

Supplemental Notes:

*The Epistles
of
Peter*

*compiled
by
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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

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The Epistles of Peter Session 1

Introduction and 1 Peter 1:1-9

Introduction

Peter's original name was in Hebrew *Simeon* (Acts 15:14; 2 Pet 1:1); "Simon," as it's usually written in the New Testament, was a Greek name of similar sound. His father's name was Jonah (Mt 16:17). He himself was married (Mk 1:30), and in his missionary days his wife accompanied him (1 Cor 9:5).

His place of origin was Bethsaida, a largely Greek city (Jn 1:44), but he had also a home in Capernaum in Galilee (Mk 1:21 ff). Capernaum was also the location of his synagogue and a home.

Simon spoke Aramaic with a strong north country accent (Mk 14:70) and maintained the piety and outlook of his people (Acts 10:14), though not trained in the law (Acts 4:13). [His literacy is not in question.]

It is likely that he was affected by John the Baptist's movement (Acts 1:22); his brother Andrew was a disciple of John (Jn 1:39f).

Galilee Fisherman

Today one can see a boat like the one he used during those days, at Nof Ginossar, a kibbutz on the Galilee. In 1985-6, a severe drought exposed a 26 ft. boat with 7 ft. beam discovered in the mud. C₁₄ dating gave a date between 60 B.C. and 60 A.D.

In the Gospels

The Gospel of John describes a period of Christ's activity before the commencement of the Galilean ministry, and this may be referenced as Peter's first introduction to him, by Andrew's agency (Jn 1:41). Thus, the subsequent call by the lake side (Mk 1:16) and then the call to the intimate band of the Twelve followed (Mk 3:16ff).

It was as a disciple that Simon received his new title, the Aramaic *Ke-pha* ("Cephas"), "rock" or "stone" (1 Cor 1:12; 15:5; Gal 2:9), usually appearing in NT in the Greek form, *Petros*. Jesus conferred this title (not known as a personal name previously) at their first encounter (Jn 1:42):

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Matthew 16:13-28

First Mention of the Church

"Thou art a little stone, Peter, but upon this big rock I will build my church" (Mt 16:18). *Petros* = a little stone; *Petra* = a large rock.

A definite article is used before *petra*; no article before *petros*.

"I" will build: Jesus will build; I "will" build: Future tense.

What Foundation? 1) the Confession? 2) Peter himself? 3) Christ Himself. The rock is Christ (1 Cor 10:4; 1 Cor 3:9-11 Eph 2:19-22).

In the Gospels

John's usual designation is "Simon Peter." Mark calls him "Simon" up to Mk 3:16, and "Peter" almost invariably thereafter. There is nothing in any case to suggest that the solemn words of Mt 16:18 represented the first bestowal of the name. (*This incident has been widely misunderstood; Peter will help clear it up in these letters...*)

Peter was one of the first disciples called; he always stands first in the lists of disciples; he was also one of the three who formed an inner circle round the Master (Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33; cf. 13:3). His impulsive devotion is frequently portrayed (Mt 14:28; Mk 14:29; Lk 5:8; Jn 21:7) and he acts as spokesman of the Twelve (Mt 15:15; 18:21; Mk 1:36f; 8:29; 9:5; 10:28; 11:21; 14:29f; Lk 5:5; 12:41).

At the crisis near Caesarea Philippi, Peter is the representative of the whole band: for the question is directed to them all and all are included in the look that accompanies the subsequent reprimand (Mk 8:27, 29, 33). The transfiguration is intimately related to the apostolic confession which precedes it (Mk 9:1). The experience made a lasting impression on Peter (1 Pet 5:1; 2 Pet 1:16ff).

Peter's Denials: Jn 18:17, 25; Mt 26:74

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Mark 16:5-7

"...disciples and Peter": Lost discipleship? Discipleship can be lost. (Salvation cannot.) Discipleship depends upon the faithfulness of the believer...

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my

sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

John 21:15-19

Reinstated: John 21:14-17

"Simon, son of Jonas..." His natural name.

- *Agape me?* *phileo*
- *Agape me?* *phileo*
- *Phileo me?* *phileo...wept third time.*

Contrast the Gospel rhetoric of Peter with his skillfully crafted sermons in Acts 2 & 3.

Parallelisms In Acts

The parallels between this letter and Peter's sermons recorded in Acts are significant—cf. 1 Pet 1:20 with Acts 2:23 and 1 Pet 4:5 with Acts 10:42. One of the more striking examples is the similarity between 1 Peter 2:7-8 and Acts 4:10-11: in each passage Psalm 118:22 is quoted and applied to Christ. It is interesting that Peter was present when Christ Himself used Psalm 118:22 to refer to His rejection by the Jewish leaders (Mt 21:42).

Peter is specially marked out at the message of the resurrection (Mk 16:7) and personally receives a visitation of the risen Lord (Lk 24:34; 1 Cor 15:5). Peter's ministry was to the circumcised (Gal 2:6-9).

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Galatians 2:7-9

The Life of Peter

Every Biblical doctrine is exemplified in the life of Peter: The Two Natures; two births... Old Simon, New Peter; Old man, New man.

Christian life, mere salvation, discipleship, carnal life...spiritual life, eternal life, life abundant... There are inconsistencies; apparent contradictions. All his life he remained *both* Simon and Peter.

In the Book of Acts

Before Pentecost, it is Peter who takes the lead in the community (Acts 1:15ff). He is the principal preacher (Acts 2:14ff; 3:12ff) and the spokesman before the Jewish authorities (Acts 4:8ff), presiding in administration of discipline (Acts 5:3ff).

Though the Church as a whole made a deep impression on the community, it was to Peter in particular that supernatural powers were attributed (Acts 5:15). In Samaria, the Church's first mission field, the same leadership is exercised (Acts 8:14ff).

Significantly also, he is the first apostle to be associated with the Gentile mission, and that by unmistakably providential means (Acts 10:1ff; cf. 15:7ff). [Acts shows the Great Commission in exercise.] This immediately brings criticism upon him (Acts 11:2ff) and not for the last time: at Antioch, the first church with a significant ex-pagan element, Peter shared table fellowship with the Gentile converts, but then withdrew under a barrage of Jewish-Christian opposition (Gal 2:11ff).

This defection was roundly denounced by Paul; but there is no hint of any theological difference between them, and Paul's complaint is rather the incompatibility of Peter's practice with his theory. The old theory (revived by S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*, 1951), of persistent rivalry between Paul and Peter, has little basis in the documents. Despite this lapse, the Gentile mission had no truer friend than Peter.

Paul's gospel and Peter's had the same content, though a somewhat different expression: Peter's speeches in Acts, Mark's Gospel and 1 Peter have the same theology of the Cross, rooted in the concept of Christ as the suffering Servant. He was ready with the right hand of fellowship, recognizing his mission to Jews and Paul's to Gentiles as part of the same ministry (Gal 2:7ff). At the Jerusalem Council Peter is recorded as the first to urge the full acceptance of the Gentiles on faith alone (Acts 15:7ff).

Peter's career after the death of Stephen is hard to trace. The references to him in Joppa, Caesarea and elsewhere suggest that he undertook missionary work in Palestine (James no doubt now assuming leadership

in Jerusalem). He was imprisoned in Jerusalem, and on his miraculous escape he left for "another place" (Acts 12:17). Attempts to identify this "another place" are fruitless.

We know that he went to Antioch (Gal 2:11ff); he may have gone to Corinth, though probably not for long (1 Cor 1:12). He is closely associated with Christians in N Asia Minor (1 Pet 1:1) and possibly Paul's prohibition to enter Bithynia (Acts 16:7) was due to the fact that Peter was at work there.

Post-Acts Events

Peter's residence in Rome has been disputed, but on insufficient grounds. 1 Peter was almost certainly written from there (1 Pet 5:13). That book shows signs of being written just before or during Nero's persecution, and *1 Clement* 5 implies that, like Paul, he died in this outburst. [Doubts cast on the interpretation of *1 Clement* (cf. M. Smith, *NTS* 9, 1960, pp. 86ff) have little foundation. On the other hand, Cullmann's suggestion, based on the context in *1 Clement* and Paul's hints in Philippians of tensions in the church at Rome, that Peter, perhaps at Paul's request, came specifically to heal the breach, and that bitterness among Christians led to the death of both, is worth serious consideration.]

The story in the *Acts of Peter* of his martyrdom by crucifixion (cf. Jn 21:18ff) head downwards cannot be accepted as reliable, but this work may preserve some valid traditions.

The Gospel of Mark

The earliest statement about the origin of this Gospel is that given by Papias as "the interpreter of Peter" is by Eusebius (*EH* 3. 39) and Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer* 3.1.1). Mark's hand, Peter's voice: evidenced by the nature of the incidents, choice of matter, and manner of treatment.

Organization of 1st Peter

- Christian suffering and conduct in the light of full salvation (1:1 – 2:8);
- The believer's life in light of sevenfold position (2:9 – 4:19);
- Christian service in light the coming Chief Shepherd (5:1 –14).

1 Peter 1

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

“...an apostle of Jesus Christ”: This bold statement of apostolic authority is supported both by internal evidence in the text and by its early and universal acceptance as a part of the canon of Scripture.

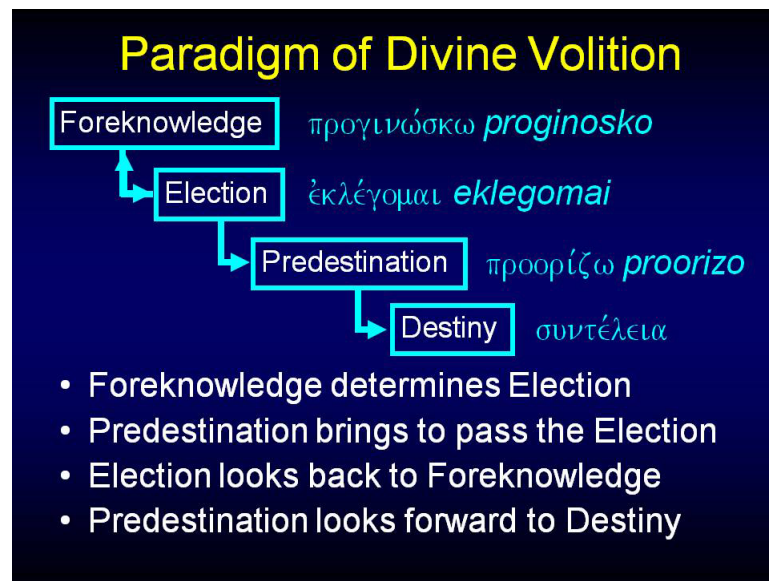
“...to the strangers scattered...”: In accordance with the Lord’s instructions, Peter seeks to feed the scattered sheep of the house of Israel. These areas were in Asia Minor, north of Palestine and Syria and south of the Black Sea.

“Scattered” (διασποράς, *diasporas*), had special meaning to the Jewish Christians in these churches. The diaspora referred to Jews who were separated from their homeland.

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

Election

“Elect”: In both OT & NT (Hebrew & Greek): “elect”; “election”; “choose” and “chosen” all mean “to choose” of both divine and human choices.



Divine Election

- Corporate: Israel (Isa 45) and the Church (Eph 1:4).
- Individual: According to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet 1:2); wholly of grace, not human merit (Rom 9:11; 11:5,6); whereby certain are chosen for Himself (Jn 15:19) or for distinctive service (Lk 6:13; Acts 9:15; 1 Cor 1:27,28).

“...through sanctification of the spirit”:

The Paradigm of Salvation

“I have been saved;
I am being saved;
and I will be saved.”

—Earl D. Rachmacher

Justification (Past tense)

The gift from God of everlasting life received by faith alone in Christ alone.

Sanctification (Present tense)

A progressive work that involves the faith and the works of the believer.

Glorification (Future tense)

A result of the previous aspects. All believers will be glorified (resurrected and given a body like Christ), but some will have more glory (i.e. reward) than others. This is what Hebrews speaks of.

Past Tense:	Separation from the <i>Penalty</i> of Sin Justification Salvation
Present Tense:	Separation from the <i>Power</i> of Sin Sanctification Salvation
Future Tense:	Separation from the <i>Presence</i> of Sin Glorification Salvation

Justification is *for* us;
Sanctification is *in* us.

Justification *declares* the sinner righteous;
Sanctification *makes* the sinner righteous.

Justification removes the *guilt* and *penalty* of sin;
Sanctification removes the *growth* and the *power* of sin.

“...obedience”: ὑπακοή, *hupakoe*, “to hear under, to hearken” is man’s responsibility to be submissive to God’s Word (cf. Ex 24:7; Rom 1:5; 15:18; 16:26).

“...sprinkling of the blood of Jesus”: One living in obedience is constantly being cleansed with Christ’s blood and is thus “set apart” from the world (1 Jn 1:7, 9).

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

“...begotten us again”: He has *given* us new birth; people can do nothing to merit such a gift. The words translate ἀναγεννήσας from the verb “beget again” or “cause to be born again.” It is used 2X in the NT, both times in this chapter (1 Pet 1:3, 23).

“...lively hope”: This “lively hope” is based on the living resurrected Christ (1 Pet 1:21). He used the word “living” 6X (1 Pet 1:3, 23; 2:4-5; 4:5-6). Here “living” emphasizes the believer’s hope is sure, certain, and real, as opposed to the deceptive, empty, false hope the world offers.

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

“...inheritance”: The sure hope is of a future inheritance (κληρονομία *kleronomia*): This same word is used in the LXX to refer to Israel’s promised possession of the land (cf. Num 26:54, 56; 34:2; Josh 11:23). It was her possession, granted to her as a gift from God. What is your *most precious* possession? What have you done *with* it?

“...incorruptible...undefiled...fadeth not away...” Peter used three words, each beginning with the same letter and ending with the same syllable, to describe in a cumulative fashion this inheritance’s permanence:

– can never perish	ἄφθαρτος	<i>aphthartos</i>
– spoil	ἀμίαντος	<i>amiantos</i>
– fade	ἀμάραντος	<i>amarantos</i>

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

“...kept”: The inheritance is not only guarded, but heirs who have been born into that inheritance are shielded by God’s power. φρουρέω *phroureo* is a military term (to guard, protect by a military guard (cf. Phil 4:7).

