When the husband sees in his wife such a transformation he will be bewildered and he '*may be won*'.

Now there is no guarantee, this is not a promise for it is written '*he MAY be won*'. But this surely is what wives ought to do, this is how they should live.

**<sup>3</sup> Let your adornment not be the external *kind*, braiding hair and putting on gold jewellery or putting on *fine* clothing, <sup>4</sup> but the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable *quality* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is highly valuable in the sight of God.**

Peter will now speak of what is truly beautiful before the Lord. Once more there is a chasm that lies between what the 'world' describes as beautiful and what the Lord God says true beauty is. What is written clashes directly with the philosophy of our contemporary world! '*Let your adornment*', the word '*adornment*' (KOSMOS') means: orderly arrangement, decoration. This speaks of how a woman dresses, what she desires to manifest about herself. This is even more striking today with the abnormal stress on appearance. Peter writes '*not to be the external kind*'. The word '*external*' (EXOTHEN) means: external or outward. This deals with what you do to yourself for others to see. Peter is speaking about VANITY of appearance and how shallow it truly is. He speaks of three things that most women still do today to look pretty or beautiful.

First it is the '*braiding hair*'. The word '*braiding*' (EMPLOKE) means: elaborate braiding of the hair. Not just taking care of your hair but spending a great amount of time to make it elaborate. Hairstyles have always been important to most women. Their hair is an ornament for them (1 Cor 11:15) but they can use this unwisely. The second is '*putting on gold jewelry*'. Once again this is vanity, why desire to show others the riches that you possess? Doing this is not in harmony with the character of Christ who was willing to lose all the glory he had to come and serve man and be the perfect sacrifice to atone for man's sin.

## **Philippians 2**

**5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,  
6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,  
7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming  
in the likeness of men.**

**8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became  
obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

**9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is  
above every name,**

**(NKJV)**

The third is *'putting on fine clothing'*; first the hair, then all the jewelry and finally the clothing that is worn. Fashion has been with us since the days of old. In all civilisations what a person wore manifested a status or symbolized power and authority. Again, this is not the thought of the Lord for his children and not only for the wives! Paul had the very same thought as Peter did when he wrote the following:

### **1 Timothy 2**

**8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;**

**9 in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing,  
10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.**

**(NKJV)**

Wives (like husbands) should have the desire to please their Lord even in the way that they dress. In no way should they become an instrument of lust or vanity! Peter explains that the Lord looks upon other things which makes a woman beautiful.

**<sup>4</sup> but the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable *quality* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is highly valuable in the sight of God.**

It is what is *'hidden'* (KRUPOTOS) which means: concealed, private, inward or secret, that counts. In other words it is the INSIDE, the very heart of a woman that makes her beautiful. There is a saying that says that *'beauty is only skin deep'*. This means that what is external really has very little value. God looks at your heart whether you are a man or a woman. He is looking for *'the imperishable quality'* in it. The word *'imperishable'* (APHTHARTOS) means: un-decaying, not corruptible. Contrary to your hair, jewelry or dress (which change and become obsolete with time) the qualities of your heart should remain unchanging. What is so precious in the eyes of the Lord - a *'gentle'* (PRAUS) meaning: mild, humble, or meek also a *'quiet'* (HESUCHIOS) meaning: keeping one's seat, still, quiet - spirit. Think about it! Who likes an: agitated, arrogant, assertive, disarranged and boisterous woman - NO ONE! So why not act in a way that will make you loveable before God and mankind? Peter notes that this kind of wife *'is highly valuable in the sight of God'*. The word *'highly'* (POLUTELESS) means: extremely expensive, very precious. A wife, a woman who has these inner qualities is regarded as being very precious before the Lord. So just the way you dress can make a great difference in your relationship with your husband and also with the Lord.

**<sup>5</sup> For in the *same* way formerly the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves *by* being subject to their own husbands, <sup>6</sup> like Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose children you have become *when you do good and are not frightened with respect to any terror.***

Peter reminded the believing wives that this way of being is not something new. It is something that goes back to Sarah who acted in a godly fashion. If a wife had a reason to be rebellious to her husband it would be Sarah! Remember how her husband Abraham denied that she was his wife just to save his life! She then landed up in the king's harem as one of his concubines and the Lord intervened personally to save her on both occasions (Gen. 12:10-20 and Gen. 20:1-18). Abraham lied twice about his wife Sarah. This must have broken her heart to be so humiliated, lied about and kidnapped! Even through all of this she remained true to her husband and is called one of the '*holy women*' in the Bible. It is written that Sarah '*obeyed Abraham*' and this is what this section is all about – being under the authority of our husband. Not being '*frightened with respect to any terror*'. Living as the Lord desires you to without any fear of what others will think or what will happen, is surely '*highly valuable in the sight of God*'. Are you that woman? Are you that wife? Are you willing to be the person God has designed you to be? If so, you will be rewarded by the Lord.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
11 – Living and our wives  
3:7

**<sup>7</sup> Husbands, in the same way live with *your wives knowledgeably*, as with the weaker female vessel, showing *them* honor as fellow heirs also of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.**  
(LEB)

Before we begin this section I would like to give a brief overview of what it meant to be a woman or a wife in the Roman Empire when Peter wrote this letter. After understanding all of this we can appreciate the Christian worldview of women much better.

- A man could legally kill his wife or daughter if they questioned his authority.
- Women were kept out of power and could not hold an office of senator, governor, lawyer, judge, etc.
- Women did not have the right to vote.
- Women officially needed a man to act on her behalf in all her financial aspects.
- Women were allowed to inherit but not to control their inheritance.
- In the case of a divorce ALL children belonged to the husband.
- Women who worked were not esteemed or admired.
- When a woman gave birth, the child was placed at her husband's feet. With a simple glance the husband could accept the child (by picking it up) or reject the child by not touching it. The mother had nothing to say!. If the child was rejected it could be left to starve or thrown in a river.

With this in mind please take time to consider how the Bible views wives and women in general.

Peter begins with calling out to the '*husbands*'. We know that in Christianity a man ought to be married to only one wife. Bigamy and polygamy are not the plan of God for a healthy marriage. Unfortunately we see instances of polygamy in the Old Testament but the original rule of God was one man and one woman. From the very beginning in the Garden of Eden God gave Adam ONE helper and she was called Eve.

**Genesis 2**

**24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

(NKJV)

Much later, Paul would carry into the New Covenant the same basic idea concerning marriage. In the following scripture we read:

### **Ephesians 5**

**31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."  
(NKJV)**

Man and woman join together and become ONE flesh. This differs greatly from the Roman philosophy where a freeman could have one wife but also (if rich) concubines and even female sex slaves. Officially polygamy in the Roman Empire was forbidden and even hated but practically men (mostly rich) could have many sexual partners. By having only one wife the Christian woman was the center of her husband's attention. This would bring stability in her marriage and a lot less stress in her life!

### **<sup>7</sup> Husbands, in the same way live with *your wives knowledgeably***

Peter is very direct and talks about '*in the same way live*'. What he teaches has to do with everyday life, the way husbands ought to conduct themselves. As we will see, this is in opposition to the general philosophy of how a man should regard a woman. This is the beauty of the Christian marriage and living with women in general.

Notice that Peter talks about living '*knowledgeably*' (GNOSIS) meaning: knowing, or knowledge. These teaching are to be known and understood by every man especially every husband. God intends men to know how to treat women and have a holy and pure relationship with them. He expects his sons to treat his daughters like they truly are – children of God.

**(v.7) ...as with the weaker female vessel, showing *them* honor as fellow heirs also of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.**

When one reads '*as with the weaker female vessel*' one can wonder what Peter means and may even be offended by this. Once we understand what is really meant we change our perception of what is said. This is what Dr. Thomas Constable wrote about this verse in his commentary on 1<sup>st</sup> Peter:

'By comparing a wife to a weaker vessel Peter was not implying that wives or women are inferior to husbands or males or that they are weaker in every way or most ways. Obviously, in many marriages the wife is the stronger person emotionally, mentally, spiritually, morally, socially, and or physically.'

Nevertheless physically the wife is usually weaker than her husband. Men tend to choose as their wives women who are not as strong or muscular as they are. Furthermore generally men are stronger than women physically. In view of this, husbands need to treat their wives with special consideration. Both the husband and the wife are vessels, but husbands are more typically similar to iron skillets whereas wives resemble china vases, being more delicate. They are equally important but different.'

The word '*vessel*' (SKEUOS) has different meanings depending on the sentence. On certain occasions '*vessel*' speaks about the person, as being chosen for the service of God (Acts 9:15) or as a chosen vessel of honor for God (2 Tim. 2:21). Other times '*vessel*' is subject of divine wrath (Rom. 9:2) or his divine mercy (Rom. 9:23). It is also used simply to describe the human frame (2 Cor. 4:7). Peter is speaking about the woman's frame which differs from a man's frame (body). Peter writes that the feminine human frame is more fragile and husbands should take this into consideration.

Peter writes that husbands should be '*showing them honor*'. With many men it is difficult to manifest emotions towards their wives. Emphasis is placed on their duty to do so. Wives need to see '*showing*' (APONEMO) meaning: to bestow, apportion, and give – their husbands manifesting direct intent and consideration towards them. Husbands are told to manifest '*honor*' (TIME) meaning: a value, esteem of the highest decree. Wives need to know that their husbands value them, not only in private but also before others. Again this was not a common thing that was done. It may even have manifested weakness if a man did such a thing. Remember that women had very little rights in the Roman Empire. Their main duty was to have children and take care of their household. Christian wives were to be regarded as having great value. I can imagine that a non-believing woman seeing how her friend's believing husband honored and treated her could have made her jealous!

**(v.7) ...as fellow heirs also of the grace of life,**

Peter goes even one step beyond and tells husbands that their wives are '*fellow heirs*'. Remember that women in the Roman Empire had no identity in themselves and were not allowed to administer any inheritance they may have received. Everything in their lives was man-centered. Here Peter reminds all Christian men that their wives are just as they are! There is equality between children of God, male and female alike. They are '*fellow heirs*' (SUGKLERONOMOS) meaning: co-heirs, participant in common. By calling wives '*fellow-heirs*' God is breaking every rule in the book (man's book that is)! Women were to receive the same type of inheritance as men would! They would be received in heaven like men would! They were loved and respected and treasured like men were! This was REVOLUTIONARY and in some parts of the world it is still revolutionary!

Wives were *'fellow heirs also of the grace of life'*. The lives of these women were filled with God's grace. His immeasurable favour also fell upon them! We can imagine that the *'life'* that Peter is writing about is both their physical and spiritual life. Now what would be one of the reasons why Peter tells husbands to acknowledge what God had done for their wives?

**(v.7) ...so that your prayers will not be hindered.**

The word *'hindered'* (EKKOPTO) means: to frustrate, cut down or hinder. This may be one of the main reasons why the prayers of husbands ARE NOT ANSWERED! They do not treat their wives like the Lord tells them to! Christian husband wake up! Take immense care of the woman that you have married. Honor her and manifest your love and kindness to her.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
12 – Living and each other  
3:8-12

**<sup>8</sup> And finally, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, showing mutual affection, compassionate, humble, <sup>9</sup> not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but on the other hand blessing *others*, because for this *reason* you were called, so that you could inherit a blessing. <sup>10</sup> For**  
**“The one who wants to love life  
and see good days  
must keep his tongue from evil  
and *his* lips must not speak deceit.**  
**<sup>11</sup> And he must turn away from evil and do good;  
he must seek peace and pursue it.**  
**<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous,  
and his ears *are open* to their prayer.**  
**But the face of the Lord *is* against those who do evil.  
Suffer for Doing What is Good  
(LEB)**

In this section, Peter writes about holy living in the general context of life. This is a short guide on how to live with people. Since we are ambassadors of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), and should be living as children of the light (Eph. 5:8), this section is very important. Disciples of Christ meet people every day and are called to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). How can we witness the grace of the Lord God, if we do not manifest God’s grace in us, through our relationship with others?

