

THE BOOK OF FIRST PETER

A Bible Student's Commentary

By

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In concert with dedicated Bible students
choosing to be a part of this work
and to whom it is dedicated
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This study, as in all our work, is subject to revision as more is learned

Introduction

The letter of I Peter addresses a major problem facing the early church, coping with unrelieved suffering and persecution. There are thirteen references to suffering and trials in I Peter alone. As in the Book of Hebrews, the recipients are Jews who have been persuaded that Jesus is the Messiah and that His death on the cross was a legitimate expression of God's grace on their behalf.

Many communities to whom apostolic letters are written are composed of people with different levels of spiritual commitment because of the circumstances they are experiencing. There are those who are solid in the faith and exhibit a mature understanding and an unconditional faith. But some have been shaken by circumstances that have caused them to wonder about what their commitment to Christ might mean for them and, if it is legitimate. Generally, this letter reveals that those to whom Peter is writing are substantially in the faith.

Word had come to Peter that they were encountering these distresses and needed encouragement. They were often reacting to this with negative attributes. Peter's primary goal is to help them internalize the secure reality of who they are in Christ (their true identity) based on all that God has done to provide for their eternal inheritance. He works hard to convince them of the solid security they have in Christ and desires that as they make this the core of their faith that their outward behavior and conduct toward others will reflect the great blessings they possess in Christ.

It is not as evangelical as Hebrews, where the author works hard to persuade the majority of his audience not to turn away from Christ as well as to persuade those seeking truth to have a full and committed faith in Him. There, many are severely disappointed at the persecution and loss they had suffered as a part of the Christian community. Add to that the unrealized expectations they had regarding the Messiah and the establishment of the kingdom and all that meant for them and they came to wonder if they had made a wrong turn in coming to Christ. Their faith was, in essence, conditional and they lacked understanding about the meaning and timing of what God was doing in their midst.

This was a very common challenge for the apostles. Expectations of a soon to be revealed kingdom and victory over evil and the enemies of Israel were not coming to pass. Instead, those following Christ were being persecuted, imprisoned, and losing everything they owned. So the issue was where is God in all this?

For Peter it is critical to stabilize his readers in the truth of who they are in Christ so as to remove the fears and apprehensions they might sense in those difficult days. His pattern is to teach and encourage them in these truths and then instruct them to reflect these truths in the way they live and treat others. He does this repeatedly in a series of cycles. First he tells them God's provision and blessings in Christ and then asks them to live accordingly.

The letter is filled with exhortations, admonishments and instructions involving their faith, conduct and understanding in the times in which they live. This makes it a very contemporary book for the modern reader as well.

THE AUTHOR

The very first verse identifies the author as, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ..." One of the problems faced by those commissioned to establish the canon was to determine the authentic manuscripts from those who bore apostolic names, but were written by someone else. In those days, one could add a famous name to a document in order to get it read and do so without penalty. In the first three centuries alone there were dozens of documents carrying the names of famous people. These documents are called the "pseudepigrapha"¹ (false writings) and are from the New Testament period. These works purport to be written by noted authorities.

The New Testament is compiled in order of authenticity, not chronology. In other words, books appearing at the beginning of the New Testament carry the most evidence of authenticity. Those following have not as much evidence, but enough to include them as authentically written by the apostles. The books at the conclusion of the New Testament have the least authenticating evidence but sufficient enough to include them.

For examples of rejected books we have the Gospels of: Thomas, Peter, Nicodemus, Bartholomew, and many more as well as the apocalypse of Peter, Paul and others, and the acts of Barnabas, Timothy and even Pilate, and the list is great.² Careful review was made and the two books of Peter were included. One of the problems including these two books faced by those considering the canon of the

¹ Or: "apocrypha".

²One can find out more about this by linking online to: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NewTestamentapocrypha>

New Testament was that though Peter was likely literate he would not have been able to produce the quality of Greek in the two epistles.³ But this impediment is solved because, like other writers, Peter used an amanuensis. In the case of I Peter it was Silvanus, ("Silas"), the same man who accompanied and assisted Paul and whose name is listed as a sender of I and II Thessalonians.

When Peter was chosen by Christ, he was the most prominent and foremost of the twelve apostles. When the list of apostles is given, Peter's name is first on the list. In those days, (and often today) the most prominent or important person in a group is mentioned first. Why Peter was chosen to hold this position is only known fully by Christ. But he was a leader, likely the oldest of the apostles and a man without guile. But most of all, as a confirmed Jew, he was sensitive and open to the word and truth of God. Change was hard, but when it came and he knew it to be of God, he stood firm by it in the face of opposition and persecution. And the truth he was confronted with was hard for him to grapple with.

Peter was with Christ from the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He saw and experienced firsthand the many miracles Jesus did among the people as well as in the creation. He was overwhelmed and awestruck. He heard the teachings of Jesus as they related to a person's relationship to God, the Law and to the kingdom of God. Many of these teachings confused him as he had been raised in the traditions of the Jews. Yet he persisted on. Once when Jesus asked if the disciples would leave him, Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." John 6:68-69

The traditions did not tell the whole story. So when Peter and the other disciples began to see that Jesus was going to give Himself up to death, they were dumbstruck, and rejected such a preposterous idea. Peter and the others had no idea what was expected of them and in confusion often fell under the influence of whatever impulse affected them at the moment. Those were difficult days, no question.

³ See Acts 4:13. Education for children of trade families like Peter's was in transition in the first century. The father was the traditional teacher of the children, but due to intense work responsibilities, the educational effort was being transferred to teachers in the synagogue. In Capernaum, a synagogue exists and whether it is early first century is debated. Teachers were unpaid married men, often scribes. They had outside employment to meet their needs. The educational requirements were based on the mandate that the Law be taught to the children by the fathers and grandfathers. This responsibility began to move to professional teaching settings in the first century and it is hard to know how well a man like Peter was educated. When old enough to work, the sons were often drafted into the family business leaving education off at that point.

It took decades for Peter to come to a solid understanding of what was actually involved in Christ coming to earth. His experience with the Gentiles, the apostle Paul and the other apostles, and the general growth of understanding he came to have is reflected in the epistle. He notes his relationship with Paul and his teachings in II Peter 3:15-16. That Paul spent time with Peter is seen in Acts 15 and Galatians 1 and 2.

Authentication of both epistles came early in church history. In II Peter 3:1-2, Peter mentions a previous letter and I Peter 1:10-12 reflect this remembrance. By the end of the first century and into the second support for the authenticity of both epistles was strong. Among those attesting to its reliability were Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origin to name a few. By the fourth century, Eusebius noted that the letter was universally recognized and accepted as coming from the apostle.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

The letter was probably written in the late 50's to early 60's as II Peter shows familiarity with Paul's letters and this epistle was earlier. The bulk of Paul's letters to which Peter refers were written between 51 and 62. His last epistle was apparently II Timothy sometime in 66-67. Somewhere around 67-68 both Peter and Paul had met with death. So the two letters from Peter have to pre-date this period.

The letter closes with a rather cryptic note as to its origin.

5:13, "She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and *so does* my son, Mark."

The term Babylon is used in Scripture to designate more than one geographic location. And the feminine pronoun "she" is interesting. The geographic locations indicated by the word Babylon are first, of course, Mesopotamian Babylon, then Egyptian Babylon. Symbolically, both Rome and Jerusalem have been suggested.

"Mesopotamian and Egyptian Babylon" are candidates for this location. "Egyptian Babylon" was a fortress or military outpost in the Nile Delta. The ruins are still visible today and it was used by the Romans and later by the Coptic Church. This is an unlikely place for the origin of Peter's work. For that matter, so is Babylon of Mesopotamia. There is no record or even tradition of Peter traveling there and no reason for him to do so.

Rome is commonly considered as the identity of this mystical Babylon, and though a conjecture, it has justification. Rome was never directly called Babylon, even in symbolic terms, but many view the Book of Revelation as evidence that Rome is called "Babylon". Justification exists for this in chapter 17 of the Apocalypse. First, it is noted in verse 9 that the "woman" (Babylon the great) sits on seven hills and the City of Rome is known as the city built on seven hills. However, the number "seven" is consistently symbolic and the text goes on to say that the "seven hills are seven kings." Second, near the end of the first century when Revelation was written, persecution against Christians was increased by the Roman emperor Domitian, but not to an extent that would require the description found in verse 6, where the woman is described as "drunk with the blood of the saints." And in 18, she is described as "the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." So Rome is a viable candidate for the idea of a symbolic Babylon, but not without controversy.

A major difficulty exists with understanding Peter's use of Babylon in this way because the Book of Revelation was written decades after I Peter and so there is no way Peter who both wrote and died before Revelation was written could have drawn his conclusion from John.

The suggestion has been made that the "Babylon" (The great harlot) reference is to Jerusalem itself. Of course we know for sure that Peter was in Jerusalem for an extended period of time. Where does this idea come from? Well, in several places Jerusalem (or Judah) was called a harlot by God. For example, Isaiah 1:21-23 says, "How the faithful city has become a harlot, She *who* was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, But now murderers." Ezekiel 16:15-26 (and following) is quite similar to Revelation 17 as Jerusalem is described in terms corresponding to John's description .

But Jerusalem, like Rome, is never directly called Babylon. And though Babylon is called "the great city" in the Book of Revelation, outside that book the term "the

great city" is only used of Nineveh. And again, Revelation was written much later than Peter.

The term "Babylon" could simply indicate the chaos Peter and other Jewish believers found themselves in at the time of the writing. Persecution, imprisonments, threats, fear and so on could have caused Peter to simply use the term Babylon to indicate the kinds of conditions reflective of the early Babylonian captivity his readers could certainly identify with.

But we are left with conjecture. Other than the city of Babylon itself, the remaining best choice is probably Rome or Jerusalem. Tradition places Peter there, but there is no specific historical or Biblical reference to Peter ever having been in Rome. To speak of Jerusalem as "Babylon" is not beyond possibility either.

