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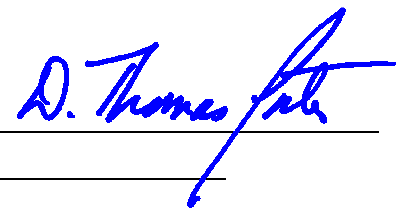
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LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

LEARNING FROM PETER & JUDE — BUILDING OUR FAITH AMONG STRANGERS
 (1 Peter 2) Lord's Day, September 18 & 25, 2016

OVERVIEW

"Session 3 & 4" for this week in the *Explore the Bible Series*



Believers are not always that smart. Like sheep who crowd themselves in a barn, they need a shepherd to literally move them to the door. Showing the door is not enough. Pointing to the door is not enough.

**A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:
 WHY DID THE LORD GOD CREATE SHEEP?**

To reassure people, the Lord God has declared those who are faithful to Him as "His." The first commandment reifies that notion as its preface declares I am the Lord Your God who brought you out of Egypt. You will have no other gods besides Me. Being "His" was indeed exhilarating, until the smoke cleared on the mountain and we saw His anger at our golden calf. Being "His," was not good enough.

As the history of believers continued, we were cautioned to be holy, set apart, so He could indeed tabernacle with us. Our self-indulgence led to great air-conditioned architectural wonders—for His glory or our comfort? Our arrogance, moreover, got in the way; being "His" we avoided Nineveh. Being "His" we knew were to separate ourselves, but we began to think we were better than all those "pagans," never sharing with them the glory of the Lord God. He responded by calling us no longer "His people..."

Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to the house of Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but by the LORD their God."

After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people, and I am not your God. —Hosea 1:6-9

As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'" —Romans 9:25-26

In Hosea, it is *Israel* who is no longer "God's people." In Romans, Paul uses Hosea to assert it is *Gentiles* who are no longer "God's people." Peter applies the words to both peoples. May we, the believers of today, reverently treasure being "God's people," but with the reverent fear that the Lord God expects us to honor Him by that appellation, not to use for self-congratulating, hypocritical self-affirmation. He is the Holy One, not us.

CONTEXT ISSUES: 1 PETER

Today, we easily break out believers into three groups—Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. Of course, we know that Protestant Church A is rarely equivalent to Protestant Church B. And for Southern Baptists, we clearly know that Southern Baptist Church A is not Southern Baptist Church B.

And, there are the new religions of North America, with accouterments of Christianity (e.g., Jehovah Witnesses or the church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints), but which fail legitimacy tests for being protestant, much less Christian.

And then there are Muslims who revere Jesus (Isa in Arabic), not as Deity, but as a great prophet; e.g., Mohammed even called Isa the greatest prophet ever. While they worship God (Allah is the Arabic word for God), most believers—Christian and Jewish alike, consider Muslims outside the boundaries of tolerable orthodoxy.

Contrary to the monolithic perceptions of outsiders, Roman Catholic Parish A can be dramatically different than Parish B (e.g., an invitation to participate in communion during mass). And many Roman Catholic parishes are enjoying a new renaissance of Biblical focus; Bible study at the church during the week is no longer an oddity.

Neither can a believer with a Jewish heritage assumed to be homogenously predictable. The differences between Reformed, Conservative, and Orthodox believers are striking.¹

In the first century, believers were a similarly complicated demographic puzzle. We too often think early Christians were a relatively homogenous group, differentiated only by their Jewish heritage or their pagan heritage. But, reality was quite different. This reality is key to understanding the intertwined, inextricably linked orthodoxy and orthopraxy Peter presents in his two epistles.

Beyond the innumerable theologies of Greek and Roman deities, most slaves, citizens and commoners held to the general cultural standard of religious freedom—provided the religion in question had been approved by the State. For example, Judaism was a tolerated and approved religion by Rome;² toleration of “the Way” (Christianity), however, varied from emperor to emperor and cultural whim to cultural whim.