**<sup>8</sup> And finally, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, showing mutual affection, compassionate, humble, <sup>9</sup> not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult**

Since this seems to be the end of a section within a section, Peter begins with the word ‘*finally*’ (TELOS) meaning: to set out for a definitive point or goal. This is exactly what believers need to have in life – a definitive goal in life. We all know that there are many goals for a believer to attain and Peter lays out one of them. There are seven goals that he brings to mind. A quick note is that Peter expects this to be accomplished by ‘*all of you*’. No one is excluded from this type of living. No one can say ‘I’m an exception’ or ‘I’m not made like that, it’s just not me’. If you are a true believer then this IS for you.

The first is *'be harmonious'* (HOMOPHRON) meaning: to be like minded. This is a hapax meaning that this word is only used once in the Scriptures. The word simply means 'of one mind'. Since it is used only once it may be difficult to explain. It gives the idea of thinking like another person and because of this, there is agreement between both of you. Here Peter is encouraging believers to try to agree with others in life. Some people just can't be likable. They never seem to be able to agree with others. There will often be points of discord but let us not make major issues out of them except if they deal with what God says.

### **Philippians 3**

**15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

**(NKJV)**

The second is be *'sympathetic'* (SUMPATOS) meaning: having a fellow-feeling. If the first encouragement is to be of the same mind the second deals with our feelings or emotions. One can be of the same mind and be cold about it. What believers also needs to do is to manifest what they think through their feelings. Imagine going to a marriage and not manifesting joy or going to a funeral and not manifesting any sympathy for the grieving family! In the believer's relationship with others, feelings that are in accord with the situation should be manifested.

### **1 Corinthians 12**

**25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.**

**26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.**

**(NKJV)**

The third is *'showing mutual affection'* (PHILADELPHOS) meaning: fraternal love as brethren. Believers are all called to love others and be kind to all. This is true but it seems that there is a special love or attachment for the brothers and sisters in Christ. Can I say that I love God and at the same time not manifest *'mutual affection'* to my brothers and sisters? The answer is NO (1 John 3:17; 4:20). Jesus said the following: 'By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35). So am I showing others my fraternal love for them?

## James 2

**14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?**

**15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,**

**16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?**

**17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

**(NKJV)**

The fourth is to be *'compassionate'* (EUSPLAGEHNOS) meaning: well compassioned, tender hearted. In general, the world is cold-hearted. People think of themselves before others and are ready to lie, cheat and step on others just to get their way. What the world desperately needs is compassion. Disciples of Christ need to be tender-hearted toward others, have an open ear and listen, have an outstretched hand to help and have feet ready to be of service no matter what is asked. People who are kind-hearted automatically attract people to them. It was the compassion of Christ that made crowds run to hear him. His compassion was shown by encouraging words, his healing of others, his hands touching men, women and children whomever they were.

## Luke 7

**12 And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.**

**13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."**

**14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."**

**15 So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.**

**(NKJV)**

The fifth is being *'humble'* (PHILOPHRON) meaning: friendly of mind, kind, courteous. Have you ever met a friendly person, one that has a smile on his face and seems to emanate happiness! For some these people are just annoying but for the majority of the people they notice them and enjoy the way they are. When someone is kind and courteous it brightens up the day. For a believer, to be friendly of mind should come naturally simply because their minds have been renewed (Rom. 12:1,2) and it should be manifest in their lives. How can one 'bring someone to Christ' if he does not have a friendly nature? Are you friendly and humble these days? Are you attracting someone to Christ or repulsing them?

### **Romans 12**

**16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.**

**(NKJV)**

The sixth is *'not repaying evil for evil'*. There are things that a disciple is called to do and things that he should not and this is one of them. The word *'repaying'* (APODIDOMI) means: to give away, give again, deliver. The idea in this phrase is to give back to someone. What is it that we should not give back to another? Peter writes *'evil for evil'*. The word *'evil'* (KAKOS) means: depraved, injurious, bad, wicked. The human tendency is to fight back and retaliate. This way of doing things should not be in the believer's heart for Jesus said:

### **Matthew 5**

**38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'**

**39 "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.**

**40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.**

**41 "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.**

**42 "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.**

**(NKJV)**

The seventh thing is *'not repaying insult for insult'*. The word *'insult'* (LOIDORIA) means: slander, railing, reproach. Most Christians do not return evil for evil. They will not physically injure someone. What they often do is *'insult'* them either in their hearts or by speaking evil of them to others. What should we do when someone openly insults us or someone we love? Jesus showed us what to do. When he was hanging on the cross people mocked and ridiculed him yet Christ said the following:

### **Luke 23**

**33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.**

**34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.**

**(NKJV)**

After telling the believers NOT to repay evil for evil and NOT to repay insult for insult the apostle Peter will tell them what they should do instead.

**(v.9) ...but on the other hand blessing *others*, because for this *reason* you were called, so that you could inherit a blessing.**

What disciples should do is '*blessing others*' (EULOGEO) meaning: to speak well of, praise. In our relations with others believers are called to speak well of others. There is a saying that goes like this: 'If you don't have anything good to say don't say anything at all'. This sounds like something Peter would teach because it is very biblical. Paul said it this way:

#### **Ephesians 4**

**29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.**

**(NKJV)**

Why should we bless others? Peter gives the answer: '*because for this reason you were called*'. The word '*called*' (KALEO) means: to call forth, to call out loud. In other words having become children of God we have received this calling from God to bless others and to be a blessing for others. As a child of God, wanting to bless others, should be in our spiritual DNA – it's our '*calling*'.

In his grace, the Lord God says, that if we bless others we will also '*inherit a blessing*'. In other words, the more we bless and become a blessing, the more we, in turn, will be the recipients of God's blessing! Should that not encourage every believer to desire to bless others? Peter now turns to Ps. 34:12-16 to make his point.

**<sup>10</sup> For**

**“The one who wants to love life  
and see good days  
must keep his tongue from evil  
and *his* lips must not speak deceit.**

**<sup>11</sup> And he must turn away from evil and do good;  
he must seek peace and pursue it.**

**<sup>12</sup> For the eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous,  
and his ears *are open to* their prayer.**

**But the face of the Lord *is* against those who do evil.  
Suffer for Doing What is Good.**

This is the soil from which Peter took his thoughts. They explain what a good life before the Lord actually looks like. Since we all want to *'love life'* and to *'see good days'*, we all should live the way the Psalmist wrote (which Peter reflects in his writings).

It first deals with our tongue *'keep his tongue from evil'* and also *'his lips must not speak deceit'*. Have you noticed that most quarrelling is initiated by what we say! So restraining our desire to say something is actually a good thing.

Then the psalm speaks of the wisdom needed in our actions. One needs to *'turn away from evil and do good'*. This implies making the right decisions. One also needs to *'seek peace and pursue it'*. We need constancy and a driving force to keeps us moving in God's direction.

In the last verse, we see what the Lord does in relation to how his people conduct themselves with others. His eyes are *'on the righteous'* and *'his ears are open to their prayer'*. God is attentive and he is favorable to the one who does right to others. On the other hand the *'face of the Lord is against those who do evil'*. A true believer should understand that the way he conducts his life is important to the Lord. One is either blessed or disapproved by the Lord. Have you thought about that lately?

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
13 – Living and righteousness  
3:13-17

**<sup>13</sup> And who *is* the one who will harm you if you are a zealous adherent for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you might suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not be afraid of their intimidation or be disturbed, <sup>15</sup> but set Christ apart *as* Lord in your hearts, always ready to *make* a defense to anyone who asks you *for* an accounting concerning the hope *that is* in you. <sup>16</sup> But *do so* with courtesy and respect, having a good conscience, so that in *the things* in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For *it is* better to suffer for doing good, *if God wills it*, than for doing evil.**  
(LEB)

The normal life of a true believer is a life of doing what is good in the eyes of the Lord God. Salvation does not begin once we have passed from this life unto the other. It actually begins right after one is born-again. This is what happens when one repents unto righteousness:

- We become a child of God (John 1:12,13)
- We are sealed by the Holy Spirit for the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13,14)
- We become a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17)
- We have received forgiveness for all of our sins (Rom. 8:1)
- We now have true life in us (1 Jean 5:12)
- We are protected by the Father from all spiritual harm (Jean 10:28,29)
- We are specially blessed by God (Eph. 1:3)
- We are now part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27)

There are many more things that happen, but I would like to point out one very important change in the new believer:

### **Romans 12**

**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, *but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**  
(NKJV)

The believer's mind is renewed. Since he has passed from death unto life (John 5:24), his mind has been enlightened and he begins to see things the way the Lord God does. Paul calls this 'having the mind of Christ' (1 Cor. 2:16).

This ‘mind of Christ’ in the believer, gives him a desire to live for righteousness, to walk in the light, to live a life that pleases his Savior. This new walk in life is described by Paul:

- ‘walk worthy of the calling with which you were called’ (Eph. 4:1)
- ‘you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind’ (Eph. 4:17)
- ‘and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us’ (Eph. 5:2)
- ‘For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light’ (Eph. 5:8)

In this section, Peter writes concerning our walk as a child of God both the good and the difficult aspects of our walk as a child of God..

**<sup>13</sup> And who is the one who will harm you if you are a zealous adherent for what is good?**

The first thought is the following: if you do good and you are zealous about it, who will harm you? This is a general statement because the next verse says that harm may come to you by doing what is good. But normally when someone is good, people will like him. With the transformation at the new birth, one receives the Holy Spirit who begins to transform him into the image of Christ. He begins to be loving, caring, kind, compassionate, tender, affectionate, thoughtful, gentle, helpful, generous, considerate and so forth. Normally these people are welcomed in society. Yet, when we read the gospels, we see that even Christ, with all of his zeal for righteousness and goodness, was rejected and crucified. So far we have learned that, in general, living with a zeal for goodness will have a beneficial effect on your social life.

**<sup>14</sup> But even if you might suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. And do not be afraid of their intimidation or be disturbed**

Here is Peter’s second statement ‘*even if you might suffer*’. There are possibilities that you will suffer. Remember that he is writing to Christians who were spread across the Roman Empire, because of their faith. Some had lost everything and were actually fleeing for their lives. So they knew that suffering was a real possibility. A quick note, depending on where you lived in the Roman Empire the persecution varied. One could live a peaceful life on the south shore of the Mediterranean while having to abandon their home if you lived in Italy. Suffering also varied from imprisonment and even death to living a ‘quiet’ life and not bringing attention on yourself. One thing is certain is that if you suffer for ‘*righteousness*’ then ‘*you are blessed*’.

The word *'blessed'* (MAKARIOS) means: supremely blessed. In most of the churches in the Western World everyone shuns suffering! Some church denominations even teach that one should never be sick or have financial difficulties. Some teach that when things 'go wrong' it's automatically because of sin in your life. This is far from the truth. Here we see that living for righteousness will bring suffering. Peter has already touched this subject in section number three (1:6-12).

**(v.14) ...you are blessed.**

As I said earlier, when a Disciple of Christ lives a life of righteousness, chances are that he will be rejected and suffer wrong because of his faith. A believer should not shy away because of this. I fear that many Christians hide their true identity. I call them 'closet Christians'. They come 'out of the closet' on Sunday but the rest of the week no one can tell that they believe in Christ. For some reason they are ashamed to proclaim that they believe in Christ! I would worry if I were them because of what Christ said:

#### **Mark 8**

**38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."**

**(NKJV)**

Peter states that blessings are given to those who suffer for righteousness. Again the word *'blessed'* (MAKARIOS) means: supremely blessed. There are no greater blessings to be had than to suffer for Christ's sake and glory. Believers can often be myopic (near-sighted, short-sighted). They are unable to see down the road and lack spiritual vision. One day, believers will be rewarded for their life on earth and blessings will shower them. In his parable concerning the servants and the work they did, during the absence of their master, to the first 'good servant' Jesus said:

#### **Luke 19**

**16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'  
17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'**

**(NKJV)**

The first good servant was rewarded by having authority over ten cities and the second servant over five cities. They lived like their master wanted and were rewarded. Believers shall be *'blessed'* for suffering because of righteousness. May we never forget this.