The feminine pronoun, "she" is taken by most to mean the church. There is no reason to dispute this conclusion. The word for church, "ekklesia" is feminine and the word "chosen" is from the same root as "church". However, both are singular. A personification is possible here and perhaps this cryptic greeting is to prevent some officials or Jewish opponents from knowing that Peter is indeed in Rome. Yet, if that were the case, why did he note his name in the opening salutation? Another opinion is that Peter is sending greetings from his wife.

OCCASION FOR THE WRITING

Nearly every epistle is a response occasioned by communication from a community of believers to an apostle who is asked his help in certain situations or to explain confusion within the body due to false teachings or conflict. In the case of I Peter, he addresses many issues but his letter is what is called a general or circular epistle designed to be read by many congregations throughout a territory.

The central issue affecting these people is evident as he immediately speaks of the confidence they (and we) have in Christ in the midst of suffering.⁴ He spends time on their value and their identity in Christ and reassures them of God's love and

⁴ See the introduction to this commentary.

provision for them. As such, their conduct in the midst of their environment must remain exemplary and their relationship to other believers, whether Jews or Gentiles must be pleasing to God and glorify Him before all people. Interpersonal conflict must be avoided and guidelines to resolving any issue are given.

THE RECIPIENTS

The recipients are Jewish believers in Christ, descendants of those who had been dispersed to these far reaching territories by the Assyrian forces after the fall of Israel in 721 B.C. Peter refers to this in his salutation, "To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout..." The word "scattered" is "dispersed" and deliberately harkens back to this, era. From this dispersion, the Jews migrated to all four corners of the compass, Europe, Asia Proper, Russia and so on, over the nearly 800 years prior to Peter writing this letter.

The gospel message came to these areas through two means. First, the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost brought tens of thousands of Jews to the city. This had been going on for centuries. On one particular day, The Holy Spirit fell upon some 120 followers of Jesus in and around the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. The loud roaring sound like a tornado and fire from the sky dividing into "tongues" of flame alighting upon the heads of the 120 brought thousands to the house to see what was happening.

They heard praise and shouts in their own language even though the speakers were Galileans. The book of Acts, chapter two tells us that they asked,

"And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs--we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." 2:8-11

Notice that some of these territories match those to whom Peter writes his epistle. So, on this particular day, Peter stood up and gave his famous speech and afterward some 3000 people believed and spent time with the disciples learning more about Christ. In time, these people returned to their homes and began small

house centered fellowships in their communities. So the word spread. Many congregations were established even before the Apostles traveled the land. For example, the church at Rome was begun apart from apostolic involvement as were many others.

The second means causing church development in some of these reasons was apostolic visitation. We read about these in the book of Acts. But there is no record of apostles traveling to Pontus, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and so on. These believers were likely those associated with the travelers from Jerusalem after the Day of Pentecost.

Things were not going well for these Jewish believers. After a time their families disowned them, and the community disenfranchised them. Persecution and loss became prevalent and some were discouraged. The expectation that Christ would soon return was growing dim and many were wondering what was going on and what they should think and do about it. Negative influences in the form of distorted teaching, Jewish mocking, heresies, and cults were affecting these saints. They had no Bible, no apostolic leadership and no one to turn to they could trust to help them.

A major problem Peter repeatedly addresses is the response of these believers to persecution, false accusation and insult. It seems that they have need of counsel to consider the demeanor of their responses and Peter counsels them to respond in a Christ like manner with forgiveness, gentleness, grace and mercy.

Their attitude and view of authority was also in need of correction, and marriage needed to be addressed. So word was sent to Jerusalem and Peter responded.

One begins to also sense, as the epistle lengthens, that Peter is addressing some within one or more communities that are not genuinely committed to the faith. Those "along for the ride" as it were. Some are apparently living lives that are not dissimilar to the Gentiles around them while others are resisting those same fleshly indulgences. He has strong words for those people, noting they may falter badly in the midst of persecution and urges them to faith in Christ and deepen their walk. The suffering that comes upon the church can be God's means to purify the body.

CHAPTER ONE
Text, Exegesis and Explanation

1:1-2

1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen
2: according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood:
May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."

1-2: The author identifies himself as the apostle Peter, and this carries considerable authority. The word "apostle" comes from a compound word the root of which means to "stand apart from". It evolved into a word used in the New Testament meaning, "one sent away from" or "sent apart from". Today, the missionary is the closest image of what the word "apostle" signifies.

Peter's first words are to lift up and encourage his readers. He grants them immediate assurance of their special place in God's plan and work. He writes this epistle to "those who reside as aliens...". Literally this verse is translated,

"Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ to the chosen (elect) aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the Holy Spirit to obedience and the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ, grace and peace be increased."

The word "chosen" fits best with "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father to obedience and...", rather than to their circumstances of being "scattered." (We will come back to this in a moment.)

The principle constituents of the communities to which he writes are Jews who have been converted to Christ. This is clear from 2:12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles...", and 4:3-5, 3: "For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 4: In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign *you*; 5: but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

The letter is also addressed to "aliens". The word here is "παρεπίδημος", (par-epi-day-mohs) a word with three components (two being prepositions, "par" and "epi" plus the noun "day-mohs" to create an adjective) roughly meaning at its root, "to surround the populace". We get our word "epidemic" from a form of this adjective.

Three things are possibly indicated by the use of this term, A. That these are Jewish believers among a generally Gentile population, B. They, as believers, are only sojourners or temporary inhabitants in this world regardless of where they reside, or C. They are alienated from their homeland for a time and thus strangers everywhere else, or perhaps all three.

Further, these are the "scattered" or "dispersed". This term comes from the ancient history of Israel who, after the Assyrian invasion of c. 721 B. C., had the bulk of its citizens captured, removed from their homeland and dispersed hundreds of miles away in strange lands to make due for themselves, prohibited from returning to their homeland. Thus, the Jews came to inhabit the known world.⁵

The territories mentioned by Peter where these people were now residing is vast indeed. In fact it covers nearly all of modern Turkey, from the Black Sea, to Western Turkey along the Aegean Sea, all the way east to Iraq.

"Chosen" is the common Greek word "ἐκλεκτός", a compound verbal adjective meaning "called out"

The "foreknowledge" of God the Father in the Holy Spirit..." The word here is "πρόγνωσις" (prog-know-sis), meaning to know beforehand or foresee. This is an ability God possesses as He can know or see the end from the beginning.⁶ This term, however, is only found here and in Acts 2:23 where Peter is speaking to the multitudes on the Day of Pentecost. God's foreknowledge is the basis for the fulfillment of the plan He put into force at the beginning of creation. This is not the same as pre-destination. Peter doesn't use this term in either of his epistles.

⁵ See also the introduction, "The Recipients".

⁶ Isaiah 46:9-10, "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'" See also: Isaiah 44:7, 45:21.

Regardless, the term "predestined" or "predestination" is misunderstood as used in the New Testament. Often interpreted within the framework of Greek philosophy and determinism, the Hebrew idea is quite simple. It amounts to, "God has predetermined that all who believe will inherit the promises of eternal life." It does not include the idea that God predetermines who will or who will not be saved.

We also possess "foreknowledge" of sorts in that we can foresee and predict the consequences of certain events. If someone made a choice we knew would bring them pain or destruction and we told them what the consequences surely would be, and they made the choice anyway, we will have foreseen the consequences of such a choice. The prophets worked on this principle and prophecy is actually closer to this idea than the idea of foretelling the future based on some mysterious insight or knowledge. through the prophets, choices were given and the consequences of each choice proclaimed. Quite often the choice was made contrary to the will of God and the consequences occurred just as God said they would.

In verse 2, God has chosen the recipients to faith and obedience to what He has done in Christ based on His "foreknowledge". His foreknowledge is not based on His choice.

Grace and peace..." Two of the most frequently used words imparted from the apostles to their constituents. The grace of God covers everything that could possibly alienate man from God except refusal to believe and receive it through faith in God's provision in Christ. Every believer basks in the unconditional grace of God and there is no need to ever worry again.⁷ Thus, peace is possible. Peace is the cessation of hostilities between man and God. God Himself provided everything necessary to achieve this standing. It is all of God and nothing of man, even though man is the offender. That is why it is of grace. Based in this truth, Peter continues,

1:3-5

3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4: to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in

⁷ See this author's work entitled, "Understanding The Grace of God."

heaven for you, 5: who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

3: "Blessed be..." is the term "εὐλογητός" (eu-loh-gay-tohs) from which we get the word "eulogy". It means to say "good words" about God. Most often the Greek word "μακάριος" (mah-ka-riohs) is translated "blessed" and this means essentially "happy" or "fortunate".

"Mercy" is another key word that we often disregard. Much like grace, it is unconditional save for faith to receive it. It is the Greek word, "ἔλεος" (El-eh-ohs). It is pity, compassion, and help to those who otherwise would deserve and suffer a painful or fatal consequence for their actions. It delivers such a one from this consequence not on the basis of what they have done but in spite of it. The one providing the mercy or deliverance is the one who pays the price to do so, not the one needing mercy. Thus it is closely aligned with grace.

The phrase containing all the words "has caused us to be born again" is not the actual phrase in the Greek, but a fair rendition. This phrase is a translation of one word in the Greek, "αναγεννησας" (ahna-ghen-neh-sahs). It is a compound verb, an aorist active participle actually which literally would read, "having born us anew". Combined with the personal pronoun "who" in the first part of the sentence, the translation is decent.

It is God who has "caused us" to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.... according to His great mercy... "to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead..." There is a subtle contrast to a "living hope" and some wishful thinking many lean on as their hope. The reason for the "living" hope is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This is the central foundational truth and fact of our faith and our hope. Paul makes this extraordinarily clear in I Corinthians 15.

The rebirth process is simply from death to life, in that without Christ we are dead in our trespasses and sins even though we breathe. But in Christ we are new creatures, walk in newness of life and are now members of an eternal family, living

forever, with everlasting life. This is due solely to God's mercy and power.

4: Plus, we are born to an inheritance. Though not described here in detail, we read that it is, "imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you."