There is, for example, substantive support for the notion that Luke wrote his gospel and the acts of Holy Spirit to Theophilus as a friend of the court. In other words, the Way should be tolerated/approved because it was a natural extension, and fulfillment of another approved religion—Judaism. Christianity was a real threat for it was atheistic (teaching there was only one God—Jupiter was not even acknowledged). Christianity was cannibalistic (they eat their prophet on a regular basis). Christians were unpatriotic (they said Yeshua was the Lord of all). Christianity

¹Learn more at *Judaism 101* at <http://www.jewfaq.org/movement.htm> which summarizes some of these differences; they are often historical in cause. Differences center around the role of the Torah (Scripture) and what the purpose of keeping the precepts of the Law should be. Sounds similar, does it not regarding the role of Scripture as inerrant evidence?

²Until Christians came to power and began to persecute believers because they had yet to accept Yeshua of Nazareth as the Messiah. One of the best ways to persuade people to your point of view is ignore the similarities between you and them, ignore your heritage as an heir to Abraham’s promise (see Galatians 3:27-29) and punish them for their practices and beliefs.

was homosexual (their love feasts were well known). Believers then, as now, brought their culture to their understanding of Christ.

Then there were Jewish believers. Many had the security of bloodline—they could trace their ancestry to either the tribe of Levi, Judah, or Benjamin. All the other tribes of Israel had been dispersed throughout the world. These believers, the *diaspora*, had no way to trace their legitimacy as believers to Abraham—except they could follow the Law. They could demonstrate their legitimacy by being Jews by knowledge and obedience of the Law. Paul, who nonetheless made sure everyone knew he was from the tribe of Benjamin, fought this battle continuously. He settled the argument for all believers, regardless of their background, by declaring...

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

—Galatians 3:27-29

But, the people who needed to hear Peter's letters read in their assemblies had yet to accept, much less appreciate being "heirs to the promise." For those with a landed-gentry Jewish heritage (Levites, Judahites, & Benjamites), the promise was often viewed as belonging only to them. For dispersed Jewish believers, the Law was particularly important—knowing and obeying it was their shema, their *raison d'être* as believers.

For those from a myriad of pagan backgrounds, the notion that Jesus the Christ was actually human was bordering on sacrilege. For other pagans, the notion of a resurrection was magic and knowing the magic would *entitle* them to a resurrection. Being "heirs to a promise" had little, if any, meaning. And where was the image which they could venerate, imagine and worship this Yeshua of Nazareth?

Peter had his work cut out, but he was not alone. As you read 1 Peter and 2 Peter, listen. If you really listen, you'll see Holy Spirit's influence. Many were reading these epistles and there was much to learn. But, like us, many brought nonsense to Peter's classroom. Watch and see how Holy Spirit taught them, and us, to leave our culture behind. We need to lean on Him. We need to learn from Him. We need to love Him. That's what 1 and 2 Peter is all about. Leaning. Learning. Loving.

1 Peter 1:1-12. *We serve a mighty God who even in suffering refines us for His glory.*

Peter, apostle of Jesus the Christ:

To all of God's called out,

- ✠ strangers to the world dispersed throughout Asia Minor,
- ✠ chosen according to the wisdom and foresight of Father God,
- ✠ by means of the sanctifying work of Holy Spirit, and
- ✠ those who obey Jesus the Christ and by the sprinkling of His blood...

May the gift and the reconciliation be yours abundantly.

Let there be praise to the Father of our Lord, Jesus the Christ! In His great mercy, He has given us a birth from above—a new birth into a living hope by means of the resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead.

We have been given an inheritance that never fades, never perishes, never spoils—it is kept in heaven. You are shielded by faith by God's power³ until the fullness of salvation is shown in the end of time. So, in this you can rejoice mightily, even though you suffer anguish in all kinds of trials. Your suffering has been for a reason—so your faith can be enriched, refined, empowered. This suffering and its resultant refinement will allow your faith to be shown genuine so praise, glory and honor may result when the fullness of Christ Jesus is shown.

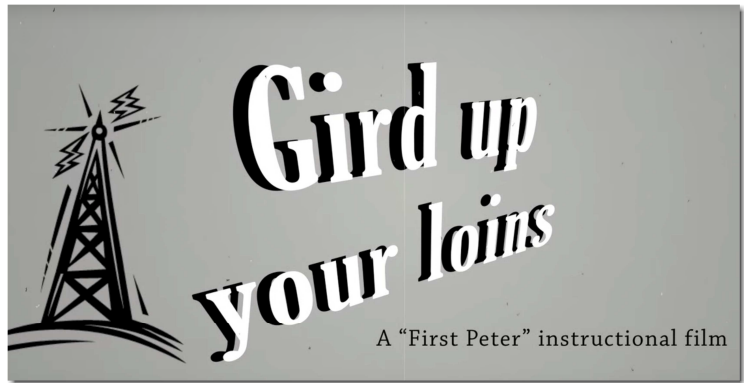
Of course you have not seen Him, you nonetheless love Him, believe in Him, and are consequently filled with a glorious joy, inexpressible in words. You are receiving the teleological objective of your faith—the soteriological security of your soul.