**(v.14) ...And do not be afraid of their intimidation or be disturbed**

If on one side the believer needs to towards the future and stand for Christ at the same time he is still living in the present - so what should he do? Peter encourages them *'not to be afraid'*. The word *'afraid'* (PHOBEO) means: to be frightened, alarmed or afraid. They need to take heart and to place all circumstances in the hands of their Father. Believers need to remember that God is ruler over all things (Ps. 115:3) and can change any circumstance if he desires. What are believers told not to be afraid of:

**(v.14) ...their intimidation or be disturbed**

The word *'intimidation'* (PHOBOS) means: to be put in fear. To have their way people will warn others of harm that can be done unto them. They will threat, bully and terrorise hoping that the person will be intimidated and do as they say. Not too long after Peter wrote his first and second letter to encourage Christians, he underwent great intimidation to recant his faith as did Paul also. It is believed that both of them were martyred under Nero who died in 68 AD. Peter also tells them not to *'be disturbed'* (TARASSO) meaning: to stir, agitate, troubled. God is in control.

**<sup>15</sup> but set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you for an accounting concerning the hope that is in you. <sup>16</sup> But do so with courtesy and respect, having a good conscience, so that in the things in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil.**

Living in difficult times and being threatened because of your belief in Christ, is the setting of this entire letter. Live a godly life, don't be intimidated and don't be disturbed. So what were they to do during their persecution? Peter adds the following to what he already had written.

The first was to *'set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts'*. Christ needed to be *'set apart'* from everything else. He needed to reign in their lives and they needed to see him as *'Lord'*, not just a spiritual teacher or leader but LORD. They needed to see him the one who has authority over them and to whom they are accountable. If Christ is Lord then his teachings and commands are to be followed. Every Christian should have Christ *'set apart'* in his own heart. His throne should be in your heart. His will should be your command. Your first love should be Christ and as his Bride you should patiently wait for his return. What place has the Lord in your life? How much space does he have in your daily living? Once he has all the place he deserves this comes next:

**(v.15) ...always ready to *make* a defense to anyone who asks you *for* an accounting concerning the hope *that is* in you.**

Believers need to be '*always ready*'. I have often observed that the best times to evangelize come without having planned to do so. These are what I call 'God moments'. It seems that the Lord just opens up a door and the timing is just right and time stands still as we speak of our faith in Christ. This reminds me of what Jesus said to the church in Philadelphia:

### **Revelation 3**

**7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens':**

**8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.  
(NKJV)**

Are you ready to defend your faith or to spread the 'Good News' wherever you are?' Do you place this in your prayers every day – to be God's witness? Believers are called '*to make a defense*' (APOLOGIA) meaning: plea, answer, clearing of self, defense. Since the believer will be called to defend or explain his faith (evangelize) he needs to have basic knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. One can not defend his faith if he does not know what he is talking about. That is why one absolutely needs to read and study and memorize the Holy Scriptures. This was even important for Paul, remember what he wrote:

### **2 Timothy 4**

**13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come--and the books, especially the parchments.  
(NKJV)**

The defense is '*concerning the hope that is in you*'. The word '*hope*' (ELPIS) means: expectation, confidence, faith or hope. Believers have only ONE hope and that is Christ (Phil. 1:20). Believers are called to defend Jesus the Son of God, the Messiah of all true believers. We are NOT called to defend a church, a denomination, a spiritual movement, a wonderful preacher, an institution or anything of the sort. They are not our hope and they will all fail us in one way or another. Our hope is in Christ Jesus and it is he that we set our eyes upon, make room in our hearts for and speak of.

**<sup>16</sup> But *do so* with courtesy and respect, having a good conscience, so that in *the things* in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.**

Far too many Disciples of Christ do not know how to defend their faith. They may have the right information but the delivery of these facts is so repulsive that the hearer is ‘turned off’ by the believer. Peter says that it must be done ‘*with courtesy*’ (PRAUTES) meaning: mildness, humility or meekness. We are not called to be arrogant, haughty and proud, thinking that we are so better than the others – we are NOT better, Christ is. This speaks of the attitude that a witness of Christ should have, he should be humble. The Peter speaks of ‘*respect*’ (PHOBOS) meaning: to be kept in fear. This gives the idea of respecting the person the believer is speaking to. Even if the person is disrespectful, rude or even insolent towards you, you need to respond with respect. Remember what Jesus taught concerning our being offended by others:

### Matthew 5

**38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'  
39 "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.  
(NKJV)**

Peter then speaks of ‘*having a good conscience*’ (SUNEIDESIS) meaning: moral conscience. Our conscience before the Lord must always be kept ‘clean’ even when we are attacked because of our faith. It is our attitude before men and God that is most important. Going against your renewed conscience is NEVER a good thing to do. Again, why do all of this?

**(v.16) ...so that in *the things* in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.**

You see people who ‘*slandered*’ you (KATALALEO) meaning: to slander, speak against or evil of and those who ‘*malign*’ you (KAKOPOIOS) meaning: a criminal, an evil-doer, they will be struck by your reaction. Instead of retaliating, hitting back or trying to get revenge, your conduct should be good and respectable. Do you remember one of the soldiers that stood at the cross of Christ? He saw all that was said and done against him and how Jesus reacted and what happened afterwards. Do you remember what this soldier said?

### Mat. 27

**54 So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"  
(NKJV)**

The living testimony of Christ and his father brought these men to confess that Christ was the Son of God. May our testimony do the same!

**<sup>17</sup> For *it is better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil.***

The only point that I would like to bring (because we have already spoken of the rest) is '*if God wills it*'. Here Peter openly says that it may be God's will (THELEMA) meaning: a determination, a choice, a decree, a desire that his child may suffer for his glory. We may not understand why, but we need to accept that it is true. The history of Christianity is filled with stories of men, women and children who have suffered under the hands of non-believers. God is not helpless in such cases. He delivered Daniel's three friends from the furnace (Daniel 3). He also allowed Stephen to be stoned to death (Acts 7).

#### **Isaiah 55**

**8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.**

**9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

**(NKJV)**

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
14 – Living with a good conscience  
3:18-22

**<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins,  
the just for the unjust,  
in order that he could bring you to God,  
being put to death in the flesh,  
but made alive in the spirit,  
<sup>19</sup> in which also he went *and* proclaimed to the spirits in prison,  
<sup>20</sup> who were formerly disobedient, when the patience of God waited in the days of  
Noah, *while* an ark was being constructed, in which a few—that is, eight souls—  
were rescued through water. <sup>21</sup> And also, corresponding to *this*, baptism now saves  
you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good  
conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who is at the right hand of  
God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been  
subjected to him.  
(LEB)**

Our text is a difficult one and in many instances more than one explanation is given by various commentators. I would encourage my readers to study various authors and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten them. There are parts of the Bible which are difficult to analyse. Peter even says the following:

**2 Peter 3  
15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved  
brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,  
16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some  
things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own  
destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.  
(NKJV)**

We begin with verse eighteen which is a wonderful statement in relation to Jesus' perfect atoning sacrifice for the believer's sins. Here is what Peter is teaching.

The first thing is that '*Jesus suffered once for sins*'. The main point is the word '*once*' (HAPAX) meaning: one, a single time and '*sins*' (HAMARTIS) meaning: sin, offense.

This is at the very center of Christianity. Christ died once and for all for the believer's sins. The writer of Hebrews is very adamant concerning this. Listen to what is written:

### **Hebrews 10**

**10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

**11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.**

**12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,**

**13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.**

**14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.**

**(NKJV)**

He writes '*once for all*' (v.10) and then '*by one offering*' (v.14). The conclusion is that the offering of Jesus '*has perfected FOREVER those who are being sanctified*'. There is nothing to add to the sacrifice of Jesus to make it better or more acceptable to the Father. He even gives the example of sacrifices that are offered day in and day out which have absolutely no worth '*which can never take away sins*'. There are churches, which call themselves Christian, who teach that suffering, good deeds, sacraments, prayers and even money will grant you a swifter way into heaven. This is blasphemy! Saying that Christ is not sufficient for our salvation is a doctrine of the demons (1 Tim. 4:1).

The second statement is that Jesus suffered for the unjust: '*the just for the unjust*'. There is only one just person and that is the Lord Jesus. Paul states that ALL men are unjust (Rom. 3:9-18) that ALL are sinners before the Lord God (Rom. 3:23) and that ALL have spiritually died (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1). Jesus, God – the Son (Immanuel) is the only one who is '*just*' (Rev. 15:3) for he is God incarnate. This takes away any thought that a person may have some type of personal justice before God. What is fancied today is the thought (mostly New Age) that IN YOU is the answer. The Bible teaches that IN YOU is spiritual death and a warped heart! Peter is saying that Jesus has become the believer's JUSTICE (Rom. 3:22; 5:17; 10:3,4)

The third statement in relationship with Jesus is that '*in order that he could bring you to God*'. Mankind had become enemies of God (Rom. 5:10) and a separation was erected between man and God. This is what is written in Isaiah:

**Isaiah 59**

**1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.**

**2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**

**3 For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity.**

**4 No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.**

**(NKJV)**

This 'wall' of separation (our sins) has been atoned for by the sacrifice of Jesus who is '*the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*' (John 1:29,36). The proof that Christ has brought believers into the presence of God is the ripping of the veil in the temple (Mat. 27:51). Once Christ died, the way to the holy of holies was now opened!

**(v.18) ...being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,**

This is the fourth statement about Christ. Jesus bore our sins '*in the flesh*' (Rom. 8:3). The Scriptures even say that Christ BECAME sin. In other words sin infiltrated his body as it does ours (2 Cor. 5:21). Once he 'paid the price' he once more was in perfect harmony with the Father.

**<sup>19</sup> in which also he went *and* proclaimed to the spirits in prison,  
<sup>20</sup> who were formerly disobedient, when the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, *while* an ark was being constructed, in which a few—that is, eight souls—were rescued through water.**

This section is a difficult one and as I said in the beginning there are different interpretations. The most plausible (in my view) is the following. During the three days before the resurrection of Christ he went and proclaimed his victory '*to the spirits in prison who were formerly disobedient*'. The context is '*the days of Noah*'. It is believed that Jesus went to testify to '*the spirits in prison*' which would be those who are waiting for the final judgment to come because they refused the witness of Noah. The proof of this is that it is written that they '*were formerly disobedient*'. Refusing to enter the ark and be saved, they disobeyed the proclamation of God through Noah. God had been patient, but a day came that the door of the ark was shut and it was too late to enter. This is a 'type' of Christ who is pictured by the ark. All who enter Christ will be saved and all who reject Christ will suffer judgment.

**<sup>21</sup> And also, corresponding to *this*, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him.**

Peter brings another analogy concerning the ark, water and judgment. This also may bring different interpretations IF WE ARE NOT CAREFUL! Peter declares that the eight mentioned '*were rescued through water*' (v.20). Notice he did not say that they were rescued BY the water but THROUGH water. Also notice that only eight were saved because only eight were in the ark. Only eight believed and acted upon God's salvation from the flood. Here we have faith in action. I hear (from God), I believe what is said and I respond by faith (Rom. 10:16,17) and I am therefore saved.

Some teach that baptism takes away the original sin and use this as proof. This is not at all what Peter writes! Baptism has never saved a single soul. A perfect example of this is the criminal on the cross who repented just before he died. Being nailed on the cross he was not and could not be baptised yet this is what Jesus said to him:

### **Luke 23**

**42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."**

**43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."**

**(NKJV)**

If baptism does not save, for only Christ can save (Act 4:12), what is Peter saying?