The final step, or ultimate completion of “the salvation of their souls” (1 Pet 1:9) will come “when Jesus Christ is revealed,” a clause Peter used twice (vv. 7, 13).

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

“Wherein”: truths mentioned in vv. 3-5.

“...greatly rejoice”: Knowledge alone cannot produce the great joy of experiential security and freedom from fear in the face of persecution. God’s omnipotent sovereignty needs to be coupled with human responsibility. It is a *courtship*. Faith makes theological security experiential.

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

“...tried with fire”: The word δοκιμαζομένου *dokimazomenou*, means “to test for the purpose of approving” (cf. *dokimion*, “trial,” in v. 7 and James 1:3, and *dokimon*, “test,” in James 1:12).

These trials yield two results: 1) They refine or purify one’s faith—much as gold is *refined by fire* when its dross is removed, and 2) Trials prove the reality of one’s *faith*. Stress deepens and strengthens a Christian’s faith and lets its reality be displayed.

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

“...joy unspeakable and full of glory”: The climax of the joy that results from faith: the focus of a believer’s faith is not on abstract knowledge but on the person of Christ.

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

John 20:29

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

“Receiving the end”: Believers can rejoice because they *are receiving* (pres. tense) (κοιμίζομενοι *komizomenoi*, “to receive as a reward”) what was promised, namely *salvation*, the goal or culmination (τέλος *telos*, “end”) of ...faith.

For those who love and believe in Jesus Christ, salvation is:

- **Past:** “He has given us new birth” (v. 3);
- **Present:** “through faith are shielded by God’s power” (v. 5);
- **Future:** it is their “inheritance” (v. 4), which will “be revealed in the last time” (v. 5) and is “the goal of your faith” (v. 9).

Next Session

Study Chapter 1. Review your favorite episodes involving Peter...

The Epistles of Peter Session 2

1 Peter 1:10 - 25

Review from Session 1

Peter was one of the first disciples called; he always stands first in the lists of disciples; he was also one of the three who formed an inner circle round the Master (Mk 5:37; 9:2; 14:33; cf. 13:3). His impulsive devotion is frequently portrayed (Mt 14:28; Mk 14:29; Lk 5:8; Jn 21:7) and he acts as spokesman of the Twelve (Mt 15:15; 18:21; Mk 1:36f; 8:29; 9:5; 10:28; 11:21; 14:29f; Lk 5:5; 12:41).

At the crisis near Caesarea Philippi, Peter is the representative of the whole band: for the question is directed to them all and all are included in the look that accompanies the subsequent reprimand (Mk 8:27, 29, 33). The transfiguration is intimately related to the apostolic confession which precedes it (Mk 9:1). The experience made a lasting impression on Peter (1 Pet 5:1; 2 Pet 1:16ff).

1 Peter 1 (Continued)

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

God’s Word is the basis for our faith. The prophets yearned for the Day that we can now see approaching...

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

“...testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ”: Psalm 22; Isaiah 53 (50:6); Daniel 9:26, et al.

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

“...the angels desire to look into”: Angels learning? ...through us! Cf. Eph 3:10. Note: 1 Pet 1:10-12 should be compared with 2 Pet 1:20-21:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

2 Peter 1:20-21

The doctrine of inspiration does not necessarily include the notion that they necessarily understood what they were “moved” to write.

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

This verse begins five specific exhortations. Actually in the Greek, the 1st, 2nd, and 4th are participles, subordinate to two commands: “have hope” and “be holy.” [It is interesting how an awareness of our “Blessed Hope” (prophecies of His Second Coming) purifies our lives and re-arranges our priorities!]

Five Specific Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-15)

1) Gird up the loins of your mind: This suggests Exodus 12, when they were instructed to eat the Passover with their loins girded and the shoes on their feet, ready to begin their journey when the signal was given... Cf., being girded with truth (Eph 6:14). “Prepare your minds for action” (v. 13). Obedience is a conscious act of the will. Christians in conflict need a tough-minded holiness that is ready for action.

2) Be sober, self-controlled (v. 13; cf. 4:7; 5:8; 1 Thess 5:6,8): νήφω from the verb νήφω, “be sober,” is used only figuratively in the New Testament. It means to be free from every form of mental and spiritual “drunkenness” or excess. Rather than being controlled by outside circumstances, believers should be directed from within.

3) (Set your) hope to the end for the grace (v. 13): “Set your hope fully”; holy living demands determination. A believer’s hope is to be set perfectly (teleious, completely or unchangeably), and without reserve on the grace (cf. v. 10) to be bestowed when Jesus Christ is revealed (lit., “in the revelation [αποκαλύψει *apokalypsei*] of Jesus Christ”; cf. the same phrase in v. 7; also cf. the verb “be revealed” in v. 5. Four times Peter has already spoken of the Savior’s return and the accompanying ultimate stage of salvation (vv. 5,7,9,13).

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

4) Not fashioning yourselves (not conform to) your former lusts (v. 14): Rather as obedient children (lit., “children of obedience”) they were to mold their characters toward His: Do not conform to the evil desires of their past sinful lives (cf. Eph 2:3) when they were ignorant of God (cf. Eph 4:18): συσχηματιζόμενοι *suschematizomenoi*, as also used in Rom 12:2).

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

5) Be ye holy (v. 15): “...conversation”: (Old English): Behavior. Their lifestyle was to reflect not their former ignorance (αγνοία, *agnoia*), but the holy (αγιοζ, *hagios*) nature of their heavenly Father who gave them new birth and called them to be His own (cf. “Called” in 2 Peter 1:3).

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

Cf. Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7. 1st Peter 1:15-16 does not speak of legal requirements but it is a reminder of a Christian’s responsibility in his inner life and outer walk. Though absolute holiness can never be achieved in this life, all areas of life should be in the process of becoming completely conformed to God’s perfect and holy will.

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

Are we “sojourning” or are we “earth dwellers?” So we are to live according to His absolute standards, as strangers (cf. “aliens” in 2:11) to the world’s shifting, situational ethics.

“...fear”: Reverential fear is evidenced by a tender conscience, a watchfulness against temptation, and avoiding things that would displease God.

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

Not with a silver half-shekel (Ex 30:12-15). Children of obedience should be strangers to their former empty way of life (cf. v. 14), handed down from their forebears, since they have been redeemed (ελυτρώητε, from “to pay a ransom”) with the precious (cf. 1 Pet 2:4, 6-7) blood of Christ (cf. 1 Pet 1:2).

Redemption is a purchasing from the marketplace of sin, a ransom not paid by silver or gold, which perish, but with the priceless blood of a perfect Lamb (cf. v. 7).

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

“...without blemish and without spot”: Passover requirements. Similar to the sacrificial lambs which were to be without defect, Christ was sinless, uniquely qualified as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29; cf. Heb 9:14).

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

“...foreordained”: When was He ordained? No afterthought here—all was foreseen and prepared beforehand.

Paradigm of Divine Volition

- Foreknowledge determines Election;
- Predestination brings to pass the Election;
- Election looks back to Foreknowledge;
- Predestination looks forward to Destiny.

Divine Election

- Corporate: Israel (Isa 45) and the Church (Eph 1:4).
- Individual: According to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet 1:2); wholly of grace, not human merit (Rom 9:11; 11:5,6); whereby certain are chosen for Himself (Jn 15:19) or for distinctive service (Lk 6:13; Acts 9:15; 1 Cor 1:27,28).

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The parallels between this letter and Peter's sermons recorded in Acts are significant—cf. 1 Pet 1:20 with Acts 2:23 and 1 Pet 4:5 with Acts 10:42. One of the more striking examples is the similarity between 1 Peter 2:7-8 and Acts 4:10-11: in each passage Psalm 118:22 is quoted and applied to Christ. It is interesting that Peter was present when Christ Himself used Psalm 118:22 to refer to His rejection by the Jewish leaders (Mt 21:42).

- 21] Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.
- 22] Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

“...unfeigned”: Sincere: *ανυπόκριτον* *anypokriton* could also be rendered “without hypocrisy.” All evil thoughts and feelings regarding one's brothers and sisters in Christ must be removed, for His followers are to love deeply, from the heart.

This kind of loving (*αγαπήσατε*, from *αγαπάω*, *agapao*), can only from a changed heart, from one whose motives are pure, and who seeks to give more than he takes. This love is to be expressed not shallowly but “deeply” (*εκτενζ*, *ektenous*, “at full stretch” or “in an all-out manner, with an intense strain”; cf. *εκτείνη* in 1 Peter 4:8).

“...a pure heart fervently”: A positive result of **obeying the truth** is a purified life (cf. v. 2b). “How can a young man keep his way pure? “...By taking heed thereto according to thy Word” (Ps 119:9).

As trials refine faith, so obedience to God's Word refines character. One who has purified himself by living according to God's Word has discovered the joy of obedience. A changed life should also be evidenced by a changed relationship with God's other children. A purified life allows one to love purely those who share the same faith.

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

“Born again.” Peter again reminded his readers that they had experienced the new birth (cf. v. 3). This supernatural event made it possible for them to obey the truth, purify themselves, and love the brethren.

“...incorruptible”: Is “incorruptible seed” corruptible? This change in their lives would not die, because it took place through God's Word, which is imperishable living and enduring (*αφθαρτος*, *aphthartos*, the word in v. 4 that described a believer's inheritance)

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

Peter supported his exhortation (v. 22) by quoting Isaiah 40:6-8. All that is born of perishable seed withers and falls, but God's Word stands forever.

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

“...the Word of the Lord”: This imperishable Word was the content of Peter's preaching (cf. v. 12): “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth” (James 1:18). His hearers must be affected by its life-changing power, as indicated in 1 Peter 2:1-3.

1 Peter 2

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

“Wherefore...”: Deriving from the previous chapter. Repentance is called for. Peter then listed five sins of attitude and speech, which drives wedges between believers. The Greek verb expresses the idea of removing garments: “Put off all malice.” Cf.. Paul also, “Put off your old self” (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9).

- **Malice** (*κακίαν*, *kakian*) is wicked ill-will; the desire to inflict pain, harm, or injury on our fellow man. [Notice the “all” 3X! No exceptions.]
- **Guile, deceit** (*δόλον*, *dolon*) is deliberate dishonesty, falsehood, craft, seduction, slander, and treachery. Operationally, it is the antithesis of being a fiduciary (see notes on Eph 6:4-9). Deceit and hypocrisy are twins: by deceit a person is wronged; and by hypocrisy he is deceived.
- **Hypocrisy** (*υποκρισεις*, *hypokriseis*), pretended piety and love; pretending to be what one is not; a man with a double heart and a lying tongue. As Jesus quoted Isaiah to the Pharisees (Mt 15:7-8, q. Isa 29:13).

- **Envy** (φθόνουζ, *phthonous*), resentful discontent (both hypocrisy and envy appear in the plural in the Greek);
- **Evil speaking, slander** (καταλαλιᾶζ, *katalalias*), backbiting lies.

None of these should have any place in those who are born again. Rather, in obedience to the Word, believers are to make decisive breaks with the past.

The Most Painful Sin

What sin has probably caused more pain than any other?

Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

Leviticus 19:16,17

In its formal form, it is a violation of a commandment written in stone by the finger of God!

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Exodus 20:16

He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth. He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

Proverbs 10:17-20

Gossip

Gossip is a form of betrayal and is probably accountable for more personal pain and suffering than most of us have any appreciation of. Common, casual, yet hurtful beyond our imagining.

Quietly, behind the flurry of daily priorities, its venom does its silent work, undermining confidences, betraying relationships, spreading unseen injustices...

It is disturbing to note how many of us have been injured—deeply—by gossip and by those who accept, without checking, negative or derogatory innuendos whispered behind our backs.

What an opportunity to display loyalty, love, and, by assuming the most charitable construction, *in advance*, demonstrate the foundation of a relationship!

The tongue is a ready and willing instrument to talk about our neighbor behind his back (Cf. Rom 1:30; 2 Cor 12:20; James 4:11).

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

2 Cor 12:20

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Proverbs 11:13

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Proverbs 18:8

He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Proverbs 20:19

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Proverbs 26:20

As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Proverbs 26:21

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Proverbs 26:22

The “Christian” Approach: “I don’t want to gossip. However, in order that you might pray more specifically for _____, let me tell you the latest . . .”

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

John 8:6,7

What Is a True Friend?

One who doesn't require explanations. One who gives the benefit of the doubt. One who is loyal and shuns any form of betrayal...

A Poem: "I Hear It Said..."

Last night my friend—he says he is my friend—
Came in and questioned me.
“I hear it said you have done this and that.
I come to ask are these things true?”
A glint was in his eye of small distrust.
His words were crisp and hot.
He measured me with anger,
and flung down a little heap of facts had come to him.
“I hear it said you have done this and that.”

Suppose I have? And are you not my friend?
And are you not my friend enough to say,
“If it were true, there would be reason in it.
And if I cannot know the how and why,
Still I can trust you, waiting for a word,
Or for no word, if no word ever come!”

Is friendship just a thing of afternoons,
Of pleasuring one's friend and one's dear self—
Greed for sedate approval of his pace,
Suspicion if he take one little turn
Upon the road, one flight into the air,
And has not sought you for your Yea or Nay!

No. Friendship is not so. I am my own.
And howsoever near my friend may draw
Unto my soul, there is a legend hung
Above a certain straight and narrow way
Says “Dear my friend, ye may not enter here!”

I would the time has come—as it has not—
When men shall rise and say, “He is my friend.
He has done this? And what is that to me!
Think you I have a check upon his head,
Or cast a guiding rein across his neck?
I am his friend. And for that cause I walk

Not overclose beside him, leaving still
Space for his silences, and space for mine.”

—Barbara Young

Next Session

Peter's two letters were based upon two great unforgettable events in his life: 1) The confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16); and, 2) The Transfiguration (Mt 17). Read 1 Peter 2 and Matthew 16. *What was the “Rock” Jesus was referring to?*

The Epistles of Peter Session 3 1 Peter 2

Review

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

“Wherefore...”: Deriving from the previous chapter. Repentance is called for. Peter then listed five sins of attitude and speech, which drives wedges between believers. The Greek verb expresses the idea of removing garments: “Put off all malice.” Cf.. Paul also, “Put off your old self” (Eph 4:22; Col 3:9).