Now regarding this soteriological security—prophets of the past spoke of this gift which was to come to you. They searched diligently, earnestly for cues and circumstances which would proclaim the glories of a Messiah who suffered [see Isaiah 53], and all the glories that would follow. The spirit of Christ revealed all this to them, not to serve themselves, but us, when they spoke of things that are just now being revealed in the good news shared by Holy Spirit from heaven itself. By the way, even angels stoop low and look into these matters.

- Q Why would the Lord God choose in advance those who He will use to do His work? For the record, just what is the work, the objective, the purpose of the Lord God?
- Q Why is our hope “living” as opposed to mere wishful thinking?
- Q What refines our faith? What is the source of our faith's power?

³Note here that even faith is a gift, and only empowering by the Lord God Himself. Be wary of bragging on one's faith—it too was a charis (χαρις), a gift which only has value because of the power accredited to it by Him.

1 Peter 1:13-25. So, gird up your loins⁴—take up your outer garments and be ready to achieve it! Be ready by being disciplined, not for the approval of others, but *self-disciplined*. Set your hope completely on this gift given to you when Jesus the Christ is revealed.



Be like obedient children, ignoring the desires you had when you were ignorant of what was evil. Be as He called you to be—set apart, holy. The Lord God has already said it—*Be holy for I am holy*. [Leviticus 11:44]

Now listen up—you answer to a Father who judges all impartially—live your lives as strangers in this alien place; live here in reverent fear. You’re not spiritually stupid—it’s not silver or gold which redeemed you from an empty life given to you by your ancestors! You were redeemed by the blood, the precious blood, of Christ Himself, a perfect sacrificial lamb, with no blemish, no defect.

Christ was chosen to be this sacrifice before the world even was, but this plan for His glorification has been revealed in these latter days, for your sake. Through Him, you believe in Father God who raised Him from the dead, glorified Him. So what? Your faith, your hope is in God!

Now that you’ve purified yourself by obeying the Truth, so that you have a sincere love for your fellow human beings, love deeply, make it *your* raison d’être. Why? You have been born again—not because of a perishable ancestry—but because of the imperishable, living, enduring word (λογος; i.e., Christ) of God Himself! Remember Isaiah’s wise counsel (Isaiah 40:6-8)...

*All of us are like grass, and our glory like wild flowers.
But, the grass withers, and flowers droop to their death.
But the word of Elohim is always green, and always beautiful.*

This is the word (ρημα) that was proclaimed (ευαγγελισθεν) to you!

- Q Why is *self* discipline so important manifestation of our calling? [Hint: consider the first sin in the garden.]
- Q Just what does it mean to be “holy in *all* we do?” Is this not over-reaching, if not impossible?
- Q What is it that we’ve now learned about Him in these last days? [Hint: this is the most important point Peter/Holy Spirit is making in this passage. Lean. Listen. Learn.]
- Q What are signs that we have obeyed the Truth? How can this be evidence of our purification, our redemption? What are the three attributes of this evidence? So?

⁴To learn more about “girding up your loins,” see this enjoyable instructional film at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDucY-Ueb7A>

1 Peter 2:1-10. *It's a new day with new joys and new expectations.* Since the living word (λογος) and the proclaimed word (ρημα) have been provided—get rid of your nastiness, all the lying, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every type. Be like newborn babies who crave pure food, so by that pure food you can mature in your process of being saved.⁵ You've now tasted that food—the Lord indeed is good!

As you approach the Lord God—the living Stone who's been rejected by people, but precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to become a royal priesthood. You offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Father God only through Jesus the Christ. Remember what Isaiah said in Scripture...

See I lay a stone in Zion, a special, chosen stone. The one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.