**(v.21) ...baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ**

He first says what baptism does not do: '*not the removal of dirt from the flesh*'. Baptism does not remove any '*dirt from the flesh*'. In other words baptism does not clean the believer from his sins. It does not take away the 'original' sin (which the bible never speaks about) or any later sins. So what does baptism manifest? Paul says that it manifests our spiritual death, burial and resurrection with Christ (Rom. 6:1-5). Peter brings another aspect of the believer's baptism: '*but an appeal to God for a good conscience*'.

Peter is speaking about the commitment of the Christian before God. Once the person repents of his sins and asks Christ to save him the next step is '*follow me*', as Jesus puts it.

The believer expresses his gratitude and love towards his Messiah by declaring that he desires to keep '*a good conscience*' before God. This gives the idea of desiring to follow his Savior as closely as possible.

The subject of our conscience is spoken about mostly by Paul and the writer of Hebrews. Paul warns that it is possible to go against our conscience before God and if one does not repent his life will be ruined. An example of this is the following:

### **1 Timothy 1**

**19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,  
20 of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.  
(NKJV)**

The problem with Hymenaeus was that he started to preach another gospel saying that the resurrection of the dead had already occurred (2 Tim. 2:17,18). As you can see, his conscience was no longer 'good before the Lord'. We do not know anything about Alexander except that he is not the Alexander mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:14 for he was a coppersmith who fabricated idols.

Baptism does not save. It is a statement made before the brethren that we have died, have been buried and have risen with Christ and now desire to live for God. It is also a statement that the person desires to keep a '*good conscience*' before God. Peter writes that it is through the resurrection of Christ that believers are able to make such a statement.

**<sup>22</sup> who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him.**

This is the final statement of Peter in this section. It finishes with a picture of who Christ is. He is first '*at the right hand of God*'. This was the position of honor in Jewish tradition. In Acts 2:34,35 it is written: '*The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool"*'. This speaks of the Father and the Son sitting at his right hand. Other verses also speak of Jesus being at the right hand of God (Acts 5:31; 7:55,56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3). Then he is '*gone into heaven*'. This is his abode and where his throne stands. The book of Revelation mentions that Christ is presently in the heavens and is being worshipped by the heavenly hosts!

### **Revelation 5**

**11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,**

**12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"**

**13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"**

**14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.**

**(NKJV)**

Finally Peter writes that all the heavenly hosts are '*subjected to him*', declaring that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. If you are a Disciple of Christ may you never forget who he is! Remember your baptism and the profession of faith you have given. May you also keep a good conscience before the Lord!

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
15 – Living with the mind of Christ  
4:1-6

**Therefore, *because* Christ suffered in the flesh, you also equip yourselves with the same way of thinking, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup> in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup> For the time that has passed *was sufficient to do what the Gentiles desire to do*, having lived in licentiousness, *evil* desires, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries, <sup>4</sup> with respect to which they are surprised *when* you do not run with *them* into the same flood of dissipation, *and so they revile you*. <sup>5</sup> They will give an account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup> Because for this reason also the gospel was preached to those who are dead, so that they were judged *by human standards* in the flesh, but they may live in the spirit *by God's standards*.**

(LEB)

In a certain way, Peter continues to speak about living with a clean conscience before the Lord God. He will talk about how people live in sin and how salvation has brought a brand new way of thinking. As we will see, living in the light does not please the ones who reject the light.

**Therefore, *because* Christ suffered in the flesh, you also equip yourselves with the same way of thinking, because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,**

This is Peter's general opening statement. Once again he speaks of Jesus and his sufferings and this time he refers to one of these causes. We know that he suffered in our stead at the cross that his suffering was meant to atone for the sins of those who would repent (1 Cor. 5:7). There are many other reasons why Christ died (I would refer you to a book entitled 'The Passion of Jesus Christ' Crossway publications, by John Piper where he gives fifty reasons why Christ suffered and died). One of them was for us to imitate his life of accepting suffering. It is written '*Therefore, because Christ suffered in the flesh*'. The word '*therefore*' (OUKOUM) means: hence or so, BECAUSE '*Christ suffered*'. I believe that this speaks of more than just the physical aspect of the cross. He suffered slaps and hitting on the face by the Roman soldiers. His head was pierced by the crown of thorns that was deeply imbedded on his head. He was whipped while attached to a pole. It is a known fact that many who were whipped did not survive this means of torture – but Christ did!

Exhausted he had to carry the cross until he was so faint that a man called Simon was told to carry it for him. Then the suffering of the crucifixion, nail being driven through his flesh. But the greatest suffering was being abandoned by the Father:

**Mark 15**

**34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"  
(NKJV)**

In a way, Peter is telling the believers to look at Christ and see his sufferings. Then he tells them: *'you also equip yourselves with the same way of thinking.'* Since Christ has *'suffered'* (PASCHO) meaning: to experience a sensation mainly of pain, you need to be prepared to do the same. The word *'equip'* (HOPLIZO) means: to equip with weapons in mind. The 'weapons' that Peter has in mind is the *'same way of thinking'* like Christ did. The word *'thinking'* (ENNOIA) means: intent, mind, thoughtfulness. Just as Christ thought, so should all of his disciples! An example of not thinking the way that Christ does is the following:

**Luke 9**

**53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.**

**54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"**

**55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.  
(NKJV)**

There is a reason that is given to WHY a true believer in Christ needs to have the same mind-set as his Savior: *'because the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.'* There is something that happens to a person when he or she has *'suffered in the flesh'*. Notice that both sufferings either with Christ or with his disciple is the same Greek word – PASCHO which means: to experience a sensation mainly of pain. When believers are suffering because they are Christians the experience of sinning is greatly reduced. The word *'ceased'* (PAUO) means: to stop, restrain, quit, and desist. We often sin because it brings some sort of enjoyment for the flesh but when the flesh already suffers then sin has less appeal to the believer.

**<sup>2</sup> in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for the will of God.**

What Peter is actually telling them is that it is a good thing to be suffering for the sake of Christ. We have already seen that believers will be rewarded but other reasons do exist. The one that is now mentioned deals with the war of sin in the believer's heart. There is a battle between the flesh and the spirit within the heart of every believer. It seems that suffering for Christ diminishes this tug-of-war between the two leaving the flesh to lose ground! Peter speaks of our living *'the remaining time in the flesh'*. He is speaking of the days that are still before us to live. The word *'remaining'* (EPILOIPAS) means: left over, remaining or the rest. Whatever portion of life that is left to live it should be *'no longer for human desires'*. Being preoccupied with living for Christ will chase away the will for *'human desires'* (EPITHUMIA) meaning: a longing especially for what is forbidden. Rather, it will open the way *'for the will of God'*. Suffering turns our hearts towards the Father as we place our faith in Him! Instead of asking the Lord God to take away all of your sufferings because of Christ, humble yourself and reflect as you taste an infinitely small measure of Christ's sufferings for you!

**<sup>3</sup> For the time that has passed was sufficient to do what the Gentiles desire to do, having lived in licentiousness, evil desires, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and wanton idolatries,**

Another aspect of Christ's sufferings in the flesh deals with his constant battle against the desires of the flesh. As a man, Christ was subjected to all that this world offers the flesh. The Bible states that Jesus was tempted as all men were (Heb. 2:18; 4:15) and because of this he can sympathise with our battles with temptation. Peter gives a short list of sins that non-believers enjoyed. It is also a list of what believers enjoyed BEFORE their new birth.

The first is living in *'licentiousness'* (ASELGEIA) meaning: filthy vices, lasciviousness. This speaks concerning the general depravity and lifestyle of people. It reminds me of the great flood and how mankind was already filled with wickedness.

### Genesis 6

**5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.  
(NKJV)**

We also have another chapter in the history of mankind where their wicked sins reached the Lord God and he once more had to clean the earth from its sinful inhabitants.

### Genesis 18

**20 And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,**

**21 "I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."**

**(NKJV)**

The heart of man was and still is filled with sinful filth. Man easily breaks every natural, spiritual and moral law as long as it pleases him to do so. Look around and you will see that things have not changed, in fact darkness is growing stronger.

The second is *'evil desires'* (EPITHUMIA) meaning: a longing especially for what is forbidden. This may describe the inner intent of the human heart before it is changed by the grace of God. Even if man does not act upon certain impulses his mind can be filled with illicit longings. Jesus remind us that desiring to do evil is actually doing it in the eyes of God.

### Matthew 5

**28 "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

**(NKJV)**

The third is *'drunkenness'* (OINOTHIUGIA) meaning: an overflow of wine. The bible does not forbid people to drink wine but it forbids them to get drunk (Eph. 5:18). When believers are filled with alcohol they become under the influence of their own minds and flesh instead of the Holy Spirit. Do you remember the two sons of Aaron (Nadab and Abihu) who died because they brought a 'strange fire' (Lev. 10:1,2) and poured incense upon it and offered it to the Lord? Notice that just after this event the Lord spoke to Moses and told him to forbid anyone to drink wine or any intoxicating drink (Lev. 10:9) when they go to the tabernacle of meeting. This refers to when they do their work as priests in the tent of meeting. No believer should ever be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that distorts his faculties.

The fourth is *'carousing'* (KOMOS) meaning: reviling, rioting. We know that rebellion has been in the heart of mankind since the tragic moment when Adam and Eve trusted in the serpent instead of in the Lord God. The Bible tells us that:

## 1 Corinthians 14

**33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.  
(NKJV)**

The word '*confusion*' (AKATASASIA) means: instability, disorder and tumult. When people act in a disorderly way, we know that the Lord is not part of this.

The fifth is '*drinking parties*' (POTOS) meaning: drinking about, banqueting, giving the idea of spending time 'partying' and over-indulging in food. Again this is something that pleases the flesh and often by doing so, we let our 'guards down' which causes us to fall into sin. We often forget that gluttony is also a grave sin before the Lord (Pr. 28:7). We never find an example of excess in food and strong drink that had a good outcome in the Scriptures.

The sixth is '*wanton idolatries*'. The word '*wanton*' (ATHEMITOS) means: illegal, abominable and the word '*idolatries*' (EIDOLOLATREIA) means: image-worshipping. Like today, people had idols in their hearts and prayed to them, asking for favors and sometimes even devoting their lives to them. In other words they had idols in their lives. Idol worship is one of the greatest sins of God's people in the Old Testament.

### Jer. 16

**18 "And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin, because they have defiled My land; they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols."  
(NKJV)**

This is a picture of what people did in general and how they lived. We see that their hearts were set on the things of the 'flesh' and that the Lord God had very little (if any) true place in their lives. Peter reminds the believers of their former lives.

**<sup>4</sup> with respect to which they are surprised *when you do not run with them into the same flood of dissipation, and so they revile you.***

But something had happened to them, their hearts were changed and their minds now had a different intent for life – they were born again. Since the Holy Spirit lived in each of them a new work had begun, this is what we call sanctification. Just as Jesus 'cleaned his Father's house' (Mark 11:15-19) so is the Holy Spirit 'cleaning' the hearts of God's children. When this happens, people around them react '*they are surprised*', they see that a new 'you' is present and they wonder where the old 'you' has gone!

The problem is that a Disciple of Christ no longer *'run with them into the same flood of dissipation'*. The hearts of the believers no longer have a tendency to look for the pleasures they once enjoyed. They no longer participate in the common sins that Peter listed just above. When this happens the non-believers, who are irritated that they no longer participate with them, *'revile you'*. The word *'revile'* (BLASPHEMEO) means: to defame, rail, speak evil of. In other words they say mean and rude things about you. They may even spread lies and destroy your reputation. If they have done it with Christ, they will do it to his disciples also. This is what Jesus said:

**Matthew 10**

**24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.**

**25 "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!**

**26 "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.**

(NKJV)

Believers are called to have a Christ-like attitude towards those who harm them either physically or verbally. Let us not forget that Christ is our model of suffering like Peter told us. There is a particular reason why believers are called to place all things in the hands of the Father.