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None of these should have any place in those who are born again. Rather, in obedience to the Word, believers are to make decisive breaks with the past.

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

Be as eager for the nourishment of the Word as babies are for *milk*. As newborn babes, their life depends on the next feeding!

After believers cast out impure desires and motives (v. 1), they then need to feed on wholesome *spiritual* food that produces growth. (*Sincere*, unadulterated, pure [ἀδόλον, *adolon*] is deliberately contrasted with “deceit” [δόλον, *dolon*] in v. 1).

God’s Word does not deceive; neither should God’s children. Christians should approach the Word with clean hearts and minds (v. 1) in eager anticipation, with a desire to grow spiritually.

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

Quoting Psalm 34:8, Peter continues the milk analogy used in v.2 and likened their present knowledge of Christ to tasting. They had taken a sample, having experienced God’s grace in their new birth, and had found that indeed *the Lord is gracious*.

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

“To whom coming...”: The participle’s tense and voice indicate that this coming is a personal, habitual approach. It is an intimate association of communion and fellowship between believers and their Lord. Peter develops and explains the metaphor of the stone in the following verses.

“...living stone”: However theologians may wrangle about the meaning of the Lord’s words in Mt 16, Peter himself understood them. The Rock is Christ Himself, the Living Stone. Every believer is also a living stone—made such by grace.

Here he said this Stone is living. It has life in itself and gives life to others. People may enter into personal, vital relationships with this

“Living Stone.” Here Peter used a unique figure of speech: In 1 Pet 1:3 he referred to a “living hope”; 1 Pet 1:23 to the “living . . . Word”; and, in 1 Pet 2:4 he refers to Christ as “the living Stone.”

“...disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious...”: Whereas Christ was disallowed/rejected by men, God had chosen Him (cf. 1 Pet 1:20 and held Him precious (cf. 1 Pet 1:19; 2:4, 7), Christians rejected by the world may take heart in the knowledge that they are the elect (1:1), and valued by God (cf. 1 Pet 1:18).

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

Believers, identified with Christ, for He is *the* living Stone, are like living stones. And as they become more like Him, further conformed to His image, they are being built into a spiritual house. Jesus had told Peter, “On this rock I will build My church” (Mt 16:18); now, Peter clearly identifies Christ as the Rock on which His Church is built (vv.4-5).

Paul called the Church a “temple” (1 Cor 3:16) and “a dwelling” (Eph 2:21,22). Believers not only make up the church but serve in it, ministering as a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices. All believers are priests (cf. 1 Pet 2:9; Heb 4:16; Rev 1:6) and need no mediator other than Jesus Christ to approach God directly (1 Tim 2:5).

“...sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”: Such priestly service requires holiness (cf. 1 Pet 1:16, 22). Praise to God and doing good to others are spiritual sacrifices that please Him (Heb 13:15). However, “living stones” should also offer themselves as “living sacrifices” acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (Rom 12:1, 2).

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

“...chief corner stone”: In verses 6-8 Peter quotes 3 OT verses: Isa 28:6; Ps 118:22; and, Isa 8:14. In Isa 28:16, Christ is the “chosen and precious” (cf. “precious” in 1 Pet 1:19; 2:4, 7) cornerstone. A cornerstone points to the visible support on which the rest of the building relies for strength and stability.

Moreover, they will never be put to shame. The Greek double negative used here in the subjunctive mood indicates an emphatic negative assertion referring to the future: never indeed will they be shamed. So Peter encourages his readers with a sure scriptural promise of ultimate victory for those who trust Christ.

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

These verses present a sharp contrast between those who believe and those who do not. Christ is “precious,” of ultimate value, to those who believe. But those who have rejected Christ stumble because of their disobedience.

Peter’s second quotation is from Ps 118:22. Jesus also quoted Ps 118:22 in reference to His rejection by the chief priests and Pharisees in Matthew 21:42-46:

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

Matthew 21:42-46

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

“...disobedient”: Peter’s third quotation is from Isaiah 8:14. Rejection of Jesus Christ is fatal and is connected with disobeying the message of God’s Word. To disobey the message is to reject it; and to obey it is to believe (cf. 1 Pet 4:17; cf. obedience in 1 Peter 1:14, 22 and “obedient to the faith” in Acts 6:7).

All who do not receive Christ as their Savior will one day face Him as their Judge. Because of sin, all disobedient unbelievers are destined for a “stumbling,” which will lead to eternal condemnation. [Cf. “Stone” and “Rock” as idioms of the Holy Spirit throughout the Scripture; cf. 1 Cor 10:4, et al.]

Christ, the Rock

Smitten that the Spirit of life may flow from Him to all who will drink (Ex 17:6; 1 Cor 10:4; Jn 4:13,14; 7:37-39):

- To the Church, the foundation and chief corner **Stone** (Eph 2:20);
- To the Jews, at His 1st Coming, a “stumbling **stone**” (Rom 9:32,33; 1 Cor 1:23);

- To Israel, at His 2nd Coming, “the **headstone** of the corner” (Zech 4:7);
- To the Gentile world power, the smiting “**Stone** cut without hands” (Dan 2:34);
- In the Divine Purpose, the **Stone** which, after the destruction of Gentile world powers, is to grow and fill the earth (Dan 2:34);
- To unbelievers, the crushing **Stone** of judgment that will grind those to powder (Mt 21:44).

Organization of 1st Peter

- Christian Suffering and conduct in the light of full salvation (1:1 – 2:8);
- **The Believer’s Life in light of Sevenfold position (2:9 – 4:19);**
- Christian Service in light the Coming Chief Shepherd (5:1-14)

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

“But ye are a chosen generation”: Peter closes this portion of his letter of encouragement with a moving exhortation for his readers to practice holiness. He reminded them that, in contrast with the disobedient who are destined for destruction, they were a **chosen** (ἐκλεκτοὶ *eklektoni*) people.

Peter again echoed the Old Testament, specifically Isaiah 43:20. “Chosen people,” which used to apply only to Israel, *was now used of both Jewish and Gentile believers*.

Royal Priesthood

The responsibility once solely trusted to the nation of Israel: at Sinai, God told Moses to tell the people, “You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6). Now, during this Age of Grace, this relationship has been given to the church: Believers in the Church Age are called:

- “A holy priesthood,” (1 Pet 2:5);
- “A royal priesthood,” (1 Pet 2:9; cf. Rev 1:6);
- “A people belonging to God” (Mal 3:17; Acts 20:28; Titus 2:14).

The Messiah was prophesied to be both priest and king (Zech 6:13; Heb 7:14-17; Rev 1:5-6). While these descriptions of the church are similar to those used of Israel in the Old Testament, this in no way indicates

that the church *supplants* Israel nor assumes that the national blessings promised to Israel (and to be fulfilled in the Millennium) devolve upon the church. *Similarity does not mean identity*. [Note the identity of the “kings and priests” of the 24 elders in Revelation with the church...]

“...that ye shall shew forth the praises of him”: God’s purpose in choosing believers for Himself is so that they may declare the praises of Him before others. “Praises” could also be translated “eminent qualities,” “excellencies,” or “virtues”: ἀρεταί, *aretos*, is used only four times in the NT (Phil 4:8; 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Pet 1:3, 5).

Believer-priests should live so that their heavenly Father’s qualities are evident in their lives. They are to serve as witnesses of the glory and grace of God, who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light.

“...called you out of darkness...” refers to the time when his readers were pagans, ignorant of God’s provision of salvation (cf. Col. 1:13), when they were not a people, when they had not received mercy. His “marvelous light” now illumines the people of God because they have received. Peter explains this figure in the next verse with a quotation from Hosea 2:23:

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

The practice of holiness, in which God’s people serve as a holy and royal priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices and extolling His excellencies, is the proper response to the mercy they have received (cf. 1 Pet 1:3).

Christian’s Behavior

Next Section: Specific ways Christians should behave differently before the world, as citizens, as slaves, and as wives and husbands. Even in familiar situations, their conduct should be discernibly different.

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

“...strangers”: Those who are loved by God are exhorted to live as strangers, aliens (παροίκους, *paroikous*, “those who live in a place that is not their home,” used figuratively of Christians, whose real home is in heaven) and pilgrims, strangers in the world (cf. Gen 23:4; Ps 39:12; Heb 11:9, 13; 1 Pet 1:17).

No one is really a pilgrim in this Biblical sense who has not first become a stranger to this world (see notes on 1 Peter 1:1). Just as their Christian values and beliefs are rejected by the world, so they are to live apart from the immorality and sinful desires that surround them (Cf. 1 Pet 4:3).

“...abstain”: ἀσπένδου, *aspendhai* is literally “hold oneself constantly back from.” Christians are to resist the sinward pull of those worldly desires which war against their spiritual lives (cf. James 4:1). In this real spiritual battle a demonic strategy is to attack believers at their weakest points (Cf. *The Armor of God*, Eph 6:10-18).

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

The negative exhortation of verse 11 is now followed by positive instruction. Christians are to abstain from sinful desires not only for their own spiritual well-being but also in order to maintain an effective testimony before unbelievers. A positive Christian lifestyle is a powerful means of convicting the world of its sin (cf. Mt 5:16).

“...honest...good”: Peter used the word **good** (καλός *kalos*) 2X in this verse to define both Christians’ **lives** (“conversations”) and their works. Before the critical eyes of slanderous people and their false accusations, the “good deeds” of believers can **glorify God** and win others to belief (cf. Mt 5:16; Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 6:20).

“...in the day of [His] visitation”: (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς, *en heimera episkopeis*; visitation (of God’s presence among men); office, place of service; office of bishop”; cf. “Time of your visitation” (Lk 19:44).

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

“...ordinance of man”: Christians are responsible to obey the law (Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1-2). Peter exhorted his readers to abide by governmental laws, to submit...to every ordinance of man *ktisei*, lit., “creation” or here “institution” or “law,” ἀνθρωπίνῃ, “made by man, human.”

The motivation for obedience is not avoiding punishment but is for the Lord’s sake. To honor God who ordained human government, Christians are to observe man-made laws carefully as long as those laws do not conflict with the clear teaching of Scripture (cf. Acts 4:19).

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

This section of Peter's argument leads many to believe that the organized persecution through oppressive Roman laws either had not begun or had not yet reached the provinces of Asia Minor.

Christians were then facing lies and verbal abuse, not torture and death. Christians were still enjoying the protection of a legal system which commended those who obeyed the law. So a believer's best defense against slanderous criticism was good behavior.

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

"...will of God": Evidently Christians were being slandered and falsely accused of evil, for Peter stressed that *it is God's will* (θέλημα *thelema*, a term expressing the result of one's purpose or desire; cf. "God's will" in 1 Pet 3:17; 4:2, 19).

"...put to silence": That through excellent behavior they *silence* (φιμῶν *phimoun*, lit., "muzzle") the ignorant talk of foolish men.

"...ignorance of foolish men": Each of the three Greek words rendered "ignorant talk of foolish men" begins with the letter alpha: ἀφρόνων ἀνθρώπων ἀγνώσιαν, as do the three Greek words in 1 Peter 1:4 rendered "never perish, spoil, or fade." Apparently Peter enjoyed alliteration!

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

"...for a cloak": Submission to lawful authority does not negate Christian liberty (cf. Gal 5:1, 18). Civil laws should be freely obeyed, not out of fear but because doing so is God's will. Christian freedom is always conditioned by Christian responsibility (cf. Gal 5:13) and must never be used as a cloak, or cover-up (ἐς πικάλυμμά *epikalymma*, lit., "veil") for evil.

"...servants of God": Christians enjoy true freedom when they obey God and live as servants (δοῦλοι *douloi*, lit., "slaves"; cf. Rom 6:22) of God. Though living **as** free men, they should also live as God's slaves. [Ex: Coeur d'Alene = "heart of the bondsman."]

- 17] Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

This section concludes with a four-point summary of Christian citizenship:

1) "Honor all...": τιμήσατε, *timeisate*, "honor, value, esteem"; cf. *timein*, "respect, honor," in 3:7 everyone (cf. Rom 12:10; 13:7). Believers should be conscious of the fact that each human has been uniquely created in God's image.

2) "Love the brotherhood": Love the brotherhood of believers, their brothers and sisters in Christ. God's family members should love each other.

3) "Fear God": The verb "fear" (*phobeisthe*) here does not mean to be in terror, but in awe and reverence that leads to obedience (cf. *phobo* in 1 Peter 1:17, *phobou* in 3:16, and *phobon* in 2 Cor 7:11). One will never truly respect people until he reverences God.

4) "Honor" is from *timaoi*, the verb used at the beginning of this verse. The respect or "honor" due to all is especially to be given to those God has placed in authority (cf. "the king" in 1 Pet 2:13 and "governors" in v. 14; cf. Rom 13:1).

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

"Servants": The Greek word for slaves here is not δοῦλοι, *douloi*, the common term for slaves (cf. v. 16), but οἰκέται, *oiketai*, which refers to household or domestic servants (cf. Lk 16:13; Rom 14:4).

"...be subject to": The word translated **be subject to, submit** ὑποτασσόμενοι, *hypotassomenoi*) is a nominative participle that continues the idea of submission expressed in 1 Peter 2:13 through the aorist imperative.

"...froward": Servants and slaves made up a high percentage of the early church, and undeserved punishment and suffering was common for the underlings. Peter challenged Christian slaves to submit to and respect even those who are *froward* (harsh); from the Greek σκολιός, *skolios* (lit., "curved," "bent," or "not straight"). The medical term "scoliosis," referring to curvature of the spine, comes from this word.

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

Peter set forth a principle here that may be applied to any situation where *unjust* suffering occurs.

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

No credit accrues for enduring punishment for doing wrong. It is respectful submission to *undeserved* suffering that finds favor with God because such behavior demonstrates His grace.

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

“...were ye called”: Peter powerfully supported his exhortation to slaves by citing Christ’s example of endurance in unjust suffering. Christians are called (*eklethete*; cf. 1 Pet 1:15; 2:9) to follow Christ, to emulate His character and conduct, because He suffered for them.

“...an example”: The word rendered “an example” (υπογραμμῶν, *hypo-grammon*, lit., “underwriting”), appearing only here in the New Testament, refers to a writing or drawing that a student reproduces.