Peter uses three words all meaning essentially the same thing to emphasize that the inheritance is permanent and will absolutely be there. "Imperishable" is "ἄφθαρτος" (ahf-thar-tohs) and means that it cannot decay, rot or disintegrate; "ἁμίαντος" (ah-mi-ahn-tohs) meaning that it is uncontaminated, pure, unsoiled; and "ἀμάρταντος" (ah-mah-rahn-tohs) meaning that it can't be extinguished, fade away, or disappear.

In addition, it is "reserved" – watched over, guarded, kept secure – "for you" – plural, not singular. Note that it is the inheritance reserved in heaven, not the heirs.

The heirs however are also:

5: "...protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Once again, it is God who is doing this by His mercy and power. "Protected" suggests a garrison of soldiers watching and guarding the believer. This "power" of God assures us that the protection He provides to the fulfillment of the salvation He also provides cannot and will not be threatened or altered.

Continuing the theme from verse 3, the key to gaining this mercy and power is faith. Faith is not a "work".⁸ It is a bonded relationship between a person and God. It is spiritual not earthly. People are born into this world with a rudimentary faith capacity. That is they can believe in something and act on certain beliefs.

This is akin to the ability to "choose". This, itself is a facet of free will. This is the ability to evaluate evidence and make a decision based on that evidence. Hearing the word of truth, the Gospel, they along with the prompting and drawing of the Spirit of God can choose to place their lives in the hands of the Lord. But then there begins a new type of faith. A relational reality. Not that the ability to choose

⁸ Please see this author's extensive work on "Faith" found online at: www.bibleclassroom.org

is enhanced, but that the result of choice has transitioned a person into a new reality.⁹

For example, from a boat in rough water, a person may cast an anchor in the direction of what they perceive to be a rocky bottom. And they do so. They drag the anchor line. The anchor bites and it holds firm and solid! They are safe and secure! Now, effort and work is no longer needed to hold the line. It holds fast by the unmovable rock to which it is secured. Their "faith" has moved from evaluation, decision, action, to rest and peace. In the analogy the first faith is that of the boatman, the second is now in the line, the anchor and the rock. Which is stronger? The strength of the boatman or the line, anchor and rock?

The disposition of the boatman has changed from being tossed about to being secure. All he did was toss the line. The line, the anchor and the solid footing now do the rest of the work. For our purposes, faith is now redefined, from human effort to an unmovable resource allowing one to rest in peace. The analogy is not totally adequate, but designed to illustrate the difference in a rudimentary human faith and that which is from God and His mercy and power. From human choice to relationship.

It is now the power of God that now holds the person secure in the midst of a rocky sea. The goal God has in protecting the believer is a "salvation" yet to be revealed. This is a common word, "σωτηρία" (soh-tey-riah). It means to "rescue", "save", "make well or whole" "deliver" and so on. It is provided fully and completely by Christ through His sacrifices on the cross and His rising from the dead. Peter uses this term to assure that the present difficulties one endures in this world will be relieved. This is assured in Christ, by their faith, but the reality will not be revealed until the "last time". Meanwhile, they can be assured that a great inheritance awaits them.

The implication is that there are multiple phases to "salvation". One would be a spiritual reality when one comes into faith in Christ. Another, as noted here, is the final rescue from the earthly or temporal environment. The first guarantees the second.

This "salvation" is actually ready right now. It has been "prepared" (another word

⁹ Note: Colossians 1:13-14; I Peter 2:9; Ephesians 5:8; etc.

for the original) and will be "revealed" at the "last time". "Revealed" is the Greek word "ἀποκαλύπτω" (ah-poc-ah-loop-toh). It means to uncover or disclose something that is covered or hidden. The book of "Revelation" (or the apocalypse) is based on this word. "Last time" is: "καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ" (Kai-roh es-cha-toh). This isn't a specific "time" as in a chronological reference, but an era, epoch or season in the history of the world and in God's timetable. There is no indication as to when this would be in terms of the calendar, just that it is the last of these eras or epochs. The word last is a common word from which we get the term "eschatology", the doctrine of "last things", or "end times." It indicates the final episode of the plan of God and the end of the world as we know it.

There are at least four essential and consistent themes in the Bible and Peter touches on two of them here. There is no order to them as they are intertwined. They are: Preparation, Creation, Redemption and salvation. All three of these come before and after each other. They stand out throughout the Bible.¹⁰ Here, preparation has been made and completed for the fullness of a "salvation" and an "inheritance".

1:6-9

6: "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7: so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8: and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9: obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

6: After lifting up, encouraging his readers, and giving them cause to rejoice in the midst of trying days, Peter addresses their circumstances. The "little while" is an euphemism. These folks have suffered a long time and have fought discouragement. Peter's term is to be compared to the eternal inheritance that awaits them. Paul put it this way, " For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Romans 8:18

¹⁰ See the appendix to this work, Article I, God's Plan at Work

The word for "time" is the same word Peter uses in verse 5.

"...if necessary..." indicates a regret that they have to go through these trial, but that they are not without value. Sometimes it is necessary that trials occur so that the "pure gold" of the Christian character might be seen both by the believer and by the observer. The word for "trials" is a very common word, "πειρασμός" from the verb "πειράζω" meaning, a "trial", "test", "temptation", "examination", "proving", "discipline" or "assay", depending on the context.

This idea of "testing" needs to be addressed as Christians are terribly confused about this subject. There are several Hebrew words that are translated "test" "tested", "testing" and also as "tempted", "tempt", "tempting", "trying", "proving" and so on). Many of these translations are unfortunate as people believe that God is setting up some trial against them to stress them or their faith. Further, the normal circumstances of life are often described by Christians as "God testing me" as if God were the source of pain, suffering and even evil. Nothing is further from the truth. James states clearly, "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust." (1:13-14) The word James uses for "tempted" is the same word here.

Yet there are numerous passages that talk about God "testing" people. Someone will surely bring up the story of God "testing" Abraham as he took Isaac to be sacrificed at God's command.¹¹ Though this is exactly what God did, both the reason for this test and the meaning of the word are missed by most interpreters.

So how does James get off with his statement? Well, the real issue is what this "testing" really is. Most think it is some stress or trial God brings into the lives of people to draw them away from their faith, stress their faith so they will come to despair, distress, discouragement or depression. Some associate the word "test" with God, but "temptation" with the Devil. This is understandable, but both words are exactly the same in the Greek.

¹¹ Genesis 22

Others think God's "testing" it is some sort of judgment or punishment designed to make people fear God. I have even heard well known teachers state that God brings trials and tribulations into the lives of people because they don't believe in Him. Terrible natural disasters killing tens of thousands are often touted as from God to get people's attention so they will turn to Him. Well, when they are killed by these events, it's going to be hard to get them to trust Him and have faith in Him let alone love Him isn't it? All of these conclusions are in error.

So let's examine what is going on. It is important to note here that both the Old and New Testament words have the same basis in origin and meaning. Let's look at the Old Testament first.

A. The word used in this text (Genesis 22) is "Nah-sah". The other two words are "Bah-chan" and "Tsa-raph". All three words are related to metal smelting and refining. The idea is not to try and crush and destroy the ore to see how much it takes to smash it, but to bring out and reveal the inner strength and beauty of the ore and bring forth a pure metal in the process.

Specifically, "Nah-sah" relates to the process of an assay to determine how much precious metal lies within the ore. It is used 40 times in the Old Testament. One definition will suffice, "To try or prove, by examination or experiment, the quantity and purity of metallic substances." This was for Abraham's benefit as well as for Isaac's and future generations. Ancient Jewish commentators wrote, "God put great honor on Abraham by giving him this opportunity of showing to all successive ages the nature and efficacy of an unshaken faith in the power, goodness, and truth of God."¹² Once Again, James comes to our aid noting, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (1:2-4)

B. "Bah-chan" is more a word of observance. To examine, observe, scrutinize, inspect, and so on. The picture is of one who sits in a tower and studies the surrounding environment. It is unfortunately also translated "test", "tempt" and so on. It comes from the idea to assay an ore to see the content of its precious metal. It is used 28 times in the Old Testament.

¹² Symmachus, a 2nd century Ebionite who was one translator of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek and wrote commentaries as well presented the testing of Abraham as God glorifying Abraham, or rendering him illustrious. It is an honor to be thus "tested" by God.

C. "Tsa-raph" refers specifically to the refiner of metal and the smelting process. It is translated "gold (or silver) smith" frequently and nearly always is used of God's word being "tested" as in Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him." The idea is "proven", "validated" and so on. It is used 33 times in the Old Testament.

Malachi uses this word and notes the point, "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a smelter ("tsa-raph") and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years." (3:1-4)

So contrary to popular opinion, "testing" is not a negative, nor is God bringing this about so that it causes damage to one's faith. Quite the contrary. But how do we know what is from God and what is not? Not all things that try our patience and our faith are from God because He does not do that.

Here's the answer. In Abraham's case, there is no mention in the text of Abraham going through severe emotional or spiritual struggles. There is no "heaviness" of heart, no "why" questions, no fear and so on. And there is no mention of Isaac rebelling and questioning the entire episode. In recounting this story, the author of Hebrews makes the point that this is because Abraham had the promise from God that through Isaac his descendants would flourish. He so believed it that he assumed God would have to bring Isaac back to life to fulfill his promise and believed He would do so without question.

Abraham looked to God, not the circumstances, for his security and his future. Thus, the author of Hebrews states that Abraham believed God could raise the dead and without much ado, proceeded to obey God and sacrifice Isaac. Again, this message is not to be lost on the recipients. In Hebrews chapter eleven, the author notes that Abraham received Isaac "back as a type." The word "type" is the word "parable" in the Greek and refers to the sacrifice, in our place, God provided in Christ. This is not to be a picture of "resurrection" as there had been none, nor was Isaac raised from the dead, but the substitute image is more likely intended.

In the Genesis account, a poignant note is made as God tells Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." The later giving of the only Son whom God loved comes to mind. God actually sacrificed His own Son while providing a substitute for Isaac and for all of us.