**<sup>5</sup> They will give an account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup> Because for this reason also the gospel was preached to those who are dead, so that they were judged *by human standards* in the flesh, but they may live in the spirit *by God's standards*.**

The reason why true believers are to be patient in their trials is that *'They will give an account'*. The word *'account'* (LOGOS) means: something said, reasoning, a thought. One day they will appear before the Living God and what they have done in the flesh will be examined and they will receive their just judgment. It is difficult to imagine the judgment others will receive for abusing God's own children!

**<sup>6</sup> Because for this reason also the gospel was preached to those who are dead, so that they were judged *by human standards* in the flesh, but they may live in the spirit *by God's standards*.**

The final verse in this section deals with what should be done knowing that unbelievers will be severely judged. The only given solution for the remission of their sins is the following: *'the gospel was preached to those who were dead'*. This DOES NOT MEAN that once you are dead you will have the possibility to hear the gospel and this time react to it! It rather means that believers should go around preaching the gospel *'to those who are dead'*. The Bible teaches that all are spiritually dead (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 2:13;). Their lives are being judged by *'human standards'* and they all fail. Once they hear the Gospel story and receive it joyfully through repentance they no longer live in the *'flesh'* but *'live in the spirit by God's standards'*. Being born again, they are no longer driven by sin in them but by the influence of the Holy Spirit which enables them to live as the Lord desires.

This is the aim of evangelizing, people repenting unto the Lord and living a new life that glorifies him. Peter is reminding the believers not to forget those who are still under the curse of sin, to open their hearts and speak of the liberating truth to them. Is this what you are doing? Do you have a heart for the non-believers? Do you ask the Lord to open the door so that you may announce his great salvation to others? May this be the desire of our hearts.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
16 – Living for God's glory  
4:7-11

**<sup>7</sup> Now the end of all *things* draws near. Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for *your* prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, keep your love for one another constant, because love covers a large number of sins. <sup>9</sup> *Be* hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup> Just as each one has received a gift, *use* it for serving one another, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, *let it be* as the oracles of God; if anyone serves, *let it be* as by the strength that God provides, so that in all *things* God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power *forever and ever*. Amen.**

(LEB)

This section touches what we call eschatology (the theology of the end-times). Like all the writers of the New testament their hope was in the swift return of Jesus and the establishing of God's kingdom (or reign if you prefer) here on earth. They looked forward to this wonderful day. Many verses speak of this hope that lay in their hearts (Rom. 13:11; Heb. 9:28; James 5:8; 1 John 2:18). Until that glorious day would appear, Peter encourages the believers to live in such a way that it will honor God. So he writes this section.

**<sup>7</sup> Now the end of all *things* draws near. Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for *your* prayers.**

What does Peter mean by '*Now the end of all things draws near*'? The term '*the end*' (TELOS) means: to set out for a definitive point or goal. There is a definitive point that this world is moving towards. All events that are unfolding are flowing down God's stream of time. The re-establishment of God's rule, a pure theocracy, is our final destination. One day there will be a judgment and a separation of God's children from those who are not.

**Matthew 25**

**32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.**

**33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.**

**34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:**

(NKJV)

Having this in mind Peter exhorts the believers to live in such a way that the Father will be pleased with them. His first encouragement is the following:

**(v.7) ...Therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for *your* prayers.**

The idea of being '*self-controlled and sober-minded*' (SOPHRONEO) means: to be sound of mind, moderate, to be sober. The mind is where it all begins and it all ends. It is the mind that determines ALL of our doings. The mind brings birth to thoughts that become actions. The apostle James wrote it this way:

### **James 1**

**14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.**

**15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**

**(NKJV)**

Jesus confirmed that it is the mind (which is often symbolized by the heart) that gives birth to our thoughts which in turn pushes us to act upon them.

### **Matthew 15**

**19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.**

**(NKJV)**

The believers absolutely needs to be in control of his mind. That is why he should never allow any substance to 'take over' because it will become disastrous! Peter gives an important reason why a believer should be self-controlled and sober-minded '*for your prayers*'. Praying is the most important ministry that God has given his children yet it is often the most neglected. Since Christ died and gave his righteousness to his disciples they now have the immense privilege to come to the throne of God's grace and intercede for others (Heb. 4:16). Paul encourages believers to pray without ceasing (1 Thes. 5:17). There are a number of elements that can hinder our praying and prayers. The one that Peter is writing about is the believer's lack of sober-mindedness and self-control. If we don't keep our mind 'on the right track' it will derail and so will our prayers!

**<sup>8</sup> Above all, keep your love for one another constant, because love covers a large number of sins.**

Keeping a right mind and then keeping the right kind of love, is needed in the believer's life. We can see how important love is for Peter, for he writes *'above all'*. Before all the other qualities one should have loving others as before everything else. The love (AGAPE) meaning: a love feast, charity, love that God's children should have is the true trade mark of being a Disciple of Christ. Listen to what Jesus said:

### **John 13**

**34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.**

**35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

**(NKJV)**

Peter tells the believers to *'keep your love for one another constant'*. The word *'constant'* (EKTENES) means: without ceasing, fervent. True love should not depend on a feeling, a sporadic moment, the person before you, the time of day or if you are having a 'good day'. Your love needs to be without ceasing and fervent. This is so difficult because we are still in the flesh and our minds are presently infiltrated with sinful thoughts and our emotions have been tainted. This is why the believer needs to be praying in all circumstances!

There is a reason why our love for one another should be constant *'because love covers a large number of sins'*. To *'cover'* (KALUPTO) means: to cover up, to hide. When we love as Christ loved us the sins of others unto us are 'covered' by our love for them. Believers easily forgive and pardon those who sin against them. Peter knows what he is talking about when he says that love *'covers a large number of sins'*. Do you remember what he once asked the Lord concerning this subject?

### **Matthew 18**

**21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"**

**22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.**

**(NKJV)**

Peter continues with what Christians should be occupied with while waiting for the return of their blessed Savior.

**<sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without complaining.**

The word *'hospitable'* (PHILOXENOS) means: fond of guests, given to hospitality. Peter is telling the believers to open their hearts and receive other believers into their lives. Remember that these believers are dispersed across the Roman Empire because of persecution and are often without any means. When such a believer or any other comes into your life, your heart should go out to them. The picture that is given is one of opening their homes to them and providing for them. It need not be to that extent for you can invite people for a meal in your home after a Sunday service. You can offer a family setting for those who have none or very little. Be there for them! You can 'adopt' a single mother and her child in the church. Step into her life and be the parent that she really needs and a grandparent for her children. So much can be done to express our Christian love and hospitality. And do it *'without complaining'* (GUGGUSMOS) meaning: a grumbling or murmuring. Be happy that you can help others. Be cheerful that you can manifest God's love to others. This should not be a burden but rather a manifestation of God's joy living in you!

**<sup>10</sup> Just as each one has received a gift, use it for serving one another, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, let it be as the oracles of God; if anyone serves, let it be as by the strength that God provides, so that in all things God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.**

This section speaks of general ministries and spiritual gifts that are given to believers. Please notice that Peter writes *'Just as each one has received a gift'*. Church has unfortunately been separated into two groups: those who do and those who don't. Some believe that OTHERS are to do because they do not believe that they have received any spiritual gifts. They let others carry the burden of maintaining and moving the church forward. They might gladly go to church activities but not actually be the ones preparing them. They don't see themselves as God sees them. They don't believe or understand that being a child of God has equipped them with spiritual capacities that they did not have before. ALL children of God have at least one spiritual gift.

- In Rom. 12:3 we see that God has given a measure of faith to all his children.
- In 1 Cor. 12:7 we see that God has distributed to each a manifestation of the Spirit.
- In Eph. 4:7 we see that each has received a measure of Christ's gift.

Yes, all the children of God have different spiritual gifts and that includes you, if you are a child of God. The question is not IF I have a spiritual gift but rather WHAT spiritual gift(s) do I have? The apostle Paul wrote the following:

## 1 Corinthians 12

**4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.**

**5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.**

**6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.**

**7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:**

**(NKJV)**

Peter tells his readers to '*use it for serving one another*'. These gifts that we have are not for our 'keeping' but rather for the benefit of others. We do not need permission to use them – God tells us to do so! Should we be shy about using them – No, it is a beautiful gift! Should we be humble about them – Yes for it is something that God gave to us and not something that we achieved by ourselves. If you don't know what your spiritual gift(s) are come to God in prayer and ask him to reveal them to you. I found out what my gifts were very simply. When I was just a new baby in Christ I decided to offer my services to do anything that was needed in the church. The elders took me in hand and with time I realized what they were. So offer yourself, be ready to do what is needed and NOT only what you automatically desire to do.

**(v.10) ..., as good stewards of the varied grace of God.**

It is only when we use the spiritual gifts that have been bestowed upon us that we become '*good stewards of the varied grace of God*'. One must not believe that he is a good Disciple of Christ unless he is actually involved with the kingdom of God! A Christian back-bencher will not receive any applause from Christ nor will he be congratulated. Remember the parable of the servant who hid the money, that he had received from his master in the ground because he was afraid (Mat. 25:24). The master did not take this well and he called his servant 'You wicked and lazy servant'. If you are a disciple, be a good steward of your spiritual inheritance.

**<sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, *let it be as the oracles of God*; if anyone serves, *let it be as by the strength that God provides, so that in all things God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.***

In this last verse Peter gives examples of how '*good stewards*' handle their spiritual gifts. The first is '*If anyone speaks, let it be as the oracles of God*'. In other words, if you have received the capacity to speak or teach others then you should be speaking concerning '*the oracles of God*'. Don't waste your time speaking about human philosophies and what people think. Speak about God and his ways! Paul wrote:

## Colossians 2

**8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.  
(NKJV)**

Too often I hear preachers and teachers spend so much time 'running around the bush' to finally conclude with a few words (often out of context) from the Scriptures. Don't be like them! Teach the Word systematically. People don't need to hear what the world thinks – they need the bread of life to edify their souls.

**(v.11) ...if anyone serves, *let it be* as by the strength that God provides,**

The other example is simply serving (as he has just taught in verse ten). Don't serve because you have to. Don't serve reluctantly. Don't serve with laziness. Serve '*by the strength that God provides*'. This verse teaches us two things. If you are of normal health serve, with all the strength that you have. If you have diminished strength, serve with that strength also. Don't stop serving simply because you don't have the strength you used to! Whether you are 15 or 85 serve with the strength that the Lord has allotted you to have. He know if you have little or much strength. He also knows if you are using what you have for him. There is no competition between brothers (which one does more). The only competition is with yourself (am I doing what I should).

**(v.11) ...so that in all *things* God will be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom is the glory and the power *forever and ever*. Amen.**

The focus of a good steward is to do '*all things*' not just the Sunday things, so that '*God will be glorified*' (1 Cor. 10:31)

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
17 – Suffering for God's glory  
4:12-19

**<sup>12</sup> Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, *when it takes place to test you, as if something* strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice *and* be glad. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled on account of the name of Christ, *you are* blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup> By all means do not let anyone of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> But if *someone suffers* as a Christian, he must not be ashamed, but must glorify God with this name. <sup>17</sup> For *it is* the time for the judgment to begin out from the household of God. But if *it begins* out from us first, what will be the outcome for those who are disobedient to the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> And if the righteous are saved with difficulty, *what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?* <sup>19</sup> So then also those who suffer according to the will of God must entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good.**

**(LEB)**

Peter comes back to one of his main themes – the suffering Christian. This is the third section that speaks concerning this subject (1:6-12; 3:13-17 and 4:12-19). Suffering is actually a theme that flows throughout the New Testament – Christ being the center of it. If suffering was understood to be part of one's life in Peter's time it is certainly not in the Western World. Everything is done to avoid and get rid of suffering, to the point that true believers will hide their identity as Disciples of Christ not to suffer the social consequence. I believe that some do this simply because they do not understand that suffering for Christ will bring eternal honor.