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

Peter is quoting from Isaiah 53:9. Jesus committed no sin, either before or during His suffering (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Jn 3:5). He was completely innocent in both deed and word: no deceit (δόλος, *dolos*) was found in His mouth (cf. 1 Pet 2:1).

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

Christ was the perfect example of patient submission to unjust suffering (cf. Rom 12:19-20). Humanly speaking, the provocation to retaliate during Christ’s arrest, trial, and crucifixion was extreme. Yet He suffered in silence, committing Himself to God. He left it to the Father to vindicate Him, in His own good time. We must also.

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

Peter explains why the One who could have destroyed His enemies with a word patiently endured the pain and humiliation of the Cross. He *had* to:

He was in our shoes. God was justly judging our sins which His Son bore; “was made sin for us” (2 Cor 5:21).

“...our sins”: In the Greek the words “our sins” are near the beginning of the verse and thus stand out emphatically, while He Himself stresses Christ’s personal involvement.

“...we, being dead to sins”: His death makes it possible for believers to be free from both the penalty and the power of sin and to live for Him: so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness (cf. Rom 6:2, 13). Christ suffered so it would be possible for Christians to follow His example, both in suffering and in righteous living.

“...healed”: Peter made a general reference to salvation: by His wounds you have been healed (Isa 53:5). This does not refer to physical healing for the verb’s past tense indicates completed action, the “healing” is an accomplished fact.

“...stripes”: The reference is to salvation. Christ’s stripes (μώλωπι, *moilōipi*; lit., “wound”; “stripe left by a lash,” referred to Jesus’ scourging and death accomplished “healing,” the salvation of every individual who trusts Him as his Savior.

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

“...Shepherd and Bishop”: Christ not only set the example and provides salvation, but He also gives guidance and protection to those who were headed away (like sheep going astray) from Him, but who then “turned about” (rather than returned) to the Shepherd and Overseer (ἐπισκοπον, *episkopon*) of their souls.

“Shepherd” and “Overseer” stress Christ’s matchless guidance and management of those who commit themselves to His care (Ezek 34:11-16).

Next Session

Study 1 Peter 3. This chapter remarkably fits our own time: how does the believer live in a hostile, pagan world?

The Epistles of Peter Session 4

1 Peter 3

Introduction

This chapter remarkably fits our own time: how does the believer live in a hostile, pagan world? It also highlights some prophetic (and dispensational) aspects of “the days of Noah”... It starts with the primary spiritual fortification: The Marriage.

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

“...be in subjection”: The participle translated **be** carries the force of a command (1 Pet 2:18; Eph 5:22; Col 3:18). The command does not require women to be subordinate to men in general but to their husbands as a function of order within the home.

Marital Challenges

A wife is to accept her place in the family under the leadership of her husband, whom God has placed as head in the home. Wives are to be submissive even if their husbands are unbelievers, so those men might be saved by the behavior of their wives.

There are few experiences more difficult than to be united in marriage to an unbeliever (2 Cor 6:14,15). If one takes a superior attitude toward their mate, it will only stir up opposition to the truth and render conditions increasingly difficult. An imperious mate will drive their spouse further from God rather than draw them to Christ. Actions speak louder than words.

- 2] While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Reverence, that is. The powerful purity of a godly woman’s life can soften even the stoniest male heart without a word (Titus 2:5).

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

“...adorning”: Greek κόσμος *Cosmos*: world, world order, universe; world inhabitants, mankind; realm of existence, way of life (especially as opposed to the purpose of God); adornment. “To bring order out of chaos.” [Same root from which we get “cosmetics.”]

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

Scriptures do not forbid a measure of adornment of the person, but rather discourages *dependence* upon this to make one pleasing and attractive. A slatternly or slovenly person only repels. But one may be tastefully attired and immaculately groomed, and yet spoil everything by a haughty spirit or bad temper.

Peter did not state that women should not wear jewelry and nice clothes, but that Christian wives should not think of outer attire as the source of genuine beauty. A woman who wins this kind of victory has a winsome loveliness that comes not from outward adornment but from her inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit (1 Tim 2:9-11).

“...hidden man of the heart”: *The Way of Agape* and *Be Ye Transformed* are practical helps which focus on the inner self and this kind of beauty.

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

This is a comment on the role of husbands and wives, not men and women in general. [Cf. Notes on v.1. Also, *Commentary on Ephesians*, notes on Eph 5:22-24.]

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

She even accommodated Abrahams’s half-truths about her being his sister, etc. Gen 20

“...amazement”: πτόησιν, *ptoesis*, to be afraid of with terror (only here in the NT; cf. Gen 18:12).

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

Weaker physically and emotionally, but not intellectually. Yet also joint heirs to God’s gift of life.

“...be not hindered”: Quarrels and bickerings in the home stifle all fellowship in prayer.

How to Live in a Hostile, Pagan Culture

Peter anticipates, and then quotes from the Old Testament.

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

“Finally” = following from; and yet introducing a new section (Phil 3:1; 1 Thess 4:1). Five qualities are then listed:

- 1) ομόφρονες, *homophrones*: like-minded; harmony;
- 2) συμπάθεις, *sympatheis*: sympathetic;
- 3) φιλάδελφοι, *philadelphoi*: to love as brothers;
- 4) εὐσπλαγχνοι, *eusplanchnoi*: to be compassionate, tender hearted;
- 5) ἐὺσπλαγχνοι, *tapeinophrones*: humble.

This unique vocabulary stresses the importance of these Christian virtues which keep one from being deceitful (*dolon*; cf. 1 Pet 2:1, 22).

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

No room for revenge here. “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.” (Rom 12:19; Lev 19:18; Prov 24:17-18, 29). Jesus also taught to refrain from retaliation (Mt 5:39).

We are to seek peace by returning a blessing when receiving an insult. Jesus said, “Pray for those who persecute you” (Mt 5:44), and Paul wrote, “When we are cursed, we bless” (1 Cor 4:12).

Peter now quotes a segment of Psalm 34:12-16 (but stops deliberately mid-sentence...!?):

- 10] For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:
11] Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.
12] For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Why was part of this quote redacted?

What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open

unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Psalm 34:12-16

Peter omitted from Psalm 34:16, “To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.” This last element will not be in this age.

This appears to parallel the Lord’s reading Isaiah 61:1-2 in Luke 4:16-21. Here, too, Jesus stopped short of the phrase, “And the day of vengeance of our God.”

Dispensational Gaps

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Ps 34 10-12 (q. 1 Pet 3:10-12) | 13. Hab 2 13 ,14 |
| 2. Ps 118; middle v. 22 | 14. Zeph 3 7, 8 |
| 3. Isa 9:6; after 1st clause | 15. Zech 9 9, 10 |
| 4. Isa 53; middle v. 10 | 16. Mt 10; middle v. 23 |
| 5. Isa 61; middle v. 2 | 17. Mt 12; middle v. 20 |
| 6. Lam 4 21, 22 | 18. Lk 1 31 ,32 |
| 7. Dan 9 26, 27 | 19. Lk 4 18-20 (q. Isa 61:1, 2) |
| 8. Dan 11 20, 21 | 20. Lk 21; middle v. 24 |
| 9. Hos 2 13, 14 | 21. Jn 1 5,6 |
| 10. Hos 3 4, 5 | 22. 1 Pet 1; middle v. 11 |
| 11. Amos 9 10 ,11 | 23. 1 Pet 3 10-12 (q. Ps 34:12-16) |
| 12. Micah 5 2, 3 | 24. Rev 12 5, 6 |

It is interesting that there are a total of 24 similar “dispensational gaps” which would include the “Church Age” in Scripture: This is associated, by some, with the 24 Elders of Revelation, both suggesting 24 as the “number” symbolizing the Church. [Also, some see a “gap” between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, but that is a controversy of a different kind (see our *Expositional Commentary of Genesis* for a complete discussion).]

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

No matter how evil men seek to injure believers, there can no evil befall the righteous that is not “Father-filtered” (Rom 8:28, 31-39). This includes persecution, sickness, financial distress—all of which God uses to sanctify for good.

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

Only he who can say, “The Lord is the strength of my life” can go on to say, “Of whom shall I be afraid?”

He who walked with them in the fiery furnace, and stopped the mouths of lions, also keeps His watchful eye upon His saints. “He loves us so much He can’t take His eyes off of us!”

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

Our hearts must be separated unto Him. *This is our most important, preemptive, stewardship!* “Be ready to give every man an answer.” the mandate to be equipped in *apologetics* (the defense of the faith). What is the role of *epistemology* in contrast?

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

The best defense (and witness) against slander *is to be innocent*. (Peter may have been alluding to the occasion when he denied Christ out of fear, in words that were neither gentle nor respectful.) Cf. v.21. Also, 1 Pet 2:19; Acts 24:16; Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:12; 4:2; 1 Tim 1:5, 19; 2 Tim 1:3; Heb 9:14; 13:18.

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

It is also of paramount importance to realize that it is our *justified* hurts that are the most dangerous in developing into that “root of bitterness” that can so easily defile us (Heb 12:15). Also, remember the Cross: In vv. 18-22 Peter illustrates the principles from vv.13-17 using our perfect example, Jesus Christ. Verse 18, which follows, is one of the shortest and simplest, and yet one of the richest summaries given in the NT of the meaning of the Cross:

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

After His body and Spirit had been separated in death, He was raised again by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11).

The Spirits in Prison: Which Spirits? When Preached?

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

“...spirits in prisons”: *Which* Spirits? *When* were they “preached to”? Clement of Alexandria, about 200 A.D., taught that Christ was sent to Hades

in his spirit to proclaim the message of salvation to the souls of sinners who were imprisoned there since the flood [*Stromateis* 6.6]. *This view is inconsistent with Scripture: there is no conversion after death.*

Augustine, about 400 A.D., said that the preexistent Christ proclaimed salvation through Noah to the people who lived before the flood [*Epistolae* 164]. However, Augustine departs from the context of v.18.

“...preached”: Greek ἐκήρυξεν, from the lemma: κηρύσσω, *kerusso*: proclaim, make known, preach, proclaim. This doesn’t necessarily imply repentance as its object: it can include simply declaring His victory.

“...spirits”: πνεύμασιν, *pneumasin*, is a term usually applied to supernatural beings but it also used at least once to refer to human “spirits” (Heb 12:23) and are described in 1 Peter 3:20 as those who were disobedient when God waited patiently for Noah to finish building the ark.

The Spirits in Prison

They had rebelled against the message of God during the years the ark was being built. God declared He would not tolerate people’s wickedness forever, but in longsuffering, extended the life of Methuselah, delaying the judgment by 120 years (Gen 6:3).

Since the entire human race, except Noah, was evil, God determined to “wipe mankind from the face of the earth” (Gen 6:5-9).

The “spirits” referred to in 1 Peter 3:20 may be the souls of the evil human race that existed in the days of Noah. Those “spirits” are now “in prison” awaiting the final judgment of God at the end of the Age.

The problem then remains as to *when* Christ preached to these “spirits.” Peter’s explanation of the resurrection of Christ (3:18) “by the Spirit” brings to mind the suggestion that the pre-incarnate Christ was ministering through Noah, by means of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ preached through Noah to the ungodly humans who, at the time of Peter’s writing, were “spirits in prison” awaiting final judgment.

This interpretation seems to fit the theme of this section (1 Peter 3:13-22)—keeping a good conscience in unjust persecution. Noah is presented as an example of one who committed himself to a course of action for the sake of a clear conscience before God, though it meant enduring harsh ridicule. [*Can you imagine having this strange structure in your driveway for all that time?!*]

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

“...longsuffering of God waited”: The flood was postponed for 120 years. “The Lord...is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish...” (2 Pet 3:9).

“...when”: In Christ’s day, the spirits of those men to whom Noah had preached were in prison, for they had rejected the message of Noah. They had gone into *Sheol*. They were waiting for judgment; they were lost. But Christ did not go down and preach to them after He died on the cross. He had preached through Noah “when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.”

For 120 years Noah had preached the Word of God. He saved his family, but no one else. It was the Spirit of Christ who spoke through Noah in Noah’s day. In Christ’s day, those who rejected Noah’s message were in prison. *The thought is that Christ’s death meant nothing to them just as it means nothing to a great many people today who, as a result, will also come into judgment.*

Incarcerated Fallen Angels?

Friedrich Spitta, however, in the last decade of the 19th century, applied Christ’s proclamation to the fallen angels of Gen 6:2 (Cf. 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). [Friedrich Spitta, *Christi Predigt und die Geister (1 Peter. 3, 19ff.): Win Beitrag zur neutestamentischen Theologie*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Gottingen, 1890, pp. 22-24.]

Christ did pass through the realm where the fallen angels are kept and proclaimed His triumph over them (Col 2:15; Eph 6:12). So another possible explanation is that the “spirits in prison” are the fallen angels of Gen. 6 who consorted with the daughters of men, “going after strange flesh” as Jude 6-7 explains it.

The word “prison” in 1 Pet 3:19 refers to the place of judgment mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4, “chains of darkness.” It was this violation of God’s order that helped bring on the Flood, which explains why Peter mentions Noah. Note too that Peter’s theme is the subjection of angels to Christ (Cf. v. 22). These fallen angels were not subject to Him, and therefore they were judged.

Between His death and resurrection, Christ visited these angels in prison and announced His victory over Satan. The word “preached” in 1 Pet 3:19 means “to announce” and not “to preach the Gospel.” Jesus announced their doom and His victory over all angels and authorities.

It is likely that at this time Christ “led captivity captive” (Eph 4:8), rescued the godly souls dwelling in Hades, and took them to heaven (Lk 16:19–31). There is not one hint here of anybody having a second chance to be saved after death.

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

“The like figure whereunto even baptism...”: Baptism represents a complete break with one’s past life. As the Flood wiped away the old sinful world, so baptism pictures one’s break from his old sinful life and his entrance into new life in Christ.

“...by the resurrection of Jesus...”: It is not the going into the water that saves us, but that of which the baptism speaks: *the resurrection of Christ from the dead*. He who sent down into death, and could say “All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.”

Baptism is the symbol of what has already occurred in the heart and life of one who has trusted Christ as Savior (Rom 6:3-5; Gal 3:27; Col 2:12).