In the New Testament, the Greek word for "trials" is a very common word, "πειρασμός" (pay-ras-mohs) from the verb "πειράζω" (pay-radz-oh) meaning, a "trial", "test", "temptation", "examination", "proving", "discipline" or "assay", depending on the context. It is used some 55 times in one form or another. However, if it describes the work of the Devil, or of those who objected to Jesus like some of the Pharisees, it is seen as an attempt to trip up, cause a stumbling block, reveal a weakness, deception, a lie or to destroy or damage. From the 55 uses, this is the intent of the Greek 47 times. Three times it is translated with the idea of someone "attempting" or "trying" to accomplish something. Then it is translated as "trials" or suffering and difficulty experienced in the world caused by those who stand against the believing communities. But it is never applied to God in the New Testament. What is explained is how God takes these trials and turns them into a benefit for His children as long as: 1. They allow Him to do so and, 2. Have the patience, longsuffering and faith to endure.

The root idea of all of this and how God uses it is nicely displayed in verse 7.

7: "...so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ..."

"Proof" is actually "assayed results" or "quality". It is used in comparison to "more precious than gold", even though gold is "perishable" (wears away, corrodes) and "tested by fire". The reality and strength of their faith is brought out under trial and seen to be more precious than gold. But it is not God who brings the trial, it is He who, "...works all things for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose."

This result causes praise and glory and honor directed to Christ when He is "revealed". This would parallel the "last time" of verse 5. "Praise" is "ἔπαινον"

(ep-ai-nohn) and means at its root to "tell a story". "Glory" is "δόξαν" (dohx-ahn) and means to "recognize great value". Its root relates to that which is weighty, heavy, or of great magnitude. "Honor" is "τιμην" (ti-mane) and reflects the idea of high value and respect, honor and high esteem.

8: "...and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9: obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

The recipients have never seen Jesus in the flesh. But this does not detract from their love for Him. "Love" here is the Greek, "agape", the deepest kind of love. Jesus talked about this kind of blind devotion when He said to Thomas, "Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed.'" (John 20:29)

"rejoice with joy inexpressible " is literally to "jump with joy...".

9: "...the salvation of your souls." The word "souls" is "ψυχῶν" (psu-cone). This is one of many words describing living beings and this one points to the core of one's life. The "soul" is the term used to incorporate all that makes a person who he or she is, their essence, except for the body. It is also used of animals. Though theology employs the term "immortal soul", this term is not found in scripture and in fact, based on Jesus words in Matthew 10:28, "'Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell", the doctrine is questionable at best.¹³

This "salvation" is the basis of all that follows in this epistle from this point until the end of it. It is because we are "saved" that the remainder must be applied.

1:10-12

10: "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11: seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12: It was revealed to them

¹³ The word for "hell" here is Gehenna.

that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look."

10: "This salvation..." Refers back to verses 5 and 9 and the context. When the terms "Salvation" or "being saved" are said they are common, jargon statements made by Christians. But what do these terms really mean and what is the proper Biblical definition?

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for "salvation" is "yeshuah", the same root as the Hebrew name for Joshua and Jesus. It means to, "deliver", "set free", "rescue", "make safe", "preserve" and the like depending on the context. In the New Testament the Greek word is "so-tey-ria" meaning exactly the same thing. "Being saved" then, is the result of the act of one party rescuing or delivering another party from some pending tragedy. As the word would be used in general terms, a lifeguard, firefighter, soldier, law enforcement officer or other person brings a person, living creature or object to safety ("salvation") often at the risk of his own life or safety. The key here is that the one (or the thing) needing rescue has no personal resources to accomplish such a thing and, without another's intervention, he (it) would perish.

Christians most often use these terms in reference to the spiritual dimension. A soul is lost and doomed to perish unless rescued. The stakes are raised from the common, worldly and temporal to the uncommon, spiritual and eternal.

Though the Jews historically used the word of the desire for temporal respite from enemies and oppression, the Scripture, as in Hebrews 5:9 lifts it to a new level. That verse says, "And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation..."

"Salvation" in this sense is only obtainable by faith alone. One must seek it and cast one's entire life into the hands of God who sent Jesus to accomplish the task. In so doing, a person must recognize that he or she has no resource of any worth or power to accomplish "salvation" on their own. Thus, all thoughts that one's works or "good life" will aid in the process must be abandoned. If this method could work, it would have worked. But it doesn't and hasn't. The world apart from Christ remains in then turmoil of evil and the chaos of darkness.

But we are also told by Paul that we shall be "saved by his life."¹⁴ This points to His resurrection as much as to His life lived while here on earth. What he did on the cross to reconcile and redeem man to God is validated by his resurrection from the dead. It is His resurrection that gives us solid evidence for the hope within us. (I Peter 1:3)

"...the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries..."

For example Zechariah, a post exilic prophet, wrote, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." 12:10

Similar prophecies occur in Isaiah 32:15-19, 51:1-21, 53; Ezekiel 39; Joel 2; etc.

11: "... seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He (it) predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow."

Peter notes that the "Spirit of Christ" was with the prophets even several hundred years before Christ Himself appeared as a man. The prophets sought the Spirit's "indication" as to when and who would bring this grace and salvation. It was not given to them specifically, but the essence of the matter was. This is seen in Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Zechariah 12 and other places.

The word for Spirit ("pneuma") is neuter in gender and so "it predicted" is preferred to the traditional "He". There is no disrespect here.

12: "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things into which angels long to look."

Those who preached the gospel to them were the apostles who spoke by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. No doubt Peter is thinking of the Day of Pentecost and

¹⁴ Romans 5:12

onward. They clarified the prophecies as being fulfilled in Christ.

The specifics of this fulfillment were hidden from the prophets and even the angels. The only things revealed to them was that their message applied to future generations.

The things they said bear this out. Perhaps Peter was thinking of something like

Psalm 102:18, "This will be written for the generation to come, That a people yet to be created may praise the LORD."

or,

Isaiah 43:18-21, 18: "Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past. 19: "Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert. 20: The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. 21: The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise."

or,

Isaiah 65:17-25, 17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. 18: But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing And her people *for* gladness. 19: I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. 20: No longer will there be in it an infant *who lives but a few* days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be *thought* accursed. 21: They will build houses and inhabit *them*; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22: They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, *so will be* the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. 23: They will not labor in vain, Or bear *children* for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the LORD, And their descendants with them. 24: It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25: The wolf and the lamb will graze

together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the LORD."

or,

Jeremiah 31:31-32, 31: "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32: not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the LORD."

1:13-16

13: Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14: As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, 15: but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16: because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

13: "Therefore..." (Or literally, "through which") Referring to the previously stated fact that the provisions of God's redemption and salvation were prophesied and are now in force since Christ, so they are to "prepare your minds for action..." is literally, "to gird (or to wrap or belt up) the loins of your mind (deep thought)", much as the term "gird up your loins" was a picture similar to "roll up your sleeves." Simply put, "get ready to go to work", and in this case it is the work of the mind.

"Abstain from wine" (keeping sober, discreet) is the idea, so that the mind is not fogged up. It is to be set completely on the hope of the grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ The "revelation" of Jesus Christ is His second coming.

14: (...do not be) "conformed" is the word, "συσχηματίζω" (sus-kay-mah-tea-zoh) from which we get our word "schematic". Paul repeats this theme when he wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which

is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2) These are the only two places this word occurs in the New Testament.

15: We must ascertain some things here before proceeding. One of them is whether or not, by common definition of "holiness", any person can make themselves holy through their own effort. Or, is this indicating something else? Reasonably, if one could make himself holy, then there would be no need of Christ's sacrifice.

"Qodesh" is the Hebrew word for "holy" and it means a person, animal or object consecrated and dedicated for God's use and purposes only. The New Testament word "hagios" reflects the same thing in the Biblical context.

The words "saint", "sanctification", "holiness", "consecrated" and "sacred" are all from the same root. Fundamentally, God is the one who determines something or someone to be holy and it is he who anoints it so. It is a frequent note that God "sanctified" or "consecrated" someone or something. For example, "I (*God*) will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me." Exodus 29:44 - Italics mine

Then, others consecrated themselves to God and anointed objects for the God's service, consecrating them, "You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and **consecrate** them, that they may minister as priests to Me." Exodus 30:30 "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall **consecrate** it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy." Exodus 40:9

The key idea is a separation from one environment and purpose to living one's life within a different environment and purpose. One is to "come out from their midst and be separate." Thus, one's "conduct" ought to reflect this transition. Understanding what is meant by "conduct" will be discussed in more detail in a moment as it is not what it seems.

But here is how Paul puts it,

"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or

what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty." II Corinthians 6:14-18

In verse 15, we have a sequence of cause and effect. First God calls us from our "former lusts and ignorance" (verse 14). This is God's work, and it is He who separates us to Himself and thus makes us "holy". The effect is that we move from an environment and manner of disobedience to one of obedience (verse 14 – note also verse 23). As Paul puts it in I Corinthians 1:30, "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,..."

So now, we are not to conform our lives to the old environment, but to the new in all our behavior.

The word "behavior" (anastrophe) is important as Peter uses it eight times within both epistles. The original meaning is: "turning up and down, back and forth." This is first to be an inner, personal, private process before it becomes external behavior. Specifically, it addresses how one relates to God and what goes on in his inner thoughts and life as a result. Then this becomes the source of the external behavior.

"Behavior" or "Conduct" in social or interpersonal relationships is a totally different word (peripateo) and involves how one "conducts" his life in daily encounters with others. The way he does business, talks, treats other people, acts wisely, and relates to others as a Christian ought to do, and so on.

Note the contrast to "lusts" (verse 14). "Holiness" stands in contrast to the former "unholiness" of our lives. This is first an internal matter before it becomes an external one. The contrast to the old is "holiness" and this needs to be the new

internal reality. A person is to emulate God who has no wickedness or darkness in Himself. Peter will go on to define what he is after in a moment.

16: ...because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

Leviticus 11:44 states, "For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and **be holy, for I am holy**. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth."

Peter quotes this passage and perhaps several other similar passages here.¹⁵ In the Leviticus passage one can see the reference to the clean versus the unclean which it goes on to discuss.