**<sup>12</sup> Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, *when it takes place to test you, as if something* strange were happening to you.**

It is surprising how many times Peter calls his brothers and sisters in Christ '*friends*' or '*beloved*'. Both are from the same Greek word (AGAPETOS) meaning: well beloved. In both of his letters he calls them so eight times! We can see his authentic attachment to them. This makes me think of how we communicate with those in our church. Do we remind them how loved they are? Do we value them and see them as being so precious in the eyes of God? Are they our friends? Are we manifesting our love to them?

Peter tells them *'do not be surprised'* The word *'surprised'* (XENIZO) means: to be a host. This gives the idea of something happening to them. What is Peter referring to when he speaks of being a host of something happening? He speaks of *'the fiery ordeal among you'*. Something was happening to them and it seems that the extent of it was surprising. Remember the context of this letter and how these men and women were persecuted for their faith and how they were moving as far as possible from its grip. The word *'fiery ordeal'* (PUROSIS) means: ignition, smelting and burning. One can easily imagine the extreme difficulty they were passing through. This was not just a dislike from others but an actual all-out war against them!

Peter calls to mind the purpose of this *'fiery ordeal'* when he writes that *'it takes place to test you'*. The word *'test'* (PEIRASMOS) means: putting to trial, adversity. Each Christian is *'tested'* one way or another during his life – no one can escape! We may not be openly persecuted (although some of us are) but we face trials every day. How do we re-act to an unpleasant comment concerning our faith? What do we do when another person is appointed to a position we should have gotten at work? How do we respond when there is a social injustice to our Christian community? What about a spouse that treats us unfairly? Trials are everywhere and believers need to respond to them in a godly way. Are you passing your daily tests? Then Peter writes *'as if something strange were happening to you'*. The word *'strange'* (XENOS) means: foreign or alien. When these trials happen, believers should expect that they do. It is the opposite that would be strange. We live in a world that detests the Light and rejects it.

### **John 1**

**9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**

**10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.**

**11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**

**(NKJV)**

So what are Disciples of Christ to do when they are plunged into this *'fiery ordeal'*? How are they to react and how are they to think about their circumstance? Are they to blame God for not having prevented this trial or to believe that He does not care for them?

**<sup>13</sup> But to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice *and* be glad. <sup>14</sup> If you are reviled on account of the name of Christ, *you are* blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

Please notice that Peter speaks of *'the degree that you share'*. The word *'degree'* (KOINENE) means: to share with others, be partakers. This gives the idea that it is not only one person who suffered but the entire group of believers who share in this suffering. One should never believe that he is the only one who is suffering for the sake of Christ. Remember how Elijah had the wrong idea concerning his own sufferings for being a servant of God:

**1 Kings 19**

**14 And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."  
(NKJV)**

Elijah thought he was the only servant of the Lord left and that he was being persecuted since people wanted to seek him and take his life. That's what Elijah thought – poor me! This was not true and God told him that he was definitively wrong!

**1 Kings 19**

**18 "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."  
(NKJV)**

Sometimes when we are persecuted we come to believe a lie! Elijah was not the last servant of God and things were not going to end up the way he thought. The believers ALL shared *'in the sufferings of Christ'*. The word *'sufferings'* (PATHERMA) means: hardship, pain and affliction. Christians are called to suffer in and for the name of Christ simply because the church is his body. Do you remember when God called Paul to salvation and what he said?

**Act 9**

**16 "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."  
(NKJV)**

The call of Paul was also a call to suffer *'for My name's sake'*. Just as the Son suffered for the glory of the Father, the children of God are called to suffer for the Son's glory.

**(v.13) ...rejoice, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice *and* be glad.**

Peter tells them to *'rejoice'* (CHAIRO) meaning: to be cheerful, to be glad. To the human mind this seems absurd but not to the Lord. He tells the believers why they should be glad

to bear the shame of Christ and it all has to do with the plan of God. One day Jesus will return and *'at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice and be glad'*. At his *'revelation'* (APOKALUPSIS) which means: disclosure, appearing and coming, he will come in *'glory'* (DOXA) meaning: glory on a wide application. Christ will be glorified, he will be the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will re-establish all things and you will be there with him and then you will *'rejoice and be glad'*. During the difficult times in your life look beyond the visible and into the invisible and see the coming King.

**<sup>14</sup> If you are reviled on account of the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

Another encouraging thought is that if you are persecuted as a believer in Christ *'you are blessed'*. Again this may sound foolish to the human heart but not to the believer's. The hand of God is with you and his grace is upon you. When you suffer for Christ's sake *'the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you'*. It is an honorable thing to suffer for Christ as we have seen the believer will be rewarded. Never think that it is not God's will that you should bear the 'shame of Christ'. He is testing you, perfecting you and also preparing rewards for what you are doing. Knowing this should normally encourage the believer when he is persecuted in one way or another.

**<sup>15</sup> By all means do not let anyone of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> But if someone suffers as a Christian, he must not be ashamed, but must glorify God with this name.**

Peter again reminds his readers (first in 1 Peter 3:17 and also in 4:3) that no one should suffer because of his own sinful behavior. A Christian should not suffer because he is a murderer, a thief, an evildoer or a meddler. There is no glory in this but rather it is actually the normal consequence of rebelling against the Lord and also the established government. I believe Peter is saying this, because one could act this way because of his persecution as a believer. He may be tempted to 'get back' or 'get rid of the problem' by taking things into his own hands. May we never 'get revenge' by doing something that displeases the Lord!

**<sup>16</sup> But if someone suffers as a Christian, he must not be ashamed, but must glorify God with this name.**

Shame is a very powerful emotion. The word *'ashamed'* (AISCHUNOMAI) means: disgrace, to feel shameful for oneself. Usually we feel ashamed when we do something that

we know others disapprove. Peter tells the believers not to feel '*ashamed*' because they believe in Christ. Remember what Christ said:

**Mark 8**

**38 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."**

**(NKJV)**

Believers should rejoice and '*glorify God with this name*'. The name of Christ is the ONLY name by which believers should '*glorify God*'. If we are Christ(ians) then his holy name should be used. There are countless millions upon millions of people who call themselves Christians and yet glorify God with other names than that of Christ. They have a whole list of 'saints' to which they refers to in their worshipping the Lord God. This is blasphemy for we have seen it is the name of Christ that must be used.

***17 For it is the time for the judgment to begin out from the household of God. But if it begins out from us first, what will be the outcome for those who are disobedient to the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous are saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? 19 So then also those who suffer according to the will of God must entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good.***

We have been told that it is normal for the true believer to face '*fiery ordeals*'. This truth is repeated over and over again. We are told that these are '*trials*' of our faith. It is like a furnace that melts dross from gold (1 Peter 1:7). God judges his people '*it is the time for the judgment to begin out from the household of God*'. These judgments are made to purify our faith. If we have ears to listen and eyes to see, we will be able to understand the working of God in us through various trials. If believers are wise enough they will separate themselves from the sins that God is manifesting to us.

**(v.17) ...But if *it begins* out from us first, what will be the outcome for those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?**

If God works this way in the lives of his own children, if they face trials and difficulties what about '*those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?*'. If it is humanly difficult, for believers imagine how terrible it will be for unbelievers! The writer of Hebrews said it this way:

**Hebrews 10**

**31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

(NKJV)

Peter continues to write about the Living God and his judgments upon both his children and those who are not. One needs to remember, that the Lord God judges his children so that they can grow and become more Christ-like, while he judges the others as a penalty for their own actions.

**<sup>18</sup> And if the righteous are saved with difficulty, *what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?***

Yes, '*what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?*' If believers are saved only because of the saving grace that is in Jesus Christ, what about those who reject him, the unrepentant sinner and the ungodly person! There is no hope for them, unless they also repent of their evil ways and ask Christ to save them!

**<sup>19</sup> So then also those who suffer according to the will of God must entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good.**

Peter ends with his last encouragement. If you suffer, do so '*according to the will of God*' meaning as a good Disciple of Christ. You are to suffer not as one who is ashamed but one who stands up as his follower not as one who suffers for the evil that he does but for the good that Christ did. Finally a last word of encouragement '*entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing good*'. Place yourself in the hands of God, trust in Him. Continue to do good by living in the Light even though you are persecuted for your faith.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
18 – Exhortations to the elders  
5:1-4

**Therefore *I, your fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a sharer of the glory that is going to be revealed, exhort the elders among you:* <sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion but willingly, in accordance with God, and not greedily but eagerly, <sup>3</sup> and not as lording it over *those under your care*, but being examples for the flock. <sup>4</sup> And *when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.***  
**(LEB)**

This section is specifically aimed at the elders of the congregation(s). Since this seems to be a letter that would circulate between churches the exhortations are for all the elders that shepherd the flocks in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. This is a vast region in what is known today as Turkey. If you are an elder or feel that the Lord is leading you towards this ministry I would read this with great intent.

**Therefore *I, your fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a sharer of the glory that is going to be revealed, exhort the elders among you:***

Peter first identifies himself as a '*fellow elder*' (SUMPRESBUTEROS) meaning: a co-presbyter, an elder. Notice that Peter places himself at the same level as the other elders, although we could consider Peter as a 'special disciple' and in many ways he was! If you read the gospel of Matthew you will find specific things that Peter experienced with Jesus which were unique:

- In Mat. 14:28,29, Peter walked on water.
- In Mat. 16:16, Peter was the first to declare that Jesus was the Christ.
- In Mat. 16:23, Jesus reprovved Peter by calling him Satan (which means adversary).
- In Mat. 17:1, Peter, James and John witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus.
- In Mat. 17:24, Peter caught a fish with money in its mouth to pay the temple tax for Jesus and himself.
- In Mat. 26:69, three times Peter denied ever knowing Christ.

There are other instances where Peter was unique as a Disciple of Christ. One also needs to remember that he was called an *apostle* and his name is listed first on every list that is given in the gospel.

Peter was set apart by Christ himself and he could have manifested that fact to impress others or to place himself above the other elders – but he did not! Here we see his humility. What a wonderful example of how all believers should act – being meek and elevating others!

He states that he was *'a witness of the sufferings of Christ'*. He was there, most of the time. From the garden to the outer court where Christ was first tried, Peter was there and saw how Christ suffered. He was not perfect. He had fallen asleep in the garden when Christ asked Peter, John and James to stay awake with him and pray. He did try to protect his master but was rebuked by Jesus (Mat. 26:51,52). He denied Jesus and fled when he was identified as being with Christ. He was not there at the feet of the cross for only John is mentioned and a few women. Peter did *'witness the sufferings of Christ'* but he could have witnessed more (like John did). May we never have to regret that we have missed being with Christ! May we be there when he is counting on us!

**(v.1) ...and also a sharer of the glory that is going to be revealed, exhort the elders among you:**

In his first statement, Peter speaks of the past and now he speaks of the future. He knows that he will be *'a sharer of the glory that is going to be revealed'*. He had just encouraged those who were going through very difficult times to look ahead to when Christ would come back in glory (1 Peter 4:13). He is now applying that very thought to himself as he also looks toward the return of Christ. He knows that he will be *'a sharer of the glory'*. He will receive his share like all believers will. Peter has something to say to the elders. He desires to *'exhort the elders'*, to encourage and edify them, bringing to mind their holy calling.