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

He is enthroned at God’s right hand (Ps 110:1; Heb 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), the seat of supreme honor, to rule and reign over all creation (Col 1:15-16; 2:14-15). Amen. So, Come quickly, Lord Jesus. *Maranatha!*

Some Lessons from the Flood

“As the days of Noah were, so shall the days of the Son of Man be” (Mt 24:37). Three classes of people were facing the Flood of Noah:

- 1) Those that *perished* in the flood;
- 2) Those *preserved through* the flood: Noah, his three sons, and their four wives; and,
- 3) Those *removed prior* to the flood (Enoch).

Enoch was but one person. Yet, the Church, too, is *one* person: “the Body of Christ!” Like Enoch, this Body, His Church, will be translated to be with the Lord *before* that great and terrible Day of Lord shall come (Rev 3:10; 1 Thess 4:16-18; et al.). This may also be in view in Rev 12:5.

Something happened to Enoch when his son, Methuselah, was born. “After he begat Methuselah he *walked with God* 300 years” (Gen 5:22). It was not easy in those days: widespread wickedness was reaching its peak. He was not at all “politically correct.” His was not a casual stroll. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

Enoch named his son, “His death shall bring.” *Muth*, (125X) = “his death”; *shelach* = “shall bring.” The year that Methuselah died, the judgment of the flood came. His son was a prophecy. [See *The Flood of Noah* for a complete analysis of the genealogy of Genesis 5.]

Walking means progress as well as communion (*koinonia*). It is interesting that Enoch was preaching the Second Coming of our Lord (Jude 14,15). He also *knew* his “translation” was coming, and walked in its daily expectation.

“By *faith* Enoch was translated that he should not see death...” (Heb 11:5). Faith in what? When his message was finished, he became the first astronaut: he was “translated” (raptured).

Note: He did not withdraw from his temporal life, but he “occupied” (Lk 19:13); after Methuselah he *begat sons and daughters* (Gen 5:22). [He was *not found*: his body did not remain behind...Gen 5:24.]

In Peter's Second Epistle, he will further apply prophetic implications to both Noah and Lot.

Final Session of 1 Peter

Study 1 Peter 4 & 5. Are we human flesh undergoing a spiritual experience?

Or are we spiritual beings undergoing a human experience?

Or is that the result of the transition that we call “the new birth”?

The Epistles of Peter Session 5 1 Peter 4-5

Introduction

- Are we human flesh undergoing a spiritual experience?
- Or are we spiritual beings undergoing a human experience?
- Or is that the result of the transition that we call “the new birth”?

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

“...arm yourselves”: Cf. Armor of God, Ephesians 6:10-18.

“...same mind”: “The mind of Christ” = the subject of Nancy’s book: *Be Ye Transformed*. “Mind” is not the brain; it is an entire process from thinking through resolution in action...

“...ceased”: *παύω pauo* past perfect tense, passive verb (middle voice in Greek): “has been released from.” God is the implied agent. The ruling power of sin has been broken. While unable to live a perfect life, the believer is free from the dominance of sin (Cf. Rom 6).

In Romans 7 Paul shows how the Christian is defeated when he lives in the flesh, but in Romans 8 he tells how God has provided the Holy Spirit that we might live by the power of the Spirit.

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

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Romans 8:5,6

With Christ as our example of patience in suffering, how can we—who owe everything to Him—do any less than arm ourselves with the same “mind” and so demonstrate that we are His by faith? Often God uses suffering to keep us from going into that which would dishonor Him.

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

A definite break with the past required. Gal 5:19-21 = works of the flesh.
Gal 5:22-23 = the fruits of the Spirit.

“Time past of our life may suffice”: we have already wasted enough of our most *inelastic* resource. [Shrewd executives always weigh the (alternative) *opportunity costs* in a decision.]

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

Being a Biblical Christian is more than just “politically incorrect.” The world *hates* believers.

“...speaking evil”: heaping abuse upon; blaspheme.

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

We all have an appointment to give account (Mt 12:36; Lk 16:2; Acts 19:40; Heb 13:17). Are you prepared for your “final exam”? (2 Cor 5:10).

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

We are to live so as to give account, not to men, but to Him who is to judge the living and the dead when He returns in power (2 Cor 5:10).

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

“But the end of all things is at hand”: That has been true since the day the Lord Jesus went back to heaven.

Here is a unique case where “the end justifies the means”! We are, indeed, to keep our “end” in view, and not to live for the passing moment, but as one who anticipates the end of all things—which is, indeed, at hand.

“...sober”: σωφρονέω *sophroneo* to be of sound mind; should be translated “sober-minded.” Peter uses this expression a great deal. He actually means, “Be ye therefore *intelligent*.”

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

This is amplified in 1 Corinthians 13 (q.v. Prov 10:12). While we are not to be indifferent to sin, we are to help those who are overtaken with a

fault (Gal 6:1; James 5:19, 20). We are to cling to one another in love rather than committed to exposure and censure of others.

- 9] Use hospitality one to another without grudging.
10] As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

“...stewards of the manifold grace of God”: Our “stewardship of the manifold grace of God!” [We *exercise* gifts; we *inspect* fruit.]

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

Failure to exercise your spiritual gift defrauds us all in the Body.

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

The primary reference for this verse may have been to the pending fulfillment of the Lord’s prophecy concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem (Lk 19:43-44; 21:20-24). Also, the horrors of Roman persecution, which was to last two centuries. (And over 1,500 years of the Papal persecutions... See *The Kingdom of Blood* Briefing Package.)

“...strange thing...”: Don’t think you are that unique. In fact, your trial may be to train you to serve others in a similar circumstance...

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

The believers suffers *in fellowship with his Lord*. We are to expect this (Jn 15:18-21). We cannot be partakers of His atoning sufferings: they stand alone; none but He could endure the penalty of our sins and so make propitiation that we could be forgiven. We share His sufferings for righteousness sake. There are no shortcuts to living the Christian life... Suffering is what develops you...

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

None can be true to Christ and loved by the world and its systems. We cannot expect the approval of those who reject and misunderstand our Savior.

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

"...or as a busybody": No follower of Christ is called upon to *deserve* the ill-will of the wicked. He is to *adorn* the gospel of Christ. There is no room for retaliation or infractions in the Christian witness. Peter puts a gossip in the same category as a murderer...

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

"Christian" is not found very often in the NT, but is the distinctive title of those who belong to Christ. First called thus at Antioch (Acts 11:26; and also Acts 26:28).

"...ashamed": "For I *am not ashamed* of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16).

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

1 Timothy 1:12

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

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10

Our Father does not pass over the failures of His people, but disciplines them toward obedience. How solemn, then, the judgment of them who persist in rejecting His savior!

The writer of Hebrews also supports Peter: "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons" (Heb 12:7). [We believe Paul was the writer of Hebrews...]

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

Indeed.

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

We are but pilgrims, passing through. Not called to a monastic life, but to go forth in the very world from which we have been delivered, being in it but not of it, declaring everywhere God's offer of salvation through the finished work of His beloved Son.

"...will of God commit the keeping of their souls": "... I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim 1:12).

Tertullian declared that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Persecution can never destroy the Church of God. Its dangers lie within.

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Philippians 3:4-7

1 Peter 5

- Verses 1–4 teach that suffering produces service and hope;
- Verses 5–14 teach that suffering produces humility and patience.

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

"...also an elder": (Fellow) "Elders among you..." συμπρεσβύτερος *sumpresbuteros*; cf. Acts 11:30; 20:17. There is no suggestion of a clerical order ruling over the laity here. Peter declares himself a *co-presbyter* with them.

Critical Vocabulary Lesson

The Greek word used here, πρεσβύτερος *presbuteros*, is a word which is sometimes used in speaking of a person being an elder or older person.

The Greek word which is translated “bishop” is ἐπίσκοπος *episkopos*, and it speaks of the *office* of the man, not the person of the man. It is the spiritual office of shepherding; the same word is used for “shepherd.”

This is all that Simon Peter ever claimed to be—he calls himself a *fellow elder*; συμπρεσβύτερος *sumpresbuteros*. He never claimed a superior place above his brethren, but as a fellow elder he exhorts them. Note: elders are never spoken of in the singular, there was never to be only one.

“...also a partaker of the glory”: Peter was in a unique position because he was an eyewitness of the sufferings of Christ. In the past Peter also saw that glory. In his second epistle, Peter identifies this as taking place on the Mount of Transfiguration.

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

“Feed,” not fleece, the flock of God. This command was also given by Jesus when Peter was reinstated (Jn 21:16).

“...oversight”: Related to the participle “serving as overseers” ἐπισκοποῦντες *episkopountes*, watching over those for whom they must give an account (Heb 13:17) is the noun “overseer” (ἐπισκοπέω *episkopeo*, used five other times (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 2:25).

The exhortations reflect Ezekiel 34:1-16, where false shepherds were contrasted with the True Shepherd.

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

John 13: the example of the washing of the feet... If Peter was ever a Pope, he never knew it!

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

“...the chief Shepherd”: Peter calls Him “the chief Shepherd” here.

- The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep—that is seen in Psalm 22.
- The Great Shepherd watches over the sheep—that is seen in Psalm 23.
- He is the Chief Shepherd who is coming again in Psalm 24.

“...a crown of glory”: At least five are specifically mentioned, which will be cast upon the glassy sea... (Rev 4:10). **Crowns (stephanos)** cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; reward for works (not salvation) Jas 1:12. Never promised to angels; reward is with Him: at the “Bema” seat.

Crowns Promised

- **Crown of Life** (Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10) for those who have suffered for His sake;
- **Crown of Righteousness** (2 Tim 4:8) for those who loved His appearing;
- **Crown Incorruptible** (1 Cor 9:25) for those who press on steadfastly;
- **Crown of Rejoicing** (1 Thess 2:19) for those who win souls
- **Crown of Glory** (1 Pet 5:4) for those who fed the flock

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

Pride is a barrier to all spiritual progress. We are to be each other’s *fiduciary*. (See notes on Ephesians 6:5-9 in our *Expositional Commentary on Ephesians*.)

- 6] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:
7] Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Unquestioning submission to His will (Cf. Sermon on the Mount, Mt 6:25-32; Ps 55:22). His heart is ever toward *you*. He is more concerned (and informed) than you are yourself...

(How many hairs are on your head? *He* knows.)

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

“Be sober”: νήφω *nepho* a different Greek word than that used in 1 Pet 4:7. Here the word means “to be watchful; circumspect.”

Satan is real. Bitter. Malignant. Resourceful. However, refuse him his place and he flees (James 4:7). (Could this also be a veiled reference to the lions of Nero in the physical arena?)

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

You are not alone.

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

“...after that ye have suffered a while”: we grow by suffering. “Perfect” = completed. Your present afflictions may be preparation for ministering to others...

- 11] To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
12] By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

“True grace” is the theme of this epistle wherein we can stand in the hour of trial (Cf. Rom 5:2).

[These remarks are possibly personal annotations by Peter himself, as Paul often did.]

Silvanus, Peter’s amanuensis, may have been the same as Paul’s Silas on his second missionary journey. (But it was a common name.) Silvanus may have personally delivered the letter to the churches along the predetermined route suggested in 1 Peter 1:1: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

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

Probably from the Nestorian Church, held from the beginning at Babylon on the Euphrates. Some maintain that it was a code word for pagan Rome. (The Coptic Church holds that it was at a new Babylon in Egypt, near present Cairo.)

[Babylon was a major Jewish center: the *Babylonian Talmud* even ranks over the *Jerusalem Talmud* (which was written in Tiberius, not Jerusalem).]

“...elected”: Election is the sovereign act of God in grace whereby certain persons are chosen from among mankind for Himself (Jn 15:16) and whereby certain elect persons are chosen for distinctive service for Him (Lk 6:13; Act 9:15; 1 Cor 1:27,28).

Election

In both OT & NT (Hebrew & Greek) all mean “to choose”: “elect”; “election”; “choose”; and, “chosen.”

Paradigm of Divine Volition

- Foreknowledge determines Election;
- Predestination brings to pass the Election;
- Election looks back to Foreknowledge;
- Predestination looks forward to Destiny.

Divine Election

- Corporate: Israel (Isa 45:4); the Church (Eph 1:4).
- Individual:
 - According to the foreknowledge of God (1 Pet 1:2);
 - Wholly of grace, not human merit (Rom 9:11; 11:5,6);
 - Whereby certain are chosen for Himself (Jn 15:19);
 - Or for distinctive service (Lk 6:13; Acts 9:15; 1 Cor 1:27,28).

“...Marcus my son”: Marcus = John Mark, who apparently accompanied Peter in the later years and wrote his gospel in collaboration with Peter. Earlier he had accompanied Paul and Barnabas but appeared unfaithful at first (Acts 15:37-39). He was later reaccredited to Paul’s satisfaction (2 Tim 4:11).

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

“...kiss of charity”: “A kiss to a young girl is hope, to a married woman is faith, but to an old maid is charity.”

“...in Christ Jesus”: Are you still in the flesh of Adam, or “in Christ?”

Next Session

Peter’s two letters were based upon two great unforgettable events in his life:

- 1st) The confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16);
- 2nd) The Transfiguration (Mt 17).

Read: Matthew 17 and the 2nd Epistle of Peter.

The Epistles of Peter Session 6

2 Peter 1

Introduction

Peter's second epistle was written shortly after his first letter (as also Paul to Corinth, Thessalonika, and Timothy). It was probably written after Paul's death, somewhere between A.D. 64-68; Peter mentions "all his epistles" as being in circulation already.

This epistle has had a rough passage through the centuries. It was considered second-class Scripture by Luther, rejected by Erasmus, and regarded with hesitancy by Calvin. Despite some scholastic controversies (which we won't bother to detail) by the 4th century it was well accepted throughout most of the world.

In Cave 7 at Qumran a papyrus fragment, 7Q5, appears to be part of Mark's Gospel, comprising 6:52-53. A tiny fragment (only 2 cm), 7Q10, found in the same cave has on it 6 letters in two lines which could come only from 2 Peter 1:15, if they come from the NT at all.

[Source: Jose O'Callaghan, "Los papiros griegos de la cueva 7 de Qumran," Madrid, *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos*, 1974, pp. 74-75, plate v.]