This is to underscore verses 14 and 15. Removal and separation from an unclean, unholy, ungodly, lustful inner life is the idea. This would include that which influences the inner life. But this does not mean removal from people in the world who are lost in darkness. But it does mean removal and separation from the dark deeds thereof.

One can be holy in the midst of an ungodly environment, clean in the midst of filth. One is not to, as Paul says in Ephesians 5:11-12, "...participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret."

So "holiness" is first an inner manner of life made possible because of what God has done. We now live in a different and new environment as our home as it were. We are in a new family, not that of Adam, but that of Christ with God as our Father. The fact is that we, in Christ are made holy. Ephesians 1:3-4 read,

"Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

And, Ephesians 5:25-27,

¹⁵ Leviticus 11:45, 19:2, 20:7, 20:26, 21:8

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.'

And, Colossians 1:21-22,

"And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach."

And, Titus 2:11-15,

11: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12: instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13: looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14: who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. 15: These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you."

Then the effect of this is a behavior among people that reflects that inner life. Peter is more specific as to his intent in verses 17-23 and following.

1:17-23

17: If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; 18: knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19: but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. 20: For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21: who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. 22: Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren,

fervently love one another from the heart, 23: for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. 24: For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25: BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you."

17: The next several verses (through 2:11) describe the essence of "holiness" as it moves from an internal reality to an external expression (1:22, 2:11-3:9).

First is recognizing that God is now our "Father", and as such we are to account ourselves to Him in our conduct as any child would to his or her parents.

In this family, God plays no favorites. "... impartially judges according to each one's work..." is an important word relating to the specific "work" Peter goes on to describe in the next two chapters. In every instance it has to do with how one treats others and views who they are in value, and within God's established plan and preference.

The word "judge" is "κρίνω", (kree-noh), and means "to judge" in the sense of examining a situation requiring a decision and then rendering the decision. The picture is from the Old Testament where "judges" sat in the city entrance and settled disputes between people. Their decision was final. They were people anointed by God and fully aware of their need of His guidance and will in any matter brought before them.

As used in the New Testament, the context is everything when the term "to judge" is employed in the Scripture. Two of the words derived from the root for "to judge" ["kra" (to have power, strength or shout out) also "kri" (to condemn)] is "κρίσις" (kree-sis) – from which we get our English word "crisis" and "κρίμα" (kree-mah) from which we derive our English word "crime".

Both of these derivatives are generally used in the context of condemnation at judgment.

However, this is not the context in Peter. In fact, a very relieving statement of Jesus is found in John 5:24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and

believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." The word "judgment" here is "κρίσις".

This idea is repeated in John 3:18, 3:36, Romans 8:1 ("ka-ta-kree-mah") and many other places. Believers will have life and those non-believers (often called the "wicked") will suffer the contrast of "condemnation and death", which is intended most often by the use of these two words.

The motive for "conducting" one's self in "fear" during one's life here is 1: Facing God's judging one's work later on - (but not His condemning), and 2: "Knowing the cost and value of our redemption – verses 18-19.

First, Paul refers to the idea of "judgment" of the believers in a number of places.

For example, Romans 14:10, "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God."

And, Colossians 3:23-25, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality."

And, II Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

The word for "judgment seat" is "βῆμα" (bay-mah). The ancient root is "footstool". In ancient cities, this was a place in the agora where public speeches or trials were held and in the case of the latter, judgments rendered. Depending on the city, it could also serve as the place where officials sat to judge the winners of Greek games. The Bema was a raised platform with a rostrum or dais. Several steps were required to reach the top. Paul and Sosthenes were hauled up to one of these by the Jews in Corinth (Acts 18:12-17).

"This word was taken from Isthmian games where the contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every

rule of the contest was obeyed (cf. 2 Tim. 2:5). The victor of a given event who participated according to the rules was led by the judge to the platform called the *Bema*. There the laurel wreath was placed on his head as a symbol of victory (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-25)."

"In all of these passages, 'Paul was picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual contest. As the victorious Grecian athlete appeared before the *Bema* to receive his perishable award, so the Christian will appear before Christ's *Bema* to receive his imperishable award. The judge at the *Bema* bestowed rewards to the victors. *He did not whip the losers.*' We might add, neither did he sentence them to hard labor."¹⁶

In the church today, normally this "judging" is associated with "rewards" as II Corinthians 5:10 alludes to. Other passages include,

Luke 6:22-23, "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap *for joy*, for behold, your **reward** is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets."

II John 1:8, "Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full **reward**."

Revelation 22:11-12, "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy. Behold, I am coming quickly, and My **reward** is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

In most cases the word for "reward" is "μισθός" (miss-thos) meaning wages, pay or recompense for service or work rendered. Another word translated "reward" is "ἀποδίδωμι" (ahpo-did-oh-mee) and means basically "to give back". This word is used of God when He gives back to those who have given of themselves, whether good or not. Note Matthew 6:3-4 where Jesus says, "But when you **give** to the

¹⁶ By: J. Hampton Keathley, III, bible.org. This information had no other source and though often repeated as fact, verification is not supplied from historical resources. However, one can go online to Wikipedia and read about the Isthmian games held at Corinth and see there the basis for this understanding of "Bema".

poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you."

And then Paul, Romans 2:5-8, 5: "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6: who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8: but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation."

And,

I Corinthians 3:11-15, 11:" For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12: Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13: each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14: If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15: If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

The theme is consistent. The "judgment" Peter speaks about to his fellow believers is not that of condemnation, but of the unselfish works stripped of dross. The description of these works is to come.

18-19: The second motivation for a holy and godly life conducted in "fear" is the recognition one must keep in mind that redemption was not obtained "with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ."

The contrast is obvious between the old and the new. His Jewish readers will see the analogy immediately. In Exodus 30:12-16 and Numbers 3:44-51 a payment in shekels had to be made to ransom (or redeem) themselves and their firstborn sons from God to who they belong. Further, their offerings were to be dedicated to the support of the Levitical priesthood. Since children (other those born to the tribe of Levi) had to be "redeemed", that is, though they belonged to God they could not serve the tabernacle. So a price was levied instead. This was paid in gold and

silver shekels. Here is the rule from Numbers 18:14-16,

14: "Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. 15: Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. 16: As to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs."

Redemption is a "buying back." If something (or in this case "someone") has been transferred from one owner to another, the first owner may buy back or redeem that which was originally his. In the case of people, Christ's death on the cross "redeemed" all mankind from the ownership of the devil (Hebrews 2:9-15).

Redemption is one of the four key themes that thread through the entire Bible from before creation to eternity. The other three are Creation, Preparation and Salvation. Salvation is the only one that not all people participate in even though it is available to all. Salvation must be gained by faith and faith alone in Christ and Christ alone.

19: Unlike silver and gold which tarnish and decay in time, the effect of the blood of Christ will never do so. Thus, faith in Him is also imperishable (1:7). This is the foundation for living a holy life. This recognition is to be internalized, ("knowing that..." – verse 18).

The "precious" blood of Christ is that of "inestimable value", "honored", "priceless". His sacrifice is seen in the simile of a unblemished and spotless lamb brought to the Lord in the Passover event in Egypt. Without blemish means having no natural imperfection, no disease, no deficiency or redundancy of parts.

Jesus is our Passover lamb. John 1:29 tells us of John the Baptist's statement as he was baptizing in the Jordan, "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" And in John 1:36, we read, "and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

In I John 3:5 we read, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and

in Him there is no sin."

Hebrews 7:26 makes a statement about the unblemished nature of Jesus. "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens;"

Paul as well notes this in I Corinthians 5:6-7 and the effect it is to have on us, 6: "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump *of dough*? 7: Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed."

Since Christ is unblemished and holy, then so is His blood. Thus, those who come to faith in Him are also holy, unblemished and ought to conduct themselves in like manner. This is Peter's point as well as Paul's. Paul speaks more of this in Ephesians, chapter 5.

20a: "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world...." A theme repeated many times in the New Testament, nearly exclusively by John.

John 1:1-3, 14, 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2: He was in the beginning with God. 3: All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." 14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 8:58-59, 58: "Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." 59: Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

Revelation 13:8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain."

The idea is that it was predetermined before creation that Jesus would be the One to give His life as the redemption for mankind...

20b-21: 20b: "...but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21: who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Again, 20b is a frequent theme in the New Testament.¹⁷ He appeared in these "last times" for our sakes. "Last times" are synonymous with "last days".¹⁸ The last days, according to Peter's speech at Pentecost began at that moment. "End times" are the conclusion of the "last days".

21: It is the resurrection of Christ from the dead, through which God gave Him glory that is the means of a sound faith in God and sure hope for our salvation. As they believe in Christ, they also place their faith in God who verified His work by raising Christ from the dead.

22: In these verses, Peter shows how the inner reality is to be demonstrated by the external conduct.

First, the internal purification of the soul¹⁹ comes from submission to and acceptance of the truth.²⁰ This is a work or better, a decree of God. "For a sincere..." is better translated "toward" a sincere love of the brethren. "Love" here is "philadelphia" or "brotherly love". This internal dynamic now is now to be expressed in a fervent "agape" love for one another "from the heart" once again indicating the core of one's being (see:4:8).

23: The reason for this expression toward others is found in this verse. What a marvelous thought Peter shares with his readers. Our faith in Christ by the truth of the gospel and the power of God has caused God to give us a new birth. The "seed" is a common word for "semen" and man's is perishable. But the imperishable "seed" is the Holy Spirit's implanting of the Word of God which causes us to also become imperishable.²¹

¹⁷ Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 1:4, 3:11; Romans 8:29-30; II Timothy 1:9 for example.

¹⁸ See discussion on verse 5, page 16.

¹⁹ On the concept of "soul" see the commentary at verse 9 on page 21.

²⁰ This is the intent of the Greek word *υπακοη* (hup-ah-koeh) – to listen and be under what you hear, that is subordinate or submissive to the truth.