Of course, for you who believe, this stone is precious, a capstone as it were. For those who don't believe, this capstone/cornerstone has become a stumbling block, a rock which people fall to their own destruction. Why do they stumble? It's because they disobey; they disobey very logos which was what they were destined for.

BUT, you've been selected, chosen to bring people closer to the Lord God. This is a royal calling because we serve the ultimate Sovereign, a holy Sovereign. We belong to the Lord God Jehovah so we can, and may, declare the praises of He who called us out of the dark, and into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had no mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 PETER 2:1-10

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. ²Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, ³now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." [Isaiah 28:16]

⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," [Psalm 118:22] ⁸and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." [Isaiah 8:14]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

⁵For more indications of how this "being saved works," see Acts 2:47—"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" or Paul's admonition to the church at Philippi—"...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, because it is *God who works in you* to will and to act according to His good purpose." (Philippians 2:12-13)

Q Why is getting rid of “your nastiness, lying, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every type” important to believers? [Careful: it’s a more challenging question than you think. For example, *why* is it spiritually useful to get rid of lying? Or envy? Or slander? Or sheer nastiness?]

Q Why are we to crave “pure” spiritual milk? What are some ingredients ensuring this milk is indeed pure?

Q What about the Lord God “tastes good?”
See Psalm 34:8 How can we use this taste to improve our mission? [Hint: the key is remembering what our mission is.]

Q Why was the living stone rejected, and continues to be rejected by people? Why is Jesus the Christ, the chief cornerstone, a stumbling block for unbelievers, but a critical foundational element in the believer’s spiritual house?

Q What makes this stone so precious, so chosen?

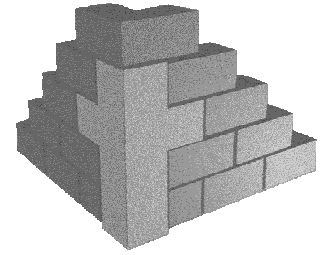
Q What are key elements of becoming a “chosen” people? A royal people? A body of priests? A holy nation? A people belonging to God Himself?

Q What is the purpose of all these new accolades and elements?

Q If we weren’t a people before, a people without a home, what were we? [Hint: look up the Hebrew word for “people without a country.”]

Q Just what is this “mercy” we have now received? Why wasn’t it received before?

INGREDIENTS: WATER (75%), SUGARS (12%) (GLUCOSE (48%), FRUCTOSE (40%), SUCROSE (2%), MALTOSE (<1%), STARCH (5%), FIBRE E460 (3%), AMINO ACIDS (GLUTAMIC ACID (19%), ASPARTIC ACID (16%), HISTIDINE (11%), THEOS (110%), LYSINE (5%), PHENYLALANINE (4%), ARGININE (4%), VALINE (4%), ALANINE (4%), SERINE (4%), GLYCINE (3%), THREONINE (3%), ISOLEUCINE (3%), PROLINE (3%), TRYPTOPHAN (1%), CYSTINE (1%), TYROSINE (1%), METHIONINE (1%), FATTY ACIDS (14%), OMEGA-3 FATTY ACID: LINOLEIC ACID (8%), OLEIC ACID (7%), PALMITOLEIC ACID (3%), STEARIC ACID (<1%), LAURIC ACID (1%), MYRISTIC ACID (1%), CAPRIC ACID (<1%), ASH (<1%), PHYTOSTEROLS, E515, OXALIC ACID, E300, E306 (TOCOPHEROL), PHYLLOQUINONE, THIAMIN, COLOURS (YELLOW-ORANGE E101 (RIBOFLAVIN), YELLOW-BROWN E160a), FLAVOURS (3-METHYLBUT-1-YL ETHANOATE, 2-METHYLBUTYL ETHANOATE, 2-METHYLPROPAN-1-OL, 3-METHYLBUTYL-1-OL, 2-



1 Peter 2:11-25. Use your circumstances to glorify the true King by obeying the king. You who I continue to love passionately and unconditionally (αγαπητοι, “agapatoi”), as strangers and people without papers, not even a visa in this world, I urge you:

- Abstain from desires which separate you from the Lord God. These desires attack your very soul!
- Live lives so good among unbelievers that they’ll see your goodness in your deeds and even glorify the Lord God when He returns. Yes, they will accuse you of being wrong, (as well as being homosexual, atheistic, and unpatriotic). Regardless, do good and glorify the Lord God.
- Submit your lives to every authority instituted by people—whether the head honcho, or his/her designates. They have been sent by God Himself to punish the wrong, and commend those who do right. It’s what God wants—by doing good, you close the stupid mouths of foolish, ignorant people.
- Live as free people; don’t use your freedom to hide your evil—live as slaves of God. Show respect to everyone: love your brothers & sisters in Christ, fear the Lord God, and honor the king.