It has been conjectured that this letter might have been a covering document to Mark's Gospel to the Qumran community shortly before the Jewish War in A.D. 68 when the cave was closed. Like all "second" epistles, it is corrective: it is the prophet or exhorter who speaks. In his final message just prior to his martyrdom, Peter gives us some specific warnings concerning the oncoming apostasy that will sweep over Christendom.

The Two Epistles of Peter

The two epistles were linked to the two great experiences of his life: The declaration of the building of the Church (Mt 16) and the Transfiguration (Mt 17).

2 Peter 1

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

"...servant": δοῦλος *doulos*, bonds slave. [Cf. Coeur d'Alene = "heart of the awl."] Clearly this is the same audience as his first letter.

"...precious": One of Peter's favorite words.

"...righteousness of God": Righteousness which God imputes to the believer. (It would be unrighteous of God to refuse to save anyone who desired to avail himself of the result of the work of the Cross. God desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.)

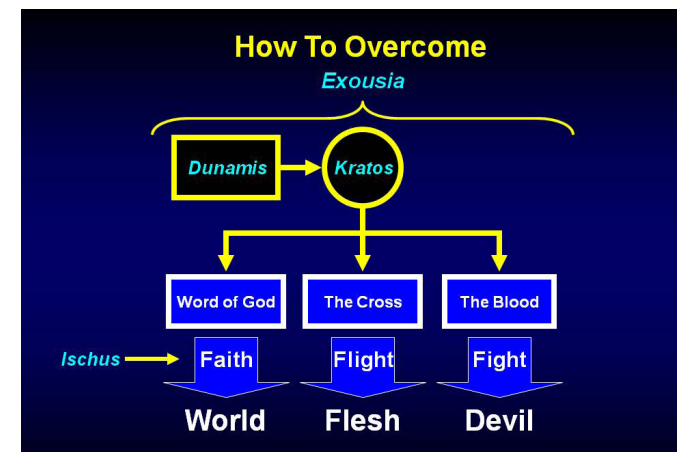
The faith given them by God was of equal honor or privilege with that of the apostles' faith. *The faith of the apostles was no different from the faith of any believer.* This contrasted with the Gnostic doctrines of the false teachers who spoke of an "inner circle" of special knowledge attainable by and available only to a privileged few.

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

"...knowledge of God": A knowledge that only the Holy Spirit can give/ It is also interesting to note how frequently Peter uses mathematical terms: "be multiplied" (also in 1 Pet 1:2).

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

"...power" (δυνάμει *dunamis*) is another one of Peter's favorite words (cf. 1 Pet 1:5; 3:22; 2 Pet 1:16; 2:11).



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

“...precious promises”: Indeed.

“...partakers”: Lit., “became partners” κοινωνός *koinonos*; sharing assets and liabilities. Because they are “partakers” of God’s nature, Christians can share in His moral victory over sin in this life and share in His glorious victory over death in eternal life. Because of the promise of the new birth (1 Pet 1:3), the promise of God’s protecting power (1 Pet 1:5), and the promise of God’s enabling power (2 Pet 1:3), believers can “participate in the divine nature,” that is, become more like Christ (cf. Rom 8:9; Gal 2:20).

“...lust”: Includes covetousness and every sort of forbidden yearning.

- 5] And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
6] And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
7] And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

“...add” = in the imperative, translates ἐπιχορηγέω *epichoregeo*, from which come the English words “chorus,” “choreograph,” and “choreography.”

ἐπιχορηγέω *epichoregeo*

In ancient Greece the state established a chorus but the director, the *choregys*, paid the expenses for training the chorus. Then the word came to be used of one who provides for or supports others or supplies something for them in abundance. A believer is to “furnish, supply, or support” his life with these virtues.

“...virtue”: This is more than merely chastity: it is really valor, as a soldier.

“...knowledge”: There can be no growth without a deepened understanding of spiritual realities.

“...temperance”: Self-control. Faith, goodness, and spiritual knowledge are not enough for a Christian’s walk. He must also make every effort to practice self-control (ἐγκράτεια *egkrateia*; used only two other times in the NT: Acts 24:25; Gal 5:23 This means to have one’s passions under control. It contrasts sharply with the anarchy and lack of control on the part of the false teachers whom Peter will expose in Chapter 2.

“...patience”: To endure without complaining. Murmuring is a sin (!)

“...godliness”: God-likeness; true piety.

“...charity”: Love (Gal 5:6; 1 Cor 13).

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

“...barren”: A better word is idle, or inactive; not unfruitful (Cf. Mt 25:14-30). Peter’s concluding benediction in this epistle—his last words to us—will be that we are to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.”

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

“...blind”: τυφλὸ *typhlos*, and μυωπάζων *myopazon*, or myopic; unable to discern spiritual things.

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

“...diligence”: “Due diligence” is a stewardship, or investor, term. Manifestation is a confirmation.

“...sure”: The Greek word for “sure” (βεβαίαν, *bebaian*) was used in classical Greek to refer to a warranty deed, somewhat like those people use today on houses and other pieces of property. One’s godly behavior is a “warranty deed” for himself that Jesus Christ has cleansed him from his past sins and therefore that he was in fact called and elected by God. [*Bebaian* is rendered “secure” (Heb 6:19), “guaranteed” (Rom 4:16), “firm” (2 Cor 1:7), “courage” (Heb 3:6), “confidence” (Heb 3:14), and “in force” (Heb 9:17).]

“...calling”: This refers to God’s efficacious work in salvation (cf. Rom 1:7; 8:30; 1 Cor 1:9).

“...election”: God’s work of choosing some sinners (by His grace, not their merits) to be saved (Rom 8:33; 11:5; Eph 1:4; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 1:1). Election, of course, precedes calling. A believer shows by his godly life and his growth in the virtues mentioned in 2 Pet 1:5-7 that he is one of God’s chosen.

“...fall”: Such a believer will not fall (or “stumble,” παλίστητε, *ptaiseite*). This word “stumble” does not suggest that a believer loses his salvation,

for salvation does not depend on one's spiritual growth. The Greek word for stumble means "to trip up" or "to experience a reversal." Certainly one who is maturing in Christ will not trip up in his spiritual life as readily as one who is immature and nearsighted.

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

Constant victory is the goal. In memory of what the Lord had told him when he was publicly reinstated to the place of apostleship at the seaside (John 21).

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

He knew our need of repeated reminders.

- 13] Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;
14] Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

Re: John 21:18,19. To be with Christ, which is far better (Phil 1:23. Cf. 2 Cor 5:1-10). The image of this earthly body being like a tent fits well with Peter's pilgrimage theme (1 Pet 1:1, 17; 2:11).

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

"...my decease": ἐξοδόν, *exodon*, same word as the title of the second book of the Torah: Exodus. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke of Jesus' "departure" (*exodon*; Lk 9:31). It is provocative that Moses and Elijah may well be returning as the two witnesses (Rev 11:3ff). Some speculate that Peter, in "keeping these things always in remembrance," may have had in mind his Gospel, through Mark.

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

"...eyewitnesses of his majesty": It is important to distinguish between the written Word (the Bible) and the incarnate Word, the *Logos* (Christ). They are both major avenues of God's revelation (cf. Ps 19:7-11; Jn 1:18; Heb 1:2 and therefore both come into focus throughout the remainder of this chapter.

A Christian's faith does not rest on clever stories or fables (μῦθοις *mythois*) as did the doctrines of the false teachers which Peter will attack in Chapter 2. Instead, true faith is founded on historical facts, which eyewitnesses corroborated. *His defense of the doctrine of the Second Coming therefore is based on his eyewitness experience on the Mount of Transfiguration* at which time he truly saw Christ's majesty.

Several times in his earlier epistle he spoke of Christ's return (1 Pet 1:5, 13; 4:13). Obviously Peter considered this doctrine of great importance, one his readers should always keep in mind. In Peter's preaching during the days of the early Church he was firmly committed to the doctrine of the Second Coming (Acts 2:32-33, 36; 3:16, 20-21).

Was the Transfiguration a "staff meeting"? A view of the kingdom in advance?

Location? Moses and Elijah ended their ministries in the same region near Mt. Nebo (Pisgah); cf. Deut 34:1; 2 Kgs 2. Was the Mt. of Transfiguration in this same region? (Mk 9:30).

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

As at His baptism... (Mt 3:17).

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

He seems as much impressed with what he heard as with what he saw.

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

"...a more sure word of prophecy": We have appended an updated rendering of the famous Peter Stoner model at the end of this session.

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

"...private interpretation": This has been interpreted several ways:

- 1) Scripture should be interpreted only in context, that is, a prophecy cannot stand alone without other prophecies to aid in its understanding.

- 2) Scripture should not be interpreted according to one's own individual liking.
- 3) Scripture cannot be correctly interpreted without the Holy Spirit.
- 4) The prophecies did not originate with the prophets themselves.

The word *πιλύσεωζ*, *epilyseos* (“interpretation,” lit., “unloosing”) and the word *γίνεται*, *ginetai* (“came about”) favor the fourth view. The Scriptures did not stem merely from the prophets themselves; their writings came from God. Verse 20, then, speaks not of interpretation, but of revelation, the source of the Scriptures. There is integrity of design, and each part takes relevance as it fits into the “whole counsel” of God (Act 20:27).

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world...
Acts 15:18

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

“...were moved”: “Borne along” or “carried along” translates the word *φερόμενοι*, *pheromenoi*. Luke used this word in referring to a sailing vessel carried along by the wind (Acts 27:15, 17). As the authors of Scripture wrote their prophecies, they were impelled or borne along by God's Spirit. What they wrote was thus inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16).

The Scriptures' human authors were controlled by the divine Author, the Holy Spirit. Yet they were consciously involved in the process; they were neither taking dictation nor writing in a state of ecstasy. No wonder believers have a word of prophecy which is certain. They are the very words of God Himself!

Measuring Our Confidence: How Sure Can We Be?

Until we can measure a thing, we really know very little about it.
William Thomson (Lord Kelvin)

The Nature of Einstein's Revolution

We have the advantage of modern physics, although few appreciate its aid to our understanding *Biblical* insights!

- **Special Relativity (1905):** Length, mass, velocity and time are *relative* to velocity of the observers
- **General Relativity (1915):** No distinction between time & space = a 4-dimensional continuum (confirmed 14 ways to 19 decimals).

Gravitational Time Dilation

Two identical Atomic clocks are located at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Boulder, Colorado, and the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England. *Both are accurate to better than 1 second per million years*, yet the NIST clock ticks 5μ seconds/year *faster* than an identical clock at Greenwich. Which is correct?

Both are! Boulder, Colorado = 5400 ft altitude; Greenwich, England = 80 ft. Atomic Clocks run faster by 10^{-16} sec/meter elevation.

Other Demonstrations

- Aircraft experiment (1971): Eastward : *lost* 0.059 microseconds; Westward: *gained* 0.273 microseconds. Accounting for the Earth's rotation, etc., it was exactly what Einstein's formula predicted.
- Twin Astronauts (hypothetical) Alpha Centauri trip...

Time Is *Not* Uniform

Time is a *physical* property; it *varies* with mass, acceleration and gravity...among other things...We exist in *more* than three dimensions (apparently, 10...). This physical insight will dissolve most theological paradoxes...

The Nature of God

Is God subject to the restrictions of mass? Acceleration? Gravity? He is not simply One with “lots of time,” He is *outside* of the restrictions of time. This uniqueness is His Personal Imprint...

From Outside Time

For thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity...
Isaiah 57:15

Since God has the technology to create us, He certainly has the means to get a message to us; but how does He *authenticate* His message so that we know that it is really from Him, and not a contrivance or a fraud?

Authentication

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done...

Isaiah 46:10

Prophetic Scriptures

In the Bible there are 8,362 predictive verses; 1,817 predictions on 737 separate matters.

J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*

The Old Testament (The *Tenach*)

These Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek by 270 B.C. They contain over 300 prophecies detailing the Coming Messiah. We are now going to examine just eight of them.

For this statistical analysis, I am indebted to Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks* (which I took as the basis and modified). Can we *measure* our confidence that Jesus really was who He said He was?

Prophecy #1: Born in Bethlehem

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Micah 5:2

What is the probability of any person, taken at random, of fulfilling this?

$$p = 10,000 / 1,000,000,000$$
$$p = 10^4 / 10^9 = 1:10^5 \text{ (1:100,000)}$$

Prophecy #2: King on Donkey

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Zechariah 9:9

How many have presented themselves as a king to Jerusalem riding a donkey?

$$p = 1:100$$

Prophecy #3: 30 Pieces of Silver

And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

Zechariah 11:12

How many people have been betrayed for 30 pieces of silver?

$$p = 1:1,1000$$

Prophecy #4: Temple, Potter, etc.

And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

Zechariah 11:13

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Matthew 27:6-8

The Final Transaction

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Matthew 27:4-5

The Precision of Zech 11:13. Price: 30 pieces of silver; location of the transaction: the House of the Lord (Temple); who ends up with the money? The potter!

$$p = 1:100,000$$

Prophecy #5: Wounds in Hands

And one shall say unto him, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" Then he shall answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

Zechariah 13:6

Thomas' Unbelief

But he [Thomas] said unto them, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then saith he to

Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger; and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God." Jesus saith unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

John 20:25-29

How many people, taken at random, have been "wounded in their hands" in "the house of their friends?"

$$p = 1:1,000$$

Prophecy #6: No Defense Though Innocent

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Isaiah 53:7

How many prisoners, accused of a capital crime, make no defense even though innocent?

$$p = 1:1,000$$

Prophecy #7: Died with Wicked; Buried with Rich

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 53:9

How many died among the wicked, yet were buried with the rich?

$$p = 1:1,000$$

Prophecy #8: Crucified

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

Psalm 22:16

(700 years before crucifixion invented.) How many, taken at random, have died by having hands and feet pierced?

$$p = 1:10,000$$

Composite Probabilities

If a population has 60% male and 40% female, what is the probability that one taken at random is female? 40%, or $p = 0.4$

If a population is 60% right handed and 40% left handed, what is the probability that someone taken at random is left handed? 40%, or $p = 0.4$. What is the probability of selecting a left-handed female?

$$p = 0.4 \times 0.4 = .16$$

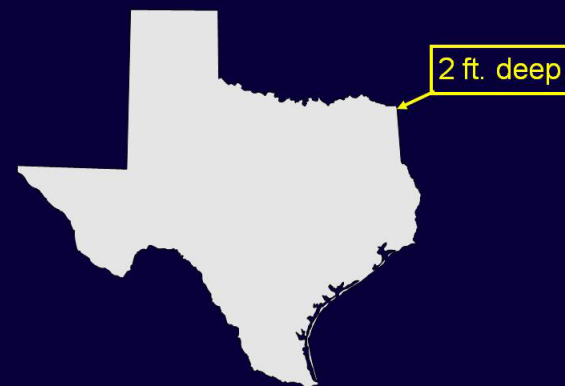
8 Prophecies

Micah 5:2	Born in Bethlehem	1:100,000
Zechariah 9:9	King on Donkey	1:100
Zechariah 11:12	30 pieces of Silver	1:1,000
Zechariah 11:13	Temple, Potter, etc.	1:100,000
Zechariah 13:6	Wounds in hands	1:1,000
Isaiah 53:7	No defense; innocent	1:1,000
Isaiah 53:9	Died with the wicked Grave with the rich	1:1,000
Psalm 22:16	Crucified	<u>1:10,000</u>
		1:10²⁸

8 Prophecies Combined

- Total population # 100 billion (10^{11})
- Combined probabilities: $10^{28}/10^{11} = 10^{17}$
- A "bucket" of 10^{17} silver dollars?