²¹ James 1:21 notes, "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." See also John 6:33; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13; I Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:2

Paul writes in this vein,

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life." Titus 3:5-7²²

24-25: In contrast, all flesh, being perishable, is like grass and flowers which appear for a season and wither away. But the Word of God is imperishable, and is what we heard and believed placing us in a whole new reality. It is in conformance to the new reality in which we are to conduct our lives and relate to others.

CHAPTER TWO Text, Exegesis and Explanation

2:1-3

1: Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, 2: like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, 3: if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

1-3: "Therefore"...based on 1:23-25, "having been born again...", '*here is how I expect you to behave*' is Peter's admonishment. (Italics mine) The five negative attributes all are those that relate to other people.

First, put aside all "malice". "Malice" is "kakos" and intends the idea of speaking a negative moral or intrinsic evil of another based in ignorance. This comes from the "heart" and reveals the corruption thereof.

"Deceit" is "dolos" from a root that means to bait a trap. One thing looks good but

²² Paul's approach is much like Peter's in that due to God's work in the life of the believer, the believer's conduct should reflect that work.

is really a trap for the unsuspecting. One is not to set such traps for others. This is a close idea to "hypocrisy" but an active means of damaging another through deception.

"Hypocrisy" comes from the idea of attempting to escape a condemnation through pretense. Though similar to the simple lie, "hypocrisy" plays. One pretends to be one thing but is in reality another. "Disingenuous" or "devious" fits in here. This approach to people is based in fear and insecurity and is the basis for a deceptive action.

"Envy" is to wish ill or destruction of another so one can either possess what he has or prevent him from having it. "Jealousy" is another word.

"Slander" is literally, "according to (or the wagging of) the tongue." One who speaks against another as to cause his demise. "Defamation" is another word.

All these have a common source, the fear and insecurity of the person that seeks damage or destruction to another. One supposes that he or she will feel better or more fulfilled or even justified in his or her own opinion if another is damaged, hurt or suffers loss. But this is not of Christ. Not at all.

Peter's suggestion is that this is a common social infection contracted as one grows up in the worldly society. I say this because he contrasts this with verse 2, "...like newborn babies...."

2: Verse 2 reflects 1:23, "we have been born again...". Now, like newborn babies, we are to grow up – not with the "milk of the world", but with the "pure milk of the word". The word "pure" is "dolos" again, but with the alpha privative "adolos" meaning "undecitful", the alpha prefix negating the noun and becoming an adjective in the process.

"In respect to salvation". A fair translation and contrasts the growth of the believer and what he is to ingest with the growth in the world and what a person ingests therein.

3: A conditional clause. "If you have tasted...." The analogy is that the "milk of the word" is in a parallel construction with the "kindness of the Lord". The

"tasting" is to whet the appetite for more. It is not a "drinking", "feeding" or "consuming".²³

If one has tasted then one ought to "long" for more. To "long" for more is "epi-poh-theh-oh", to "yearn", "desire" or "crave".

2:4-5

4: And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, 5: you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

4: Now Peter moves first to a simile then to a metaphor involving "stones" ("lithos"). This idea is taken from Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 8:14. Peter, as is true of all the apostolic writers, uses the LXX as his text,²⁴ and in each of these passages "lithos" is used as the translation of the Hebrew word "eh-ben". It means to build or make a "copy" or "reproduction" of an original. We get our term "lithography" from this.

Believers are reproductions of a spiritual and holy reality by the work of God through the Holy Spirit. In Peter's first simile he tells his readers, the new born in Christ, that they come to God as "living" stones...stones rejected by men but chosen and precious to God.

5: As such, they are the "living" building blocks of a spiritual house into which they are being built. This is a metaphor. The present passive indicative of the Greek verb "to build" is employed here which indicates a present action from a past act. God is doing the building. Both the materials and the house He is building are imperishable, and stands in contrast to the earthly environment and all things built from its resources.

The word "for" is supplied as the original reads, "...being built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood..." The metaphor changes to "a holy priesthood" and is

²³ See Hebrews 6:4-5; John 2:9.

²⁴ LXX –the Septuagint, a Greek translation from the Hebrew manuscripts completed in Alexandria, Egypt in about 250 B.C. under the rule of Ptolemy II. Called the "Septuagint" because it was supposedly completed by 72 Jewish Scribes in 72 days.

mixed, but the idea is clear as Peter continues. A spiritual house and a holy priesthood are the same thing in this parallelism. Neither are from this world.

This parallels living a "holy life" and those in Christ are now seen as a "holy priesthood" offering "spiritual sacrifices" acceptable to Christ. This is not a purpose clause, but an expression of an inner reality. In other words, we are not being made into a holy priesthood in order to offer spiritual sacrifices, but as an holy priesthood we are to offer up "spiritual sacrifices." What are these "spiritual" sacrifices?

Peter's emphasis is on the believer's relationship with others, including earthly institutions and governments. The essence of the spiritual is to flow through the believer toward these entities. Thus, "spiritual sacrifices" would involve the setting aside of all earthly and fleshly desires and drives and replacing them with spiritual ones. This is his focus in the entire epistle.

Paul and the writer of Hebrews notes several personal matters that can also be seen as "spiritual sacrifices". For example,

Romans 12:1-2,

1: "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2: And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Ephesians 5:17-20,

17: "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18: And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19: speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20: always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father..."

Paul goes on then to speak about personal relationships in the same context, specifically beginning with the marital. The same order is true in Colossians 3:12-17. After 17, the marital relationship is once again addressed.

12: "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13: bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14: Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16: Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17: Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

The writer of Hebrews notes in 13:15-16,

15: "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. 16: And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Again this translates into relational conduct in the ensuing verses.

Peter himself writes in 2:9 that as a "royal priesthood" one is to,

"...proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..."

And in 3:9-10, immediately after speaking about the marital relationship,

8: "To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; 9: not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."

So one ought to be able to discern what the conduct and spiritual sacrifice of a believer ought to be from these few passages. He continues to emphasize the identity of the believer and the subsequent conduct both toward God and to others based on this identity.

1:6-10

6: "For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 7: This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*," 8: and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed. 9: But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10: for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."

6-8: Verses 1-3 of this chapter sees Peter admonishing his readers to put aside all the malice, deceit etc. based on the holiness imputed to them by God and grow in respect to salvation on the "milk" of the Word of God. Then, as "living stones" with Christ, realize they are being built up into a spiritual house and holy priesthood.

This is now defined in detail in verses 6-11. First, Peter quotes Isaiah 28:16. He applies it to Christ in the metaphor as the "choice and precious corner stone", and whoever believes in Him ("it" in the original) will not be "disappointed". The idea in Isaiah is belief in the work God is doing. It carries over here. "Disappointed" is actually "disgraced" or "shamed". It is from the same root of the word Paul uses in Romans 1:16 when he says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ..."

So God has laid a living "cornerstone" in Christ upon who He is building a living edifice to His glory...which is us, the living stones with which He builds. The cornerstone is the most critical part of the ancient structure as it must be level, straight and strong enough to both guide the remaining structure and its structural integrity. It is the cornerstone from which everything else is measured against and built upon. We would call it the foundation. This is the role Christ fulfills.

Paul's concept corresponds with Peter's when he says in Ephesians 2:19-22,

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

7-8: The "cornerstone" is only set and built upon only with those "stones" who believe. The cornerstone is rejected by those who disbelieve. Peter quotes Psalm 118:22. (In this psalm the rejected one likely refers to David, God's choice, not the people's. Saul was the people's choice and he did not have the heart for God that David did. He was removed and David anointed by Samuel.) Peter reapplies it to David.

In Matthew 21:42 Jesus applies the psalm to Himself. In Acts 4:11 Peter quotes it to those who arrested and tried him and John for healing a crippled man on the Sabbath. There, Peter applies the psalm to Jesus as the power that healed the man.

In verse 8, Peter quotes Isaiah 8:14 that speaks of the Lord as the stone over which the disobedient people stumble. The people had trusted in themselves, consulted mediums, spiritualists, and feared the enemy Assyria more than they looked to God. This was foolishness and caused them ultimate disaster. Christ became that stone also, both rejected and an offense. Yet God deemed Him choice and precious. Those who reject Him will stumble over Him and in doing so fall into the consequence of destruction.

9-10: "But" – in contrast to these who reject Christ and stumble, Peter returns to his theme of believers being "living stones being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

One needs to note that much of the language Peter quotes applied to the ancient people of Israel. Here, for example, verse 9 is a quote from Exodus 19:5-6 and Deuteronomy 7:6 where Moses tells these things to the people. But the condition for this to be true was faith and obedience.

Because the people to whom he is writing are those of faith and obedience, the description fits them. Thus it fits us as well as those who have faith in Jesus and obey the leading of His Spirit. Note 1:1-2.

"A Chosen Race" - The word "race" indicates "family", "people", or "generation" and comes from the idea of those born to a specific heritage. It really has nothing to do with "race" as in "ethnic origins".

"A Royal Priesthood" - A priesthood of the king of kings. God has chosen His servants, elevated them to serve in His kingdom, made them His own and no one else's, and given them a divine ministry.

"A Holy Nation" – A people from every culture whether Jew or Gentile who now have a new and unique identity as one – A Holy People (or "race"). The original indicates a new ethnicity, set apart to God and for God's service and ministry.

"A People for God's Own Possession" – A derived translation. The Greek is: "λαὸς εἰς περιποίησιν" (la-ohs ice perri-poy-eh-sin). The literal translation is nonsensical, "a people unto making around". So it is variously translated, "A peculiar (special) people", "an acquired people", "God's people" (the word "God" is supplied in all translations where it appears), and so on. But in the intent of the original it seems that the idea of a "specially created people" would fit well.

"So that..." the word "ὡς" (ho-pohs). It is followed by the verb "to proclaim" in the subjunctive mood and thus sets up a purpose clause. Thus, the "purpose" of this special people is to: "proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..."

In other words, to glorify God. "Excellencies" is "virtue" and "goodness". One could list these and have quite a list. It is this list that is to be spoken of and proclaimed. Why? Because it is he who has "called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." And, after all,

"...you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY."