If you’re owned by someone, submit to your owner, respectfully; and not just to the considerate and good masters, but also to the harsh. When you bear up under the pain of unjust suffering, it is commendable—you do this because you are aware of the Lord God in your life. After all, how is it to your credit to receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? BUT, if you endure suffering for doing good, guess who commends you? The Lord God Himself.

1 PETER 2:11-25

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. ¹²Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

¹⁵For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²²“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” [Isaiah 53:9]

²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

You were **called** to this suffering because Christ suffered for you. He left you an excellent example—follow in HIS footsteps. He knows the way for He is the way. Isaiah said it well: *He did not sin, nor did any one find deceit coming from His mouth or in His life.* When Jesus was insulted, He didn't retaliate. When He suffered, He offered no threats. He entrusted Himself to Father God. And just what *did* He do...

He bore **our** sins so we might die to sin, and live for righteousness. It is by His wounds that we're healed. We've been like sheep going astray, but now we've returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.

- Q Why are we strangers in this world, aliens without documents and visas? So what?
- Q Why are we to abstain from desires which separate us from the Lord God? Characterize the nature of this "war against our soul."
- Q What is the value of living a good life among unbelievers according to Peter?
- Q Why are we to submit to all the knuckleheaded authorities of this alien, strange land?
- Q How are we to demonstrate this submission? As slaves?
- Q For what purpose were we called (verse 21)? Why we were we called to suffer? Who provides an excellent example for this relationship between suffering and honoring the Sovereign? How so?
- Q What Scripture is Peter's analysis heavily dependent upon? So what?
- Q How are we like sheep ("sheeples?" gone astray, each of us turning to our own way? Examples? Reasons? Solutions?



1:1 *strangers in the world.* People temporarily residing on earth but whose home is in heaven (cf. 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; Heb 13:14).

scattered throughout Pontus . . . Bithynia. Jewish and Gentile Christians scattered throughout much of Asia Minor. People from this area were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (see Ac 2:9-11). Paul preached and taught in some of these provinces (see, e.g., Ac 16:6; 18:23; 19:10,26).

1:2 *Father. . . Spirit . . . Jesus Christ.* All three persons of Deity are involved in the redemption of the elect.

sanctifying work. The order of the terms employed suggests that the sanctifying work of Holy Spirit referred to here is His influence that draws one from sin toward holiness. Peter says it is "for" (or "to") obedience and sprinkling of Christ's blood, i.e., Holy Spirit's sanctifying leads to a faith which is obedient and saving; i.e., cleansing from sin.

sprinkling by his blood. The benefits of Christ's redemption are applied to his people (cf. Ex 24:4-8; Isa 52:15; Heb 9:11-14,18-28).

1:3 *living hope.* In spite of the frequent suffering and persecution mentioned in this letter (v. 6; 2:12,18-25; 3:13-18; 4:1,4,12-19; 5:1,7-10), hope is such a key thought in it (the word itself is used here and in vv. 13,21; 3:5,15) that it may be called a letter of hope in the midst of suffering. In the Bible, hope is not merely wishful thinking but a firm conviction, much like faith that is directed toward the future.

resurrection of Jesus Christ. Secures for his people their new birth and the hope that they will be resurrected just as he was.

1:4 *into an inheritance.* Believers are born again not only to a hope but also to the inheritance that is the substance of the hope. The inheritance is eternal—in its essence (it is not subject to decay) and in its preservation (it is divinely kept for us).

1:5 *through faith . . . by God's power.* There are two sides to the perseverance of the Christian. He is shielded (1) by God's power and (2) by his own faith.

salvation. See 2Ti 1:9. The Bible speaks of salvation as

- (1) past--when a person first believes (see, e.g., Tit 3:5),
- (2) present--the continuing process of salvation, or sanctification (see v. 9; 1Co 1:18), and
- (3) future--when Christ returns and salvation, or sanctification, is completed through glorification (here; see also Ro 8:23,30; 13:11).