The State of Texas



16 Prophecies Combined

Over 300 to choose from; the next 8 would be more specific (each less likely than the previous); Assuming *no decrease* in likelihoods: $10^{28} \times 10^{28} = 10^{56}$. Combined probabilities: $10^{56}/10^{11} = 10^{45}$

How big of a “bucket” do we need now? A ball of silver dollars with a radius that is 30 times the distance between the earth and the sun!

48 Prophecies Combined

Over 300 to choose from; assuming no decrease in likelihoods: $10^{28} \times 10^{28} \times 10^{28} \times 10^{28} \times 10^{28} \times 10^{28} = 10^{168}$. Combined probabilities: $10^{168}/10^{11} = 10^{157}$

Silver dollars won’t work this one... 48 Prophecies: 10^{157}
Make a “ball” of every atom in the universe: 10^{66}
Make one *for each atom* of the universe: $10^{66} \times 10^{66} = 10^{132}$
Repeat this exercise *every second since the universe began*:
 $10^{132} \times 10^{17} = 10^{149}$

10^{149} vs. 10^{157} ? ...we are still short by 10^8 : *100,000,000 times*...and we’ve dealt with only 48 of over 300 prophecies!

The Most Amazing Ones

- His detailed genealogy;
- The specific prediction of the precise day that the Messiah would present Himself as King to Jerusalem;
- Old Testament *Midrashic* Prophecies. . .
- There are no other equivalents—Islam’s *Koran*; Hindu’s *Veda*; *Bhagavad-Gita*; *Book of Mormon*; Nostradamus’ *Centuries*; Occultic mediums, channelers, “New Age” spirit guides, etc.

The Scarlet Thread

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| • The “Seed of the Woman”
– The Human Race | Genesis 3:15 |
| • Abraham
– The Nation of Israel | Genesis 22:18 |
| • Jacob
– The Tribe | Genesis 49:10 |
| • David
– The Family | 2 Samuel 7:11-16 |

Old Testament Prophecies *Quoted* in the Gospels

- He was to be of David’s family (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 89:3-4; 110:1; 132:11; Isa 9:6, 7; 11:1).
- He would be born of a virgin (Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14).
- He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- He would sojourn in Egypt (Hos 11:1).
- He would live in Galilee (Isa 9:1, 2).
- ...in Nazareth (Isa 11:1).
- To be announced by an Elijah-like herald (Isa 40:3-5; Mal 3:1; 4:5).
- Would occasion massacre of Bethlehem’s children (Gen 35:19-20; Jer 31:15).
- Would proclaim a Jubilee to the world (Isa 58:6; 61:1).
- His mission would include the Gentiles (Isa 42:1-4).
- Ministry would be one of healing (Isa 53:4).
- He would teach through parables (Isa 6:9-10; Ps 78:2).
- He would be disbelieved, rejected by Rulers (Ps 69:4; 118:22; Isa 6:10; 29:13; 53:1).
- Would make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Zech 9:9; Ps 118:26).
- Betrayed by friend for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:1-13; Ps 41:9).
- Would be like a smitten shepherd (Zech 13:7).
- Would be given vinegar and gall (Ps 69:21).
- They would cast lots for His garments (Ps 22:18).
- His Side would be pierced (Zech 12:10; Ps 22:16).
- Not a bone would be broken (Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20).
- Would die among malefactors (Isa 53:9, 12).
- His dying words foretold (Ps 22:1; 31:5).
- Would be buried by a rich man (Isa 53:9).
- Rise from dead on 3rd day (Gen 22:4; Ps 16:10-11; Jon 1:17).
- Resurrection followed by destruction of Jerusalem (Dan 9:26; 11:31; 12:1,11).

Epistemological Approach

Establish the Integrity of Design in the Bible; which Establishes the Identity of Jesus Christ; which in turn Authenticates the Integrity of Design.

Our Challenge

We are being plunged into a period of time about which the Bible says more than in does about any other period in history...*including the time when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee and climbed the mountains of Judea.*

The Epistles of Peter Session 7

2 Peter 2

False Teachers

False doctrines had begun to make inroads; both 2 Peter and Jude deal with these. A greater apostasy was to come. (There are significant similarities with Jude. This “double testimony” by the Holy Spirit should get our attention in this day!) Paul also dealt with similar libertine false teachers (1 Cor 6:19,20; 7:23).

A false teacher is not a person who teaches false doctrine out of ignorance. Apollos taught mistakenly the message and the baptism of John, but he was not a false teacher (Acts 18:24–28).

False teachers are professed believers who know the truth but who deliberately teach lies in the hope of promoting themselves and getting financial gain from their followers (1 Pet 2:3,14); are able to live in sin to please themselves (1 Pet 2:10,13,14,18,19); use deceptive means (1 Pet 2:1,3) and twist the Word of God to suit their fancies.

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

“...false prophets”: They arose in Israel (cf. Jer 5:31; 23:9-18) in Peter’s day, and so also among us.

“...privily”: False teacher never announce their arrival as such. The church is never injured from the outside; only from the inside.

“...damnable heresies”: There is no heresy that has not been *anticipated* by the Holy Spirit. Heresy is like leaven (Gal 5:9): it corrupts all with which it comes in contact.

“...denying the Lord that bought them”: A direct rebuttal of limited atonement, the view that Christ died only for those whom He would later save.

...and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2

False Teachers

- Their teaching was flattery;
- Their ambitions were financial;
- Their lives were dissolute;
- Their conscience was dulled;
- Their aim was deception. Cf. Isa 28:7; Jer 23:14; Ezek 13:3; Zech 13:4. “Wolves in sheep’s clothing” is the way our Lord pictured them (Mt 7:15; cf. 2 Cor 4:1,2; 11:13).

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

“...pernicious ways”: ἀσελγείαις, *aselgeiais*: debased sexually; immoral practices. Debauchery (1 Pet 4:3); filthy (2 Pet 2:7); lustful (2 Pet 2:18). ἀσέλγεια *aselgeia* unbridled lust, excess, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence (Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:9; Jude 4). This will become important in v. 4.

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

“...feigned words”: “Counterfeit words” or “manufactured, fabricated words.” πλαστός *plastos*, from which we get the English word “plastic.” They take familiar Bible words and manufacture new meanings for them. They use our vocabulary but empty these words of spiritual meaning. They will fall into the same judgment as former violators of truth. God’s judgment is never late.

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

“...the angels that sinned”: Gen 6:1-4.

“...hell”: *Tartarus*: a Greek term signifying a region that was as far below Hades as Hades was below the earth [Homer; also Josephus *Apion*. ii.33.] In Greek mythology, it was the place of punishment for the departed spirits of the very wicked, particularly rebellious gods like Tantalus. Possibly equivalent to the *Abouso* (Rev 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1).

Nephilim

“...chains of darkness”: An allusion to Gen 6:1-4. This reference (along with Jude 6, 7) seems to corroborate the identity of the *b’nai Elohim* of that strange passage.

The hybrid offspring of this unnatural intercourse were the *Nephilim*, the “fallen ones” (from the Heb. *Nephil*, to fall.) These were the heroes, or giants, preserved in ancient mythology.

Satan’s attempt to adulterate the human race, to thwart God’s plan of redemption through Adam’s kinsman-redeemer, was terminated through the judgment of the Flood... Where are the spirits of the Nephilim? Their bodies were washed away in the flood. Only man can be redeemed through Christ’s redemption; are these disembodied spirits what we know as the demons?

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

“...a preacher of righteousness”: Only Noah, whose genealogy was uncontaminated (Gen 6:9) was spared, with his family. Noah was a preacher (declarer). His very life must have been a testimony. Every nail that Noah drove into the ark was a sermon, declaring that judgment was about to fall.

Other Revelations in Allusions

- Jude: Prophecy of Enoch (v. 14,15);
 - Paul: Words of Christ not in Gospels (Acts 20:35);
 - Names of the two magicians in Egypt (2 Tim 3:8);
 - James: Elijah shut the heavens for 3 ½ years (1 Kgs 17:1 & 18:1 do not link long drought in Ahab’s reign to prayers of the prophet; Cf. James 5:17, Lord’s reference, Lk 4:25),
- 6] And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

Sodom and Gomorrah must be important: they are alluded to 7X in each the OT and NT. Here, as a warning to *us*. Cf. Jude 1:6, 7. [The Book of Enoch?]

- 7] And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:
8] (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

“...from day to day”: “He sat in the gate...” (Gen 19:1ff). Lot appears to have been an alderman of the city.

“...that righteous man”: Lot a *righteous* man? Yet he was in the wrong place; thus, in a constant state of vexation. [*Are you still shocked by sinful things? Or has our consciences been dulled to sin, with apathy toward today’s moral standards?*]

It could never be said of him that “by faith Lot dwelt in Sodom.” Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom 14:23). Yet he was saved out of it, yet as by fire (1 Cor 3:15).

And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?

Genesis 18:20-24

A very important principle is laid down here. [Abraham intercedes for the righteous—including Lot.]

That be far from thee to do after this manner; to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty’s sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty’s sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall

be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Genesis 18:25-32

A very important principle: ***The two angels will spend an entire chapter (Genesis 19) getting Lot out of there before they can accomplish their assigned mission!***

[What does this imply regarding the church and the Tribulation?]

Genesis 19: The Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah

- 17] And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.
- 18] And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord:
- 19] Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die:
- 20] Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.
- 21] And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken.
- 22] Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.
- 23] The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.
- 24] Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;
- 25] And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.
- 26] But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

With burning sulfur the Lord overthrew the wicked cities and the entire plain (vv. 24-25). (Some have suggested that deposits of sulfur erupted from the earth (cf. the “tar pits,” Gen 14:10), and then showered down out of the heavens in flames of fire (cf. Lk 17:29).)

Lot's wife gazed back intently and was changed into a pillar of salt, a monument to her disobedience; covered and encrusted with deposits from the raining brimstone. Jesus admonishes us to “remember Lot's wife” (Lk 17:32).

2 Peter 2

- 9] The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:
(This verse concludes the sentence begun in v. 4.) A declaration of God's sovereignty. Praise His name! (1 Cor 10:31).

“...deliver the godly out of temptations”: In Lot's case, he had to be literally dragged out! Lot did accept divine intervention on his behalf, as did Elizabeth and Zacharias, who are also called *dikaioi* (“upright”) (Lk 1:5, 6). (This says much for Abraham's intercessory prayer in Gen 18:23-33.) Lot's removal was a *condition precedent* to the judgment falling. Noah and Lot stood alone, however. God delivered them both. There is no hope for the unjust...

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

“Presumptuous are they, selfwilled”: These also make sport of the Second Coming in Chapter 3. Self-willed, his world contracts until the only thing he has left is the self he has corrupted. Rejecting (all) authority.

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

“...railing accusation”: “Railing”: βλάσφημο, *blasphemos*, blaspheme, insult, slander. Jude's parallel example of Michael has to be about the most bizarre (Jude 9). There, Michael was on a mission for the Lord which Satan was obstructing! Still, Michael left it in the Lord's hands.

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

[The “Jesus Seminar” is a dismal example.] The false teachers are willfully blind to what the Bible teaches (Cf. 2 Pet 3:5). They call evangelical Christians “uneducated” and Biblical theology “old-fashioned”! (The reference to “brute beasts” may have evoked Peter's use of the Balaam's ass in v.16.)

- 13] And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;
- 14] Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

“...beguiling”: δελεάζω, *deleazo*, to catch with bait; a fishing term. (Are you surprised that Peter would use such a term?)

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

“...the way of Balaam”: Three related aspects:

- The Way of Balaam 2 Pet 2:15
- The Error of Balaam Jude 11
- The Doctrine of Balaam Rev 2:14

The Way of Balaam (2 Pet 2:15)

Pretending to be subject to the Lord, they crave the riches of Balak (the world; cf. Num 22-24). Num 31:16 attributes his influence the immorality of the Israelites at Baal-Peor (Num 25). This type is used also in Jude 11, where Baal-Peor is implicit (cf. 1 Cor 10:8; Rev 2:15).

Error of Balaam (Jude 11)

Reasoning from natural morality and seeing the evil in Israel, he supposed a righteous God must curse them. He was blind to the higher morality of the cross, through which God maintains and enforces the authority and awful sanctions of His law, so that He can be just and the Justifier of a believing sinner. The reward of v.11 is not necessarily money; it may be popularity, fame, or applause.

Doctrine of Balaam (Rev 2:14)

His teaching Balak to corrupt the people who could not be cursed (Num 31:15,16; 22:5; 23:8). Baal-Peor is implicit (cf. 1 Cor 10:8).

“...son of Bosor”: Some manuscripts call Balaam “son of Bosor” not *son of Beor* here. If correct, this could be a paranomasia with *basar* (“flesh”). It also could be a Galilean mispronunciation of the guttural in the Hebrew name, expected of Peter (Mt 26:73).

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

[The OT was not a problem to the early church; it was their basic datum.]
If God can use Balaam’s ass, He can use any of *us*!