Taken from Hosea 1:9-10, and 2:23, the idea is, "You were not mine, you belonged to no one and you had no identity." (Hosea is employed here because the child referred to was born from adultery out of wedlock.) "You received neither compassion (Hosea) nor mercy. But now you have and are mine." All this is

because they turned to Christ and believed.²⁵ The word "marvelous" is "thu-mahd-zoh" meaning to be "amazed", to "wonder", to be "awestruck". It is the early "wow" or "awesome". God's "light" (also used as a metaphor for truth) is like nothing ever experienced before.

2:11-17

11: Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12: Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13: Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14: or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15: For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16: *Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God. 17: Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

11: Once again Peter, having impressed upon his readers their precious value to God and their place in His kingdom and household, now urges them to live accordingly - with who they are now rather than as who they were before they became God's.

"Aliens and strangers" ...see comment on 1:1, page 11.

"I urge you..." He repeats the same admonition he stated in 1:14. He repeats this again in 4:2-3. The word "lusts" is "ἐπιθυμία" (epi-thu-mia) and is plural. It includes more than sexual desire or drive and is more in line with a "driven coveting" and is translated such in Romans 7:7 and 13:9 where the commandment is quoted. It is a coveting that captivates and drives the person to foolish, illicit or sinful action. It is a desire and captivation regarding the things of this world including things of the flesh, power, position, wealth as well as material

²⁵ See also Romans 9:25 where Paul employs the same passages. There he points to the Gentiles as the fulfillment of the imagery and the prophecy creating the fullness of the "true Israel of God". See also Acts 15:14ff.

possessions. One may become dependent upon something of this nature for their security and well being. But this world will pass away.

John puts it this way in his first epistle, 2:15-17,

15: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17: The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

These things wage "war against the soul" because they become substitutes for the things of God and shut out His person and presence in the Spirit. In chapter one, Peter follows the prohibition with, "... but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." In other words, rather than becoming captivated by the things of this world, one is to become separated from them and united to the Lord. Then Peter gives reasons for this mandate.

12: The word "excellent" is the simple word for "good" in the sense of radiating beauty and virtue. In the early church, the "Christian" movement was fraught with those who would slander it, spread false rumors, make accusations against it of deplorable nature and so on. Peter is intending that their conduct and behavior in the midst of a non-believing environment be such that it would dispel any such preconception or prejudice.

To the contrary, in fact, he wants them to be such good neighbors and citizens that their good and virtuous deeds completely change the suspicions to praise to God because of the way they handle themselves among the Gentiles (non-believers).

The "day of visitation" is an odd phrase and there are many ideas as to what it means. The phrase actually translates as "a day of oversight or inspection." The Greek word Peter uses suggests one who peers into something to see if it is genuine or if something is being hidden from sight. Now the question is, who is doing the "peering?" Suggestions have been made that it is either God, the "Gentile" community itself, or civil authority. One hint might be that the word "the" before "day of visitation" is supplied and not in the original. Rather than

specific, the day is general ("a day"), and this lends itself to a civil inspection in my mind. The context of the next few verses seems to buttress this conclusion, especially verse 15.

Plus, there is no specific "day of visitation" spoken of in the Bible relating to God or a future judgment. Only in Luke 19:44 is the word used and translated "visitation", but it speaks of Christ's time here on earth and the events surrounding His cleansing of the temple. But no reference using this term as a future matter is given.

13-14: Since Peter is in the context of the community and the civil authorities among whom those professing faith in Christ reside, the previous understanding has support. "For the Lord's sake" is literally, "through the Lord". "Every human institution" is a good translation and specifically intends "authority."

"...or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right."

This teaching will raise a multitude of questions in these times, especially since we have had the opportunity to view two thousand years of history and the impact of hundreds of governments led by evil rulers. The beginning of the 20th century onward has been filled with the worst examples of evil in government in history and we have to grapple with this teaching in light of the twisted things we have witnessed.

First, let's note that Peter is teaching a principle that even Christ followed while He lived here on earth. He was subject to all the governing authorities of His day even to the point of His own death at the hands of both Jewish and Roman authorities. He was falsely accused of violating the Law and the traditions of God as well as treason when His enemies reported to the Roman authorities that He was conspiring to overthrow Caesar and become king Himself.

He suffered and died without a word of rebellion or condemnation toward these authorities. It was understood that civil authority was instituted by God, even though He did not establish the evil that many perpetrated while holding their office. He submitted Himself to the civil authorities whether local, religious or regional. He even stated the basic principle when interviewed by Pilate.

John 19:10-11, 10: "So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" 11: Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin."

Even under Roman rule, the rulers of the empire (with few exceptions) were focused on a humane rule and indeed, they and their governors were there to punish evil and keep an orderly society. They offered no threat to the law abiding and tolerated many various religious expressions. There was little fear of going out at night so to speak, and a family and their children were safe in their homes and their community.

The Pax Romana was a period from the time of Jesus birth under Augustus to 180 A.D. (C.E.) when the empire was invaded by Germanic tribes during the reign of Commodus who became emperor after the death of his father Marcus Aurelius.

So 180 years where neither external nor internal threat of war affected the empire other than a few minor skirmishes with two Jewish uprisings quickly extinguished by the Roman Military. In contrast, our nation has been at war from the beginning of its history with little respite. Still, there were those instances where laws were passed that neither Christians nor Jews could not obey.

The book of Acts (18:2) makes reference to the edict of Claudius in 48 A.D. (C.E.) demanding that all citizens in the city of Rome conform to specific dress and conduct codes, many of which the Jews refused to comply with. So Claudius commanded that all the Jews leave the city under penalty of imprisonment.

But the most important example occurred when Roman authorities posed a threat to the Christian and Jewish adherents that if they did not worship any emperor who claimed deity. They would be executed. The majority did not bow the knee to Caesar and were summarily punished or executed.

We have many documents attesting to the martyrdom of Christians under some Roman Emperors. Among those are Nero who, in 65 A.D. instigated a local persecution in the City of Rome against Christians accused of setting fire to the city. In their deaths they were made the subjects of sport; for they were wrapped in the hides of wild beasts and torn to pieces by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set on fire, and when darkness fell upon the city, were burned to serve for lights.

In 89-96 Domitian was the emperor and some minor evidence exists that a persecution might have existed under his rule. Persecution often resulted when Christians refused to recognize the deification of a particular Roman emperor who had applied this entitlement to himself as did Domitian. If one did not recognize this by acknowledgement or offering, one could be punished or executed for "atheism". But only a few emperors instituted this doctrine. Domitian is said to have felt that he was divine, but evidence of persecution is nearly non-existent.

On the other hand, Trajan (98-117) was known to have persecuted and executed unrepentant Christians. Between 109 and 111 AD, Pliny the Younger was sent by the emperor to the province of Bithynia (in Anatolia) as governor. During his tenure of office, Pliny encountered Christians, and he wrote to the emperor about them. "...this is the course that I have adopted in the case of those brought before me as Christians. I ask them if they are Christians. If they admit it, I repeat the question a second and a third time., threatening capital punishment; if they persist I sentence them to death. The governor indicated that he had ordered the execution of several Christians."

Around 155 A.D., under the reign of Antonius Pius, Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna was burned and the stake and when that wasn't effective to kill him, he was killed with a sword. It is recorded that when he was asked to curse Christ and recant, Polycarp responded, "Eighty-six years have I served Him and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?"

Though there is little evidence that Christians specifically were "thrown to the lions", there were occasions, as with Polycarp that the threat of being thrown to "wild beasts" was certainly evident.²⁶ Polycarp was known to the Apostle John in his later years. The "wild beasts" included dogs, hyenas, and other vicious animals, but lions are not specifically mentioned.

Marcus Aurelius considered the Christian doctrines regarding the disposition of the soul after death to be offensive to his own beliefs that held that the soul was immediately absorbed into the "divine essence" upon death. Any other doctrine was an offense against the state and those guilty of such offenses were to be punished. This was directed specifically at Christians, and Christianity became a forbidden religion under his rule.

²⁶ These accounts are found in Henry Bettenson's book, "Documents of the Christian Church", Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 1943, 1963, 1966. For this reference, see page 15.

One of the best-recorded acts of violence against Christians in Marcus Aurelius' reign is the persecution in Lyons, which occurred in 177 AD. Over 48 Christians were killed in it.

"Another²⁷ emperor under whom Christians suffered terribly was Septimius Severus who ruled from 193-211. Writing during his reign, Clement of Alexandria said, "Many martyrs are daily burned, confined, or beheaded, before our eyes. The emperor Severus may not have been personally ill-disposed towards Christians, but the church was gaining power and making many converts and this led to popular anti-Christian feeling and persecution in Carthage, Alexandria, Rome and Corinth between about 202 and 210. In 202 Septimius enacted a law prohibiting the spread of Christianity and Judaism. This was the first universal decree forbidding conversion to Christianity. Violent persecutions broke out in Egypt and North Africa. Leonides, the father of Origen, a Christian apologist, was beheaded. Origen himself was spared because his mother hid his clothes. A young girl was cruelly tortured, then burned in a kettle of burning pitch with her mother. The famed Perpetua and Felicity were martyred during this time, as were many students of Origen of Alexandria. It is reported that Perpetua, a young noblewoman, and Felicitas, a slave girl, held hands and exchanged a kiss before being thrown to wild animals at a public festival.

From this point until Constantine, emperors who persecuted Christians include: Maximinus (235); Decius (250); Valerian (253); Diocletian (285); Galerius (302); Julian The Apostate (361). The persecution under Decius may have been the most vicious as he went after not just the clergy, but anyone who professed the faith across the empire.

The persecution under Decius was the first universal and organized persecution of Christians, and it would have lasting significance for the Christian church. In January 250, Decius issued an edict requiring all citizens to sacrifice to the emperor in the presence of a Roman official and obtain a certificate proving they had done so. This persecution lasted around a year until Decius died. Those who had purchased a certificate then wanted re-admittance into the churches. Quite a furor erupted about what to do with these who had denied Christ and even sacrificed to the emperor. Some could say that they were required to submit to the governing authorities while others could quote Christ's admonition, "But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

²⁷ From "Wikipedia" on line.