1:7 *that your faith . . . may be proved genuine.* See Ro 5:3; Jas 1:2-4. Not only is the faith itself precious, but Peter's words indicate that the trial of faith is also valuable.

1:8 *though you do not see him now, you believe.* Similar to Jesus' saying in John 20:29, on an occasion when Peter was present.

1:10 *prophets . . . searched intently.* Inspiration (see 2Pe 1:21) did not bestow omniscience. The prophets probably did not always understand the full significance of all the words they spoke.

1:11 *Spirit of Christ.* Holy Spirit is sometimes called this because Christ sent Him (see Jn 16:7) and ministered through Him (see Lk 4:14,18).

⁶Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

the sufferings of Christ and the glories. A theme running through the Bible (see, e.g., Ps 22; Isa 52:13-53:12; Zec 9:9-10; 13:7; Mt 16:21-23; 17:22; 20:19; Lk 24:26,46; Jn 2:19; Ac 3:17-21), and a basic concept in this letter (vv. 18-21; 3:17-22; 4:12-16; 5:1,4,9-10). Those who are united to Christ will also, after suffering, enter into glory. And they will benefit in the midst of their present sufferings from his having already entered into glory (vv. 3,8,21; 3:21-22).

1:12 *Holy Spirit sent from heaven.* By Christ, on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:33), at which Peter was present. Father God also sent Holy Spirit (see Jn 14:16,26).

angels long to look into. Their intense desire is highlighted by the Greek word rendered "to look into." It means "to stoop and look intently" (see John 20:5,11).

1:13 *prepare . . . for action.* The first of a long series of exhortations (actually imperatives) that end at 5:11. This one is a graphic call for action. In the language of the first century it meant that the reader should literally gather up his long, flowing garments and be ready for physical action. Note about 45 seconds into this clip from *The Devil Wears Prada* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PjZAeiU7uM>)

grace to be given you. The final state of complete blessedness and deliverance from sin. Peter later indicates that a major purpose of this letter is to encourage and testify regarding the true grace of God (5:12).

1:14 *children.* Christians, born into the family of God (see v. 23), are children of their heavenly Father (v. 17) and can pray, "Our Father in heaven" (Mt 6:9). Believers are also described as being adopted into God's family (see Ro 8:15).

1:16 *Be holy, because I am holy.* To be holy is to be set apart—set apart from sin and impurity, and set apart to God. The complete moral perfection of God, whose eyes are too pure to look on evil with favor (Habakkuk 1:13), should move his people to strive for moral purity. Interestingly, the Lord God nonetheless looks on evil, and mercifully, provides a way (οδος; see John 14:6) from its consequences, or justice. 1 Peter is a letter of practical earnestness, filled with exhortations and encouragements.

1:17 *impartially.* See Ro 2:11; Jas 2:1. *strangers.* See the note above on verse 1.

reverent fear. Not terror, but wholesome reverence and respect for the Lord God, which is the basis for all godly living (cf. Pr 1:7; 8:13; 16:6).

1:18 *redeemed.* In the Bible, to redeem means to free someone from something bad by paying a penalty, or a ransom (see e.g., Ex 21:30; see also Ex 13:13). Likewise, in the Greek world slaves could be redeemed by the payment of a price, either by someone else or by the slave himself. Similarly, Jesus redeems believers from the "curse of the law" (Gal 3:13) and "all wickedness" (Tit 2:14). The ransom price is not silver or gold, but Christ's blood (Eph 1:7; 1Pe 1:19; Rev 5:9), i.e., his death (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Heb 9:15) or Christ himself (Gal 3:13). The result is the "forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14) and "justification" (Ro 3:24).

empty way of life . . . from your forefathers. Some maintain that the recipients must have been pagans because the NT stresses the emptiness of pagan life (Ro 1:21; Eph 4:17). Others think they were Jews since Jews were traditionalists who stressed the influence of the father as teacher in the home. In the light of the context of the whole letter, many types of Jews and and pagan Gentiles are addressed. See *Context Issues: 1 Peter*, page 2.