**<sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion but willingly, in accordance with God, and not greedily but eagerly, <sup>3</sup> and not as lording it over those under your care, but being examples for the flock. <sup>4</sup> And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

He reminds them of how they should minister to *'the flock of God'*. This is the only place where this term is used in the Bible. It reminds me of the words of Christ when he was looking at Jerusalem, where he compares the Jews to little chicks:

### Luke 13

**34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!  
(NKJV)**

Elders need to be impressed with the fact that the *'flock'* belongs to God and no one else. Jesus is the shepherd of the sheep and God has given them to his Son (John 17:6;9;11). With this in mind elders are to treat the *'flock'* with great care. They are *'exercising oversight'* meaning that they are to keep a close watch over them. Like David, elders should be ready to battle all who desire to do the flock harm even against bears and lions (1 Sam. 17:34-37)! But how are they to watch over the children of God?

**(v.2) ...not by compulsion but willingly, in accordance with God,**

Not by *'compulsion'* (ANAGKASTOS) meaning: by constraint or obligation. Being obliged to take care of the flock IS NOT a good way to do things. It should be done *'willingly'* (HEKOUSIOS) meaning: voluntarily. The elder's heart should desire to take care of the flock. Christ willingly followed the Father's desires even unto the cross. The Father willingly allowed the Son to become man and later placed his wrath upon him for our salvation. The Holy Spirit willingly became our guide and stands by God's children until they reach the Kingdom. All is out of love and so should the elders act out of love because this is *'in accordance with God'*. That's how he wants his overseers to care for his sheep. Far too many church leaders do not act *'in accordance with God'*. They act and direct the congregation as if it was their own. They administer the church as they please and not as having to be accountable to anyone.

**(v.2) ..., and not greedily but eagerly,**

Here Peter warns the elders to care for God's flock *'not greedily'* (AISCHROKERDOS) meaning: sordidly, for filthy lucre's sake. You are not in the ministry for money's sake! How many pastors and teacher and so called prophets live as millionaires on the backs of God's people! Some have expensive homes and cars and some even have airplanes. They spend money on themselves and their families while saying that it is for the ministry. They will be severely judged and many will be proclaimed to be false by God. Remember what Christ said:

### **Matthew 7**

**22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'**

**23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'**

**(NKJV)**

Elders are to care for the flock '*eagerly*' (PROTHUMOS) meaning: alacrity, willingly. Their motivation should not be for the money or the praise or the glory or the fame or for the best seats in the house but they should care with enthusiasm and readiness, knowing that the Lord God will provide for all of their needs (Phil 4:6,19). I would definitely stay away from a church with elders that live like royalty!

**<sup>3</sup> and not as lording it over *those under your care*, but being examples for the flock.**

This is Peter's last exhortation for the elders, '*not as lording it over those under your care*'. The word '*lording*' (KATAKURIEUO) means: to lord against, to exercise dominion. Elders have no right to act as rulers of the people, they are not to be dictators! But you are to be as Christ who abandoned his glory to become a servant even to wash his disciples' feet (John 13:1-10). Elders are to be humble servants of the Lord unto his flock and not to take advantage of them. Jesus said it this way:

### **John 10**

**10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

**11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.**

**12 "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.**

**13 "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.**

**14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.**

**(NKJV)**

His final statement to the elders is the same as with all believers including themselves. He points to a very specific moment to come.

**<sup>4</sup> And *when* the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

Again he speaks of when the Lord will come back. They also will receive a reward for taking care of the flock '*the unfading crown of glory*'. They will receive a crown that is '*unfading*' (AMARANTINOS) meaning: fade-less or that never fades, a crown that will never become dull or dismal. They will receive a crown that will always shine throughout eternity, a crown that will never lose its value or glory. It is the '*chief Shepherd*' that will personally give it to those who will be worthy, because of their good leadership and care of God's flock.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
19 – Last general exhortations  
5:5-11

**<sup>5</sup> In the same way, younger men, be subject to the elders, and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. <sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the *right* time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your cares on him, because *he cares* for you.**

**<sup>8</sup> Be sober; be on the alert. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in your faith, because you know the same *kinds* of sufferings are being accomplished by your community of believers in the world. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, *after you* have suffered for a short time, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.**

(LEB)

We are coming to the end of this epistle and Peter will give general exhortations to the brothers and sisters in Christ. All true believers need to be reminded over and over again who they have become and how they are to live. The first section deals with having humility.

**<sup>5</sup> In the same way, younger men, be subject to the elders, and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. <sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the *right* time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your cares on him, because *he cares* for you.**

Peter first speaks about being humble in relationship with the elders. He speaks of '*younger men*' (NEOTEROS) meaning: new, youthful, fresh and young. One might wonder why Peter specifically aims at the '*younger men*'. It is well known that it is when a boy is becoming a man that this period of transition is one of rebellion against authorities. Wanting to assert yourself can unfortunately bring many frictions between people in authority. I believe this is why Peter points out '*younger men*'.

### **Ecclesiastes 11**

**9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment.**

**10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, And put away evil from your flesh, For childhood and youth are vanity.**

**(NKJV)**

It is because '*childhood and youth are vanity*' that Peters cautions them. He tells them to '*be subject to the elders*'. The word '*subject*' (HUPOTASSO) means: to subordinate, to obey. Peter is telling them to obey their spiritual leaders. Again the context is being young, therefore lacking wisdom and experience in life and in the Lord. One should voluntarily submit oneself to those that the Lord have called to oversee them. Elders are there to feed and protect the flock of God and should be regarded with respect. They are to be '*subject*' to the elders. As we have said they are the spiritual leaders of the congregations. It is not a question of being spiritually blind and accepting all that they say without giving it a thought. Believers are called to search the Scriptures and inquire if what is said aligns with the Word of God. Young and old ought to follow the model of the following Christians:

### **Acts 17**

**11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**

**(NKJV)**

Peter tells the young men and everyone who needs to hear about submission to the ecclesiastical authorities how they can arrive at doing this.

**(v.5) ...and all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another,**

Notice Peter says '*all of you*' in a way he switches from speaking to young men to everyone in the congregation. If you are part of a local church then this concerns you also. All are to '*clothe yourselves*' (EGKOMBOOMAI) meaning: to engirdle oneself, to wear. What are we to wear? I think this is a great word picture, it gives the idea to take upon yourself. This is like choosing what to wear and getting dressed with it. Peter tells the believers to get dressed '*with humility*' (TAPEINOPHROSUNE) meaning: humiliation of mind, modesty. Every single day we need to humble ourselves, to have this very special trait of character that all born-again believers should possess. Being humble in mind and heart is of great worth before the Lord. The book of Psalms teach us the following about being humble:

- Ps. 9:12 says that God does not forget the cry of the humble.
- Ps. 10:17 says that God prepared the heart of the humble
- Ps. 18:27 says that God saves his humble people
- Ps. 25:9 says that God guides and teaches the humble
- Ps. 69:32 says that God will make your humble hearts to become alive
- Ps. 147:6 says that God lifts up the humble
- Ps. 149:4 says that God beautifies and saves the humble

Whatever age we may be, being humble is always of great worth. Peter specifically states that all believers are to be humble *'toward one another'*. Being humble is to be a mutual act: the young towards others, the older towards everyone, men towards women, women towards men and so forth. No one is exempt from being humble. And when we see people who lack humility, we automatically know that there is an absence of spirituality in their lives. Peter will writes all should be humble:

**(v.5) ...because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**

That is the reason! God *'opposes the proud'*. The word *'opposes'* (ANTITASSOMAI) means: to range oneself against. Can you imagine God being your personal enemy! Can you imagine having to fight against God in your life! This is a very strong image and should bring chills down your spine. No one can oppose God, no one can tell him what to do! For he is sovereign over all things and your very breath is in his hands (1 Tim. 6:13). If an angel killed in one night 185,000 Assyrian soldiers who were camped outside Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35), imagine what God can do against you if you have pride in your life! On the other hand, God *'gives grace to the humble'*. The grace of God will fall upon you if you are *'humble'* (TAPEINOS) meaning: humiliated or cast down. Would you not prefer to receive grace than to be the subject of God's wrath! One would be a fool to refuse God's favor upon himself. Peter gives another reason why believers should be humble.

**<sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the *right* time,**

To be able to humble ourselves before others we first of all need to *'humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God'*. The attitude of bowing down before the Lord and respecting him in all things is what all believers are called to do. Peter speaks of *'the mighty hand of God'*. We all know that God is a spirit (John 4:24) how then can he have a hand? The use of human body parts to ascribe certain attributes of God is called anthropomorphism. To help readers understand things of God, the bible sometimes pictures God with human parts and so we read about:

- The ear of God (Ps. 10:17)
- The arm of the Lord (Isaiah 53:1)
- The hand of God (Ex. 9:3)
- The eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8)
- The finger (Luke 11:20)

When Peter speaks of *'the mighty hand of God'* he is referring to God's power, authority and strength. All believers should place themselves under the power of God as a chick runs under the wings of a hen. The reason to humble ourselves under the *'mighty hand of God'* is to make certain *'that he may exalt you at the right time'*. The word *'exalt'* (HUPSOO) means: to elevate, to lift up. If we willingly abase ourselves before his Majesty, he will lift us up and elevate his child to greater honor. Remember what Christ said:

#### Luke 14

**8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him;**

**9 "and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place.**

**10 "But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.**

**11 "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

(NKJV)

I believe that the greatest exaltation ever given, will be when Christ will say these words to his Disciple: 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' (Mat. 25:21). This exaltation will come *'at the right time'*. There is a time for everything and although we desire it to be as soon as possible, the Lord's time-table is not ours. The just shall live by faith, writes Paul (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11) and that is what we need to do until *'the right time'* has come.

**<sup>7</sup> casting all your cares on him, because *he cares for you.***

Until *'the right time'* comes this is what believers ought to do. You are to be *'casting all your cares on him'*. The word *'casting'* (EPIRRHIPTO) meaning: to throw upon. The word *'cares'* (MERIMNA) means: solicitude or care. For some this might seem very childish, as if we believe in magic – far from us to do so!

Believers can actually come to the Lord with their load of cares and troubles and worries and actually deposit them at the feet of Christ. We should be *'casting'* our burdens on him. This is a personal invitation from Christ to do so!

### **Matthew 11**

- 28 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**  
**29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,**  
**and you will find rest for your souls.**  
**30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."**  
(NKJV)

So why should we refrain from doing so? Why should I keep all the burdens of my heart which weigh me down and afflict my soul? Why not give them to Christ and let him take care of them? The only reason would be either unbelief or pride. Only a fool would desire to keep a burden that afflicts him! It is not childish to do so – it is faith in action! Peter says that you should give Christ your burdens *'because he cares for you'*. The word *'cares'* (MELO) means: to be of interest to, to concern. God really does have an interest in you – after all are you not his child by faith in Jesus Christ? So let God take care of your concerns, like a child would let his father take care of them.

- <sup>8</sup> Be sober; be on the alert. Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in your faith, because you know the same kinds of sufferings are being accomplished by your community of believers in the world. <sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered for a short time, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.**

This final exhortation deals with our spiritual fight. There are verses that are better known than others. Concerning our spiritual fight these are probably the most commonly used:

### **Ephesians 6**

- 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**  
**12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**  
**13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**  
(NKJV)

In this section, Peter gives two commands. The first is '*Be sober*' (NEPHO) to abstain from wine. We spoke about this earlier (1 Peter 1:13). The mind of the believer must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. Let's not forget that he is the one who guides the believer throughout his life (John 16:13). If we are not under his influence then his guidance will be distorted and probably unrecognized! On three occasions Paul writes to be sober minded (1 Thes. 5:6;8, Titus 2:2). In the Christian's battle with the enemy, to be sober minded is an absolute necessity.

The Peter writes that believers should be '*on alert*' (GREGOREUO) meaning: to keep awake, to be vigilant and to watch out. One can say that this is like having a spiritual radar. Our eyes and ears scan what is going on around us and should send us signals or alerts when things or situations are potentially dangerous for our spiritual health. Places we shouldn't go, things we shouldn't see and things we shouldn't hear should raise a 'red flag' and we should step back.