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

“...wells without water”: Psychology is but one example. It has no remedy for the cause (sin); only patches for the symptoms (guilt). In contrast to *Living* water as described in John 4:13-14; 7:38. Pretentious vendors of man’s alternative doctrines are doomed to darkness.

“...the mists”: ὁμίχλαι *homichle*, metaphorically, of the evil workers here mentioned; is a haze which heralds dry weather [Aristotle, *Meteor*, 1.34b.] It is easily dispersed by a sharp gust of wind; i.e., instability.

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

“...swelling words”: unnaturally swollen; bombastic, haughty. Ostentatiously verbose. [Have you ever sampled the psychological literature? Talk about “great swelling words of vanity”!...]

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

“...brought in bondage”: The promise of modern psychological counseling: liberty. The delivered result: bondage to self. [Psychoanalysis gives the term “couch potato” a whole new meaning!]

To be enslaved to oneself is the heaviest of all servitudes.

—Seneca

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

“...entangled”: another fishing metaphor. It is quite different to know Christianity as a system; it is quite another to know Christ as *Savior*! Those who simply take up a series of doctrines are always vulnerable to giving them up for some other “system.”

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

Some stumble at vv. 20, 21 as suggesting that one truly “born again” can become once more the seed of Satan. Don’t confuse mere profession with reality. Like the men of Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:26-31 (cf. Mt 12:45; Lk 11:26).

- 22] But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Peter quotes Proverbs 26:11. The dog is used as a symbol of a false teacher (Ex 11:7; Deut 23:18; Judg 7:5; Ps 22:20; 59:6, 14). Both the dog and the pigs, unclean animals to the Jew, are united by Jesus in Mt 7:6. One's true (new) nature will be manifested in one's subsequent walk.

Their punishment is that they will be given over to the lot they have chosen. God underwrites a man's deliberate choice. In the end, we will all go "to our own place."

Next Session

Read 2 Peter 3. Notice the connection between "Creation" and the "Second Coming..."

The Epistles of Peter Session 8 2 Peter 3

Parallelism of Two Books

Second Peter is the swan song of Peter, as Second Timothy is the swan song of Paul. There are striking similarities between the two books. *Both epistles put up a warning sign to identify the awful apostasy that was on the way at that time and which, in our time, has now arrived.*

Facing Death

Both Peter and Paul speak in a joyful manner of their approaching deaths (Cf. 2 Pet 1:13-14; 2 Tim 4:6-8). Paul knew that the time of his departure had come: he had finished his course; he had been on the racetrack of life, and now he was leaving it; he had fought a good fight; and, he had kept the faith. A crown of righteousness was laid up for him.

You will find that same triumphant note here in 2 Peter as Peter also faced the prospect of death.

Major Divisions (2 Peter 3)

- 1) The attitude toward the return to the Lord as a test of apostates;
- 2) The agenda of God for the world; and
- 3) The admonition to believers.

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

"...now": ἤδη *ede* (now, already) implies that the interval between the two Epistles was not long.

"...pure": εὐλακρυνῆ *heilikrines* found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun's light; "sincere" is a better translation.

"...remembrance": Preparing to depart, Peter encourages them to keep hold of what they have: the Word of God. Remembrance has been a key theme in this letter—add to your memory verses (Cf. 2 Pet 1:12-15).

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

"...us the apostles": He includes himself with Paul (2 Pet 3:15,16). Paul was committed to the uncircumcision (the Gentiles); Peter to the circumcision (Gal 2:7).

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

"...in the last days...": Why are we surprised at the prevalence of "scoffing" at the Word of God *today*? This very disparagement is a sign of our times!

"...scoffers": These were the apostates dealt with in the previous chapter! Members of churches—some, pastors "walking after their own lusts..." victims of "heart" trouble...

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

"...continue as they were": The Return of Christ questioned. *Even from pulpits!* Examples: Uniformitism; evolution, *linked to prophecy*. Is there really a God who intervenes in history? *Both the beginning and the end are, thus, linked.*

The Lord Himself revealed that He would be coming for His own (John 14:2-3). He is preparing a place for us... We are to meet Him in the air 1 Thess 4:17. He—*then*—will be setting up His Kingdom on the earth... (Lk 1:32; Acts 1:6,7; 15:16, et al.). But Peter cites OT examples to prove that God does break into history. The first is that of a flood:

- a) An original judgment (the “Gap” theory); Gen 1:1-2;
- b) The flood of Noah; Gen 6-9.

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

“...willingly are ignorant”: Ignorance is a response to the will (Rom 1) *A decision*, not a lack of data. The antediluvians wanted God to depart (Job 21:14). So it is today. *[They want the Christians out of their hair. God is going to give them their wish.]*

“...earth standing out of the water and in the water”: “He stretched out the earth above the waters;” (Ps 136:6). “He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.” (Ps 24:2).

- 6] Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
- 7] But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

“...world that then was”: Gen 1 (v.9) through Genesis 9. A universal flood in the time of Noah. (If the flood of Noah was local, then God didn’t keep His promise! Cf. Gen 9:11-12.)

The “Gap Theory” (Genesis 1:1 - 2)

Some Basic Issues

When were the angels created? *When* did Satan fall? Is there a “gap” (interval) between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2?

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

This is certainly straightforward (and if you fully grasp that verse you will have no problem with any other verse in the Bible!). It is the next verse that raises some basic issues:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2

The words “without form and void,” *הוּא וְהוּא tohu v’bohu*, will become critical elements of our vocabulary. *הוּא tohu* means without form, confused; *בוּהוּ bohu* means void, empty. (The *וּ vav* between them is the

conjunction “and.”) When we examine a declaration of God in Isaiah we note an apparent contradiction:

*For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it **not in vain**, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.*

Isaiah 45:18

The same word for “vain,” *תוהו tohu* (without form, confused), appears in both verses, and would appear to contradict the declaration in Genesis 1:2. The phrase in Genesis 1:2 also appears in Jeremiah:

*I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was **without form, and void**; and the heavens, and they had no light.*

Jeremiah 4:23

Whenever you find an apparent contradiction in the Biblical text, we should rejoice! It may be what the rabbis call a *remez*: a hint of something deeper. It’s like a signpost saying, “Dig here! A treasure is hidden here.” So this compels us to more carefully examine the passage in Genesis 1:2.

The verb “was” is actually a transitive verb (indicating action) and the word order (normally, conjunction-verb-subject-object) is reordered to suggest the transitive pluperfect form: “had become.” (It is so ordered in the International Standard Version.) It is the identical transitive verb which appears in Genesis 19:26, where Lot’s wife “became a pillar of salt.”

Furthermore, we also find that the initial conjunction, “And,” is an *adversative* conjunction (“but”) and is so rendered in both the Septuagint and Vulgate translations. It often suggests a significant time delay: An 8-year period (Ex 2:1-2); a 38-year period (Deut 10:5-6); a 7-year period (1 Chr 10:14; 11:1); and, a 58-year period (Ezek 6:22, 7:1).

Putting this all together suggests the following rendering:

But the earth had become without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Genesis 1:2

There appears to be an interval of some kind—perhaps eons—between verses 1 and 2. It would seem that the earth was *not originally* “without form and void,” but had been subjected to some kind of catastrophic judgment prior to the sequence that continues in Genesis 1.

The “Gap Theory” was originally suggested by Thomas Chalmers in 1814. Compare: George H. Pember, *Earth’s Earliest Ages*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1907; Donald Gray Barnhouse, *The Invisible War*, Zondervan Publishing Co., MI, 1965; and Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void*, Ontario, CAN, 1970.

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.

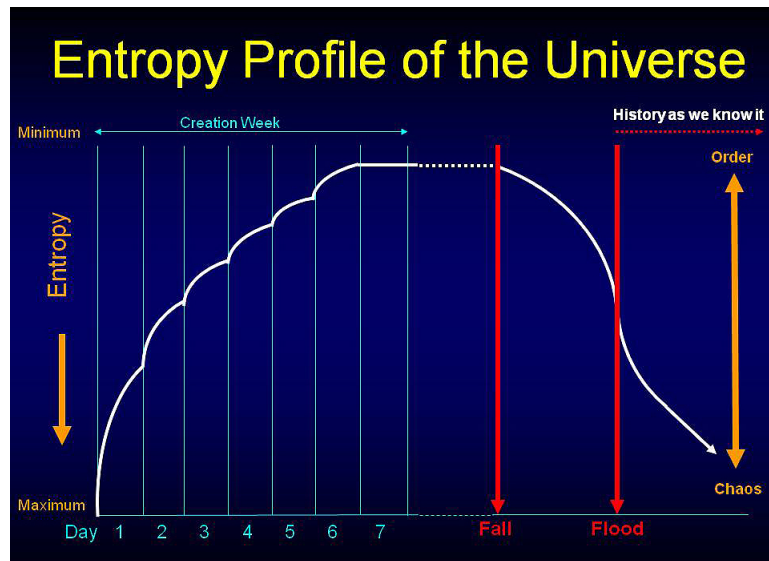
Jeremiah 4:23-27

Why?

- 6] Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
- 7] But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

This “second world” is the one we are living in. It is subject to a form of “global warming” that will quite a surprise!

“...fire”: Next time *by fire* (Cf. Isa 66:15; Dan 7:10; Mal 4:1; 2 Thess 1:8). By Him are the very elements “held together” (Col 1:17). God’s sovereignty over *time* (cf. Job 22:15-18). God has a perspective, an intensity, a priority, that we lack.



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

“...as one day”: = “as yesterday” (Ps 90:4). Not a calculation; a metaphor. Time is relative. We assume time is linear and absolute. However, time is a *physical* property. It varies with mass, acceleration, and gravity. [Positron in time reversals? Cf. *Beyond Time and Space*; *Beyond Perception*; et al.]

The Nature of Time

- Can time go backward? How do you tell? By exploiting the entropy laws as an *arrow of time*...
- Eternity is not “having lots of time” but being *outside* of our particular time domain altogether.
- “7000 year” week = ancient notion. First appears in the Epistle of Barnabas.
- **Setterfield hypothesis:** speed of light has been slowing down. This, along with the entropy laws, may have begun as a result of the curse (Gen 3; Rom 8:22).

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

“...not willing that any should perish...”: Another refutation of Calvinism. The great tragedy is, that after the entire panorama of redemption, God *doesn’t get what He wants* out of the deal! Not all will repent. Time is our most inelastic (and thus, precious) resource. Teach us to number our nanoseconds (Ps 90:12). (See *Kingdom, Power & Glory* for a more complete discussion of the controversies exemplified by Calvinism and Arminianism.)

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

“...as a thief in the night”: A term from Paul’s Epistle to the Thessalonians (cf. 1 Thess 5:2-5).

“...day of the Lord”: [Cf. 1 Thess 4:13f (“bring with Him” v.14)] “As a thief in the night” only to *those who are in darkness*: 1 Thess 5 (1 Thess 4:18 introduces). “Behold I create a new heavens and new earth.” (Isa 65:17).

“...in the which”: The Day of the Lord closes at the end of the Millennium when the destruction of the heavens and the earth (Rev 20:11; 21:1).

“...a great noise”: ῥοιζήδον *rhoizēdon*. It is the word used for the swish of an arrow, the rush of wings, the splash of water, the hiss of a serpent.

“...elements”: στοιχεῖα *stoicheia*—basic building blocks.

“...melt”: λύω *luo* to untie, loose.

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

“...ought ye to be”: So how then shall we live? Does the realities of all this impact our priorities?

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

“Looking for and hasting unto”: You can hasten the Day of God! Lord’s Prayer: “Thy Kingdom Come.” Help bring in the “fullness” (Rom 11:25). [Cf. *Revelation & Isaiah* Commentaries.] See also Mal 4:1; Joel 2:10; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24; Rev 6, 8, et al. Mountains melting: Ps 46:6; Micah 1:4; etc.

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

“...new heavens and a new earth”: World #3? (Isa 65:17; 66:22. Rev 21:1). This one will have righteousness dwelling in it.

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

“...be diligent”: This is the third time Peter has mentioned diligence (2 Pet 1:5, 10). How then shall we live? Why?

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

“...hath written unto you”: This appears to be an authentication of Paul’s authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There are no other of Paul’s writings: 1) To the Jews, and 2) Which corroborates these eschatological truths (Cf. Heb 12:25-29).

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

“...hard to be understood”: Peter admits that Paul is tough to fully understand!

“...Scriptures”: *Peter corroborates Paul’s writings as in the same category as “the Scriptures”!*

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

“...beware lest ye also”: No will ever fail if he keeps his eyes fixed on our Lord Jesus Christ. Doctrinal error of a serious character is almost invariably connected with some moral failure. Exercise “due diligence...”

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

“...grow in grace”: Are you growing?

Summary: Grace

Grace is the method of divine dealing in salvation and in the believer’s life and service. As one is saved, he is “not under the law, but under grace” (Rom 6:14). God ceaselessly works through grace, to impart to and perfect in him corresponding graces (Jn 15:4,5; Gal 5:22-23).

Grace, therefore, stands connected:

- **With service:** Rom 12:6; 15:15-16; 1 Cor 1:3-7; 3:10; 15:10; 2 Cor 12:9-10; Gal 2:9; Eph 3:7-8; 4:29; Phil 1:7; 2 Tim 2:1-2; 1 Pet 4:10.
- **With Christian growth:** 2 Cor 1:12; Eph 4:29; Col 3:16; 4:6; 2 Thess 1:12; Heb 4:16; 12:28-29; 13:9; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 1:2; 3:7; 5:5,10; 2 Pet 3:18; Jude 4.
- **With giving :** 2 Cor 4:15; 8:1,6-7,19; 9:14.

How to prepare against apostasy?

- 1) Knowledge of the Word of God;
- 2) Personal knowledge of Christ!

* * *

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About The Cover Design

(on the tape cassette volumes)

The “Front” cover:

The Greek border: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1:8).” The center design element symbolizes the Word of God Incarnate, illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

The “Back” cover: (the “front” to the Jewish reader)

The Hebrew border: “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (from the Sh’ma, Deut 6:4-5).”

The center design represents the Burning Bush, made up of Hebrew letters which proclaim “the Eternal One cannot lie.”

The Spine:

The spine includes a Menorah from the Old Testament, a Maranatha Dove suggesting the New Testament, and the Koinonia House logo at the base.



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