1:19 *lamb.* In the Hebrew Scriptures sacrifices were types (foreshadowings) of Christ, depicting the ultimate and only effective sacrifice. Thus Christ is the Passover lamb (1Co 5:7), who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29).

1:22 *sincere love.* See Ro 12:9. *love one another.* A command no doubt based on Jn 13:34-35. See also 1Th 4:9-10, where, like Peter, Paul commends his readers for their love of fellow believers and then urges them to love still more.

1:23 *born again . . . through the . . . word of God.* The new birth comes about through the direct action of Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5), but the word of God also plays an important role (see James 1:18), for it presents the gospel to the sinner and calls on him to repent and believe in Christ (see v. 25).

2:4 *living Stone.* Christ (see vv. 6-8; cf. Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10-11; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11; Ro 9:33). The Stone is living in that it is personal. Furthermore he is a life-giving Stone. Christ as the Son of God has life in himself (Jn 1:4; 5:26). See also "living water" (Jn 4:10-14; 7:38), "living bread" (Jn 6:51) and "living way" (Heb 10:20).

rejected by men but chosen by God. Peter repeatedly makes a contrast in Acts between the hostility of unbelieving men toward Jesus and God's exaltation of him (Ac 2:22-36; 3:13-15; 4:10-11; 10:39-42).

2:5 *living stones.* Believers are, of course, not literal pieces of rock, but are persons. In addition, they derive their life from Christ, who is the original living Stone to whom they have come (v. 4), the "life-giving spirit" (1Co 15:45). These references to stones may well reflect Jesus' words to Peter in Mt 16:18. Remember, Jesus of Nazareth was a τεκνον ("teknon"), probably not a carpenter *per se*.

spiritual house. The house is spiritual in a metaphorical sense, but also in that it is formed and indwelt by Holy Spirit. Every stone in the house has been made alive by the Holy Spirit, sent by the exalted living Stone, Jesus Christ (cf. Ac 2:33). The temple described in the Hebrew Scriptures provides the background of this passage (cf. Jn 2:19; 1Co 3:16; Eph 2:19-22).

holy priesthood. The whole body of believers. As priests, believers are to

- (1) reflect the holiness of God and that of their high priest (see 1:15; Heb 7:26; 10:10),
- (2) offer spiritual sacrifices (here),
- (3) intercede for man before God and
- (4) represent God before man. *spiritual sacrifices.*

The NT refers to a variety of offerings: bodies offered to God (Ro 12:1), offerings of money or material goods (Php 4:18; Heb 13:16), sacrifices of praise to God (Heb 13:15) and sacrifices of doing good (Heb 13:16).

acceptable to God. Through the work of our Mediator, Jesus the Christ (cf. Jn 14:6). Believers are living stones that make up a spiritual temple in which, as a holy priesthood, they offer up spiritual sacrifices.

2:6 *precious cornerstone.* See Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11. This is an obvious reference to Christ, as vv. 6b-8 make clear. The cornerstone, which determined the design and orientation of the building, was the most significant stone in the structure. The picture that Peter creates is of a structure made up of believers (living stones, v. 5), the design and orientation of which are all in keeping with Christ, the cornerstone.

the one who trusts in him. Two attitudes toward the cornerstone are evident: (1) Some trust in him; (2) others reject him (v. 7) and, as a result, stumble and fall (v. 8).

2:8 *what they were destined for.* Some see here an indication that some people are destined to fall and be lost. Others say that unbelievers are destined to be lost because God in his foreknowledge (cf. 1:2) saw them as unbelievers. Still others hold that Peter means that unbelief is destined to result in eternal destruction.

2:9 *chosen people.* See Eph 1:4 and note; Isa 43:10,20; 44:1-2. As Israel was called God's chosen people in the Hebrew Scriptures, so in the NT believers are designated as chosen, or elect and descendants of Abraham (Galatians 3:27-29).

royal priesthood. See v. 5; see also Isa 61:6.

holy nation. See Dt 28:9. *people belonging to God.* See Dt 4:20; 7:6; 14:2; Isa 43:21; Mal 3:17. Though once not the people of God, they are now the recipients of God's mercy (see Hos 1:6-10; Ro 9:25-26; 10:19).

declare the praises of him. See Isa 43:20; Ac 2:11.