**(v.8) ...Your adversary the devil walks around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.**

This is why the believer needs to be sober and alert – we have an enemy. This enemy is more fierce, vicious, cruel and brutal than any other enemy known to man. He is the devil himself - mankind's sworn enemy. Peter gives a description of his plan of attack. He says that '*the devil walks around like a roaring lion*'. A lion mostly roars for two reasons. The first is to warn others that this is his territory, the second is to communicate with others. When a lion roars he is manifesting his strength and authority to on comers. Remember what is written about the devil:

#### **Luke 4**

**5 Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.**

**6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. (NKJV)**

It is believed that at the fall of Adam and Eve, the dominion over the earth that the Lord God had given to Adam was transferred to the devil. That is why he was able to say: '*this has been delivered to me*'. So the devil is not a sleeping lion, he is a roaring lion and believers need to beware because technically we are walking in his domain of darkness here on earth.

The second thought is that the devil is *'looking for someone to devour'*. The word *'devour'* (KATAPINO) means: to drink down, to gulp entirely. This gives the idea that the devil does not just want to 'warn you off' his territory, he wants to injure you in a way that it will make you useless for the Lord. Many have been 'bitten' by this lion and have fallen in disgrace or wandered off far from the Lord. Remember that Peter describes the devil as *'your adversary'* (ANTIDIKOS) meaning an opponent. There are no circumstances that the devil or any other fallen angel ever become a friend or have your interest at heart.

***<sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in your faith, because you know the same kinds of sufferings are being accomplished by your community of believers in the world.***

Here is what believers are to do when they know that the devil (or fallen angels) are on the look out to do all the harm they can. We are told to *'resist him'* (ANTHISTEMI) meaning: to stand against, to oppose. This makes me think of what James wrote concerning spiritual warfare:

#### **James 4**

**7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.  
(NKJV)**

The word *'resist'* in both 1 Peter 5:9 and James 4:7 is the same in Greek. Both writers have the same solution against outbursts of evil against a believer which is to *'resist'*. Let's go a little further. In both Peter and James the idea of resisting comes right after they say to humble yourselves before God! With Peter it is in 1 Peter 5:6 and with James it is in James 4:6. I believe that this is very important to understand. To be able to *'resist'* the devil one ABSOLUTELY needs to be humble before the Lord. If you are proud, then you are not protected by the Lord and can not resist, simply because pride was the sin that turned Lucifer against God (Isaiah 14:11-15; Ez. 28:11-19) and will also bring your downfall!

Believers are to *'resist'* and then to be *'steadfast in your faith'*. The word *'steadfast'* (STEREOS) means: solid, stable and strong. In other words our faith needs to be anchored on the Lord himself. This fits perfectly with the parable of the two men who built two houses (Mat. 7:24-29). The winds and the flood destroyed the house that was built on sand BUT the house that stood firmly on rock withstood all that nature could give. When our faith is steadfast, the children of God will be victors when the enemy's storm comes against them. Peter also reminds them that they are not alone in this battle, others are having *'the same kinds of sufferings'*. They too participate in the warfare and are the targets of the devil and the fallen angels.

**<sup>10</sup> And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, *after you have suffered for a short time, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.* <sup>11</sup> To him *be the power forever and ever. Amen.***

The battle is raging and Peter speaks of the final outcome. The victory is at hand, in fact the war has already been won! The last words of Christ on the cross were *'It is finished'* (John 19:30). All was done, the sacrifice paid and the chains that held us captive had now been broken. Paul wrote it this way:

### Colossians 2

**13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,  
14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.  
15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.  
(NKJV)**

There will be *'eternal glory in Christ'*. Peter is speaking of the kingdom of God) that will once more prevail and be established) the New Jerusalem, the new heaven and earth with the Lord God reigning, sitting upon his throne. There peace, joy and perfect harmony will be present forever and ever. Until then, there is a possibility that *'you have suffered for a short time'*. The enemy is present and desires to attack God's children and this brings suffering. This may vary from country to country in intensity and fashion, but all true Christians suffer when they walk in the light. During our lifetime and until the restoration of all things, the Lord God promises that he will do four things to help us carry on.

The first is to *'restore'* (KATARITZO) meaning: to complete thoroughly, make perfect and prepare. Our trials will make us complete. As we have seen, suffering causes believers to become more Christ-like. This period of sanctification and hardships, prepares the disciple for life, making him more complete and able to withstand the attacks from the enemy.

The second is *'confirm'* (STERIZO) meaning: steadfastness, establish, to set fast. Just like the prophets of old who stood before kings and the elite of their day proclaiming God's message, God will establish his children. They will be able to stand in adversity, because the Lord God will enable them to be his witnesses.

The third is *'strengthen'* (STHENOO) meaning: fig. to confirm in spiritual knowledge and power. This reminds me of what Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit.

### Mark 13

**11 "But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.  
(NKJV)**

The fourth is '*establish*' (THEMELIOO) meaning: to lay a base for, erect, consolidate. God's children will stand on solid ground – Jesus being the rock of their lives. They will not waver, but stand tall in the midst of the tempest. This is the assurance that God gives his children. He does not promise that they will be free from attacks but rather that through these times he will be there with them and provide for them.

**<sup>11</sup> To him *be* the power *forever and ever*. Amen.**

Peter ends this section with a short doxology. God and only God is worth worshipping '*forever and ever*'. His reign shall never end and never should our worship!

1<sup>st</sup> Peter  
20 – The conclusion  
5:12-14

**<sup>12</sup> Through Silvanus, the faithful brother (as I consider *him*), I have written to you *briefly* to encourage *you* and to attest that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. <sup>13</sup> She *who is in Babylon*, chosen the same as *you*, greets you, and *so does my son Mark*. <sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.  
(LEB)**

The man called Silvanus (Silas in the shortened form) was a well-known Christian who worked with both Paul and Peter. Here is a short history of this brother in Christ.

- In Acts 15:22 he is mentioned as being ‘chief among the brethren’ and sent with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch.
- In Acts 15:32 he is called a prophet.
- In Acts 15:22,32 He is sent with a delegation to Jerusalem.
- In Acts 15:40 he sets off with Paul for his second missionary journey.
- In Acts 16:37 Paul says that they are Roman citizens.
- In Acts 17:17 Silas stays with Timothy in Berea.
- In Acts 18:5 Silas joins Paul in Corinth.
- In 2 Cor. 1:19 Paul states that Silas was a preacher in Corinth.
- In 1 Peter 5:12 Silas is mentioned as being with Peter.

Peter mentions that Silas (Silvanus) was a ‘*faithful brother*’. The word ‘*faithful*’ (PISTOS) means: trustworthy, sure and true. What a beautiful statement written concerning someone! Who would not love to be described as being a trustworthy person? As you have read above, you can see why Peter describes Silvanus as trustworthy. He devoted his life to the Lord’s work, by serving him wherever he was needed. He was also recognized by Paul as being trustworthy when he was with him on one of his missionary trips. Jailed and beaten, his scars gave proof of his true faith and service in the Lord. I wonder how people would describe us as Christians. Would we also be called trustworthy? Does our life bear the marks of our following our Savior? If not, the time has come to follow Christ and stand up for him.

**(v.12) ...I have written to you *briefly* to encourage *you* and to attest that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.**

Here Peter gives the reason why he wrote his letter and we can see that it is two-fold. The first is *'to encourage you'*. The word *'encourage'* (PARAKALEO) means: to call near, consolation and comfort. He wanted to console their hearts and come near to them by this letter. He knew how difficult it was for them to have lost so much for their faith and how hated they had become in the eyes of Rome. Peter wanted to do something – so he wrote to them. Believers need to be like Peter. There are so many among us who live difficult moments and need our consolation. We need to open our eyes and our hearts and search among us those who could need us. We also can write a letter, send an Email or a card or perhaps visit someone in the hospital or at his home when recuperating. What about helping by giving a 'day off' to a single mom and babysit for her. Maybe someone would appreciate a meal after church just to have fellowship. Does someone need his or her pantry filled up or a turkey for the freezer? How about caring for the pastor and his family and doing something special for them. What about the elderly? Is there anything you can do to encourage them? They are often lonely. There are so many things that one can do just open your eyes and hearts and I am certain that the Holy Spirit will guide you to do something.

The second reason for his letter is *'to attest that this is the true grace of God'*. The word *'attest'* (EPIMARTUERO) means: to attest further, corroborate. Peter wants to make sure that everybody know this to be a fact. He speaks of *'the true grace of God'*. The word *'true'* (ALETHES) means: not concealing, true. He did not want to hide or cover anything from them. We all should have this at heart - to be true in whatever we say and do. Remember what Jesus said:

### Matthew 5

**37 "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.  
(NKJV)**

James had the same thoughts when he wrote the following about being truthful:

### James 5

**12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.  
(NKJV)**

This is what Peter was doing about *'the true grace of God'*. He is writing the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about the Lord and his dealings with his children. Knowing that this is the truth, one should do the following:

**(v.12) ...Stand firm in it.**

Are believers to be half-hearted listeners? Are they to pick and choose what they like and forget the rest? Are they to wonder if they can really believe what is written? The answer is NO! They are to *'stand firm in it'*. The words *'stand firm'* (HISREMI) means: to stand, establish, hold up. One can rest assure that the words of Peter are true. One can stand on them for they are the words of God. Don't worry, just stand!

**<sup>13</sup> She who is in Babylon, chosen the same as you, greets you, and so does my son Mark.**

This is a difficult verse to interpret because it is mysterious. Who is the *'she'* and what is *'Babylon'*? If you take time to read concerning this you will also come to the conclusion that no one is certain. There are only guesses here and there weaving bits and pieces of information that are all outside of the Sacred Scriptures. So I will not guess but rather leave it as it is – a mystery. What we do know is that this *'she'* and this *'Babylon'* is *'chosen the same as you'* giving the idea that this is a group of believers who *'greets you'*. The word *'greets'* (ASPAZOMAI) means: to enfold in the arms. This surely is a sign of friendship and love. So this group was sending their love along with Peter's.

**(v.13) ...and so does my son Mark.**

In Acts 12:12 we see that John-Mark (also known as Mark) is the son of Barnabas' sister. This could be the same Mark who we see in Acts 15 when Paul and Barnabas had a very heated discussion concerning bringing him with them on their missionary trip. Paul refused to take him because he had abandoned them on their last trip. Paul and Barnabas split up and each went their own way. We later see in Col. 4:10 that Mark is once more in the *'grace'* of Paul and is recommended by him. Most commentators believe that this is the same Mark who is now working with Peter. It is a common thing to call a close younger fellow-worker a *'son'*. Paul does this with Timothy (2 Tim. 2:1) and with Onesimus (Phm. 1:10).

**<sup>14</sup> Greet one another with a loving kiss. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

The word *'greet'* (ASPAZOMAI) means: to enfold in the arm. This is the same word as found in verse thirteen. Believers should always be willing to open their arms and hearts to other believers, especially when they are living difficulties because of their faith. If Jesus has greeted us with open arms on the cross, his disciples are called to do the same no matter what background they come from and no matter how different they may be from yourself! The greeting is *'with a loving kiss'*.

There is a special greeting when people are within the same family, a greeting that those outside often do not get. Since all believers are in the same family they should all be lovingly greeted in your home or in the congregation. Let us not be like the believers that James speaks about:

**James 2**

**1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.**

**2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,**

**3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"**

**4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?**

**(NKJV)**

The greeting that they reserved for this poor believer is surely not the one Christ wishes he had received! So let us love all true believers, wherever they come from, and do all that we can to help them.

**(v.14) ...Peace to all of you who are in Christ.**

The last blessing Peter has is '*peace*' (EIRENE) which means: peace or prosperity. Notice that peace is to be found '*in Christ*'. For he is our peace towards the Father.

**Romans 5**

**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

**(NKJV)**

May God's grace and peace be upon you also.