2:10 See Hosea 1:6,9; 2:1,22; Romans 9:25-26. In Hosea it is *Israel* who are not God's people; in Romans it is the *Gentiles* to whom Paul applies Hosea's words; in 1 Peter the words are applied to both.

2:11 *aliens and strangers*. As aliens and strangers on earth, whose citizenship is in heaven, we are to be separated from the corruption of the world, not yielding to its destructive sinful desires.

2:12 *see your good deeds*. Deeds that can be seen to be good (cf. Mt 5:16). The Greek word translated "see" refers to a careful watching, over a period of time. The pagans' evaluation is not a "snap judgment."

the day he visits us. Perhaps the day of judgment and ensuing punishment, or possibly the day when God visits a person with salvation. The believer's good life may then influence the unbeliever to repent and believe.

2:13-3:6 Peter urges Christians to submit to all legitimate authorities, whether or not the persons exercising authority are believers. The recognition of properly constituted authority is necessary for the greatest good of the largest number of people, BUT more critically, it is necessary to best fulfill the will of God.

2:13 *every authority instituted among men*. Authority established among men depends on God for its existence (Ro 13:1-2). Indirectly, when one disobeys a human ruler he disobeys God, who ordained the system of human government (cf. Ro 13:2).

to the king. When Peter wrote, the emperor was probably the godless, brutal Nero, who ruled from A.D. 54 to 68. Of course, obedience to the emperor must never be in violation of the law of God (to see this basic principle in action cf. Ac 4:19).

2:15 *silence the ignorant talk*. Good citizenship counters false charges made against Christians and thus commends the gospel to unbelievers.

2:16 *Live as free men*. Does not authorize rebellion against constituted authority, but urges believers freely to submit to God and to earthly authorities (as long as such submission does not conflict with the law of God). *as a cover-up for evil*. Genuine freedom is the freedom to serve God, a freedom exercised under law.

2:18 *Slaves*. Household servants, whatever their particular training and functions. The context indicates that Peter is addressing Christian slaves. NT writers do not attack slavery as an institution (see Eph 6:5), but Scripture contains principles which contributed to making slavery a cultural taboo. Peter's basic teachings on the subject easily applies to employer-employee relations today (see Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25; 1Ti 6:1-2; Tit 2:9-10).

2:19 *conscious of God*. As submission to duly constituted authority is "for the Lord's sake" (v. 13; cf. Eph 6:7-8), so one will submit to the point of suffering unjustly if it is God's will.

2:21 *To this you were called*. The patient endurance of injustice is part of God's plan for the Christian. It was an important feature of the true grace of God experienced by the readers (5:12).

Christ suffered for you. Cf. Isa 52:13-53:12. Christ is the supreme example of suffering evil for doing good. His experience as the suffering Servant-Savior transforms the sufferings of his followers from misery into privilege.

2:22 Scripture declares the sinlessness of Christ in the clearest of terms, allowing for no exception (see 1:19; Ac 3:14; 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1Jn 3:5). *no deceit*. Cf. v. 1; 3:10.

2:23 Prominent examples of our Lord's silent submission are found in Mt 27:12-14,34-44 and parallels. *entrusted himself*. Cf. 4:19.

2:24 *bore our sins*. See Isa 53:12. Although dealing with the example set by Christ, Peter touches also on the redemptive work of Christ, which has significance far beyond that of setting an example. Peter here points to the substitutionary character of the atonement. Christ, like the sacrificial lamb found in the Hebrew Scriptures, died for our sins, the innocent for the guilty.

tree. A figurative reference to the cross (see Acts 5:30; see also Acts 10:39; 13:29; Galatians 3:13).

that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. Cf. Ro 6:3-14. Peter stresses the bearing of the cross on our sanctification. As a result of Christ's death on the cross, believers are positionally dead to sin so they may live new lives and present themselves to God as instruments of righteousness (see Ro 6:11-13).

2:25 *Shepherd*. A concept raised here in connection with the allusion to the wandering sheep of Isa 53. The sheep had wandered from their shepherd, and to their Shepherd (Christ) they have now returned. See Ps 23:1; see also Jn 10:11,14 and Heb 13:20.

Overseer. Christ (cf. 5:2,4; Ac 20:28). Elders are to be both shepherds and overseers, i.e., they are to look out for the welfare of the flock. These are not two separate offices or functions; the second term is a further explanation of the first.