Thus, to submit to every governing authority, does not mean to deny Christ at their demands. There are obvious laws that have been passed that Christians cannot conscientiously obey. The difficulty comes when Christians are prodded in their conscience regarding laws they are perplexed by. This has taken place throughout history in countries all over the world.

Questions regarding "civil disobedience" under certain conditions are always debated. Paul's dissertation in Romans, chapter 13, corresponds to Peter's here in chapter 2. For Paul, his counsel comes from 12:17 ff.²⁸

There were movements of discontent against the Roman authorities that had nothing to do with affecting the faith. Taxation, regulation of commerce, citizenship issues, and the like were commonly argued by the discontented. The religious toleration by the Romans was objected to by many Jews when they objected to the new Christian movement. The Roman presence was hated by some, the zealots in particular and uprisings against Roman domination of the homeland were frequent. In none of this were Christians to participate. But under some emperors, the duty and extent of submission to them became a matter of very serious inquiry.

In general, the believer is to comply with every law of the govern authorities since this institution of human government has been established by God Himself. This edict is in force except where it may allow or demand disobedience to Christ. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lord's and His commands are paramount and preempt those that are contrary. Peter himself faced this matter as recorded in Acts 4 and 5. Still, resistance is not counseled here, but the suffering of being obedient to Christ in the face of a contrary governing principle.

The matter of civil or military service has its own set of challenges. When one becomes involved in these careers, he or she comes under the law of the organism in which they participate. If the organism has regulations (say, in a law enforcement organization) that requires one to violate their Christian conscience it

²⁸ 17: Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18: If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19: Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. 20: "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." 21: Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

is not advisable to enter these type of vocations. Otherwise they are required to execute orders, commands and bear the responsibilities their office demands.

15: "For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men." "Foolish men" are those who falsely accuse Christians of conduct unbecoming or in rebellion to the governing authorities. By being submissive to the governing authorities, and conducting oneself in a Christ like manner toward all outsiders, whether they be friends or not, will "muzzle" those who would speak against believers. This is the main point of the discourses by both Peter and Paul.

16-17: Paul gives the same counsel in Galatians 5:13-14, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

The supplied words "*act*" and "*use it*" in verse 16 of the NASB are not necessary. The prohibition of using one's freedom as a "covering for evil" is intended. This occurs when one assumes on the grace of God who, by Christ's blood, extends His grace to all who sin and does not count it against them (Romans 5:20-21). This freedom from the condemnation of the law has actually caused some to question and limit the extent of grace to the believer. This often leads to legalism and placing believers under the Law and condemnation once again.

So Paul also issues the prohibition in Romans 6:1-2, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"

In terms of social ordinances, some Christians have moved to disobedience or debauchery when illicit or immoral acts are permitted by law. These include frequenting houses of prostitution, or engaging in adulterous acts and other such ungodliness simply because it is not prohibited by secular law. I remember one so called "Christian" couple who expressed delight when penalties for adultery were lifted by one governing entity. Now they could commit such acts, they thought, because civil authorities had lifted the penalty. They were submitting to the governing authorities they rationalized, as God had commanded.

In Peter's context, he is primarily concerned with the Christian's relationship to and conduct before the local community and civil authority.

2:18-20

18: Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. 19: For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. 20: For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

18-20: "Servants" is not "slaves" but employed house servants. "Masters" are those who give them orders and to whom they answer. The interesting matter is that whether the "masters" are kind or harsh, the servants are to honor them the same. This is consistent with the behavior Christians are to display at all times. The issue is not the nature of individuals or governments surrounding within which the Christian resides, but the internal nature of Christians in relationship to them regardless of how they are viewed or treated. For it is the internal reality that determines the external conduct.

19: "For this is grace, if through consciousness of God one bears up under the sorrow of unjust suffering" is the literally translation. That is, grace is displayed when a Christian bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly because of his or her "God conscientiousness".

The word "patiently" in verse 20 means to "bear up under"; to remain constant and strong in one's faith and perseverance to do the right thing. It is both a credit to the faith and pleasing to God when one does so under false accusation. Note 3:16-17.

"To "suffer" is "πάσχω" (pas-koh) from which we get the "passion" of Christ. It means to be afflicted with pain, mourning, sorrow, and grief.

Peter then goes on to add a key illustration and example as to how Christians are to conduct themselves at all times, especially in times of suffering.

2:21-25

21: For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22: WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS

MOUTH; 23: and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; 24: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 25: For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

21: Verses 21-25 are specifically intended to illustrate the manner in which believers are to conduct themselves in this world regardless of the circumstances. Here, unjust suffering is the matter at hand, and Peter notes that Christians are called to present a Christ like response to their suffering.

The word "purpose" (supplied – but not italicized) is a bit misdirecting. The literal translation is, "for unto this you have been called because even Christ suffered..." Unto what is the believer called? Unto a gracious spirit and response when unjustly suffering. This is described in this passage. Christ Himself, who suffered for us, left us an example for us to follow. The difference though is that Christ's suffering was indeed unjust, it was for us - for a specific goal to bring salvation to others. A noble cause based in love for the lost. Can this be in anyway compared to the unjust suffering that believers experience?

22: Still, the example follows that believers who suffer for any reason or for none they can discern are to neither say or do anything Christ Himself would say or do. Here Peter quotes from Isaiah 53:9 (LXX).

23: To "revile" means to vilify or verbally abuse and insult. When these things happened to Christ, He did not "revile" in return. Neither are we to do so, nor to threaten some sort of judgment and punishment on them in God's name. Why? Because we entrust both ourselves and those who unjustly inflict suffering upon us to God. It is to be out of our hands. God will take care of the matter in His own way.

24: In fact, Christ's death was to remove sin from us in order to that we might be driven by and display His righteousness in our conduct. Then Peter applies Isaiah 53:5 to the situation. This application deals with (and was always intended to deal with) spiritual healing of the inner man as he is restored to God. However, it is nearly always used in the context of physical healing. But it is in the returning to

the shepherd and guardian of our souls that the verse finds its meaning.²⁹

25: The straying like sheep is what was healed.

CHAPTER THREE Text, Exegesis and Explanation

3:1-7

1: In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2: as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3: Your adornment must not be *merely* external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4: but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5: For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6: just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 7: You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

1-4: This passage along with several others has been misconstrued and confused in the teaching of it. We will try to bring clarification rather than more confusion to the subject and the text.

"in the same way" ...as verse 13 of the last chapter. Per that discussion, "submission" to the governing authorities is an act for the common good and to exhibit Christian character in the sight of the community and any governing authorities who may inspect any rumored citizenship problems among Christians.

²⁹ The context of Isaiah 53 reveals this intention. The phrase, "the chastening of our well being fell upon Him" is literally "the chastisement by which our peace is effected." In other words, we are brought into a state of peace and favor with God, and in this is healing understood. This is the only place in the Bible where Isaiah 53:5 is quoted.

And as the governing authorities are to protect the community from evil doers and "praise those who do right" submission is a means to a good working relationship.

It means literally in the Greek, "to be arranged in an orderly fashion under an accompanying authority". It is a positional attribute and does not carry with it the "doormat" and "strict obedience no matter what" often taught concerning these passages. The husband is to treat his wife with understanding, love and gentleness. On the other hand, there is no place for contention in either a social setting or in a marriage. We will come back to that later on. The purpose of conforming to this attitude and role is to silence any criticism toward the Christian and bring honor to the Christ they serve. It is a general principle that will assure success in any relationship where two different roles are involved. Again, more on that later.

Here, Peter speaks in this context. The wife's "submissiveness" is to accomplish the same thing, harmony in the marriage. If a husband is disobedient to the word, rather than rebel or engage in uncivil conduct or contentious behavior, she is to remain steadfast in her Christian demeanor. This is the way to persuade them to obedience to Christ. Any other contentious approach would likely make matters worse all the way around.

"Respectful" is based in the root "to fear", "pho-bohs", and indicates as appropriate response to the position another holds. It does not necessarily reflect "respect" or "honor" of the person himself, but recognizes God's plan for the structure of the home.

The word "behavior"³⁰ is the same as that in verse 2 and 1:15 – "anastrophe" (anastroph-eh'). As verse 2 indicates, the inner qualities of a woman are more significant than outer adornment as verses 3- 4 explain.

2: "Chaste" is from the same root as "holy". In other words, a wife's relationship to Christ should be uppermost in her life and her conduct with her husband ought to reflect that bond. "Respectful" is "fear" and reflects one's proper recognition and response to the position another holds. In other words, it recognizes position and assumes proper conduct in recognition of that position. This is not the same as

³⁰ From the comment at 1:15. The word "behavior" (anastrophe) is important as Peter uses it eight times within both epistles. The original meaning is: "turning up and down, back and forth." This is first to be an inner, personal, private process before it becomes external behavior. Specifically, it addresses how one relates to God and what goes on in his inner thoughts and life as a result. Then this becomes the source of the external behavior.

"to honor" which is a cherishing of the worth and value of another person.³¹ So we are speaking of a woman's recognition of the position or her husband not necessarily the person of her husband in this instance.

So her "submission" is to the position her husband holds, not necessarily to him as a person. That is why it can be compared to the government.

3. Again Peter emphasizes the inner qualities as more important than external adornment to which many women often give more attention. The word "adornment" relates to the idea of "adore", that is, the quality for which one is valued or finds attraction to others. Peter stresses that the inner qualities are far superior to develop than the common exterior qualities so many women work hard to enhance. In doing so, a distraction from the real person is presented and men, unfortunately, see these external attributes more than the internal and may be deceived as to the person herself. Verses four and following find Peter's definitions in terms of what is truly important to God.

4: Continuing, Peter describes the inner "adornment" wives need to attain. It is simply the hidden person of the heart, comprised of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is imperishable and precious in the sight of God. Barnes says it this way. "The word "hidden" here means that which is concealed; that which is not made apparent by the dress, or by ornament. It lies within, pertaining to the affections of the soul."³²

It is imperishable in contrast to the exterior adornment and appearance. Once again, we see that God is far more interested in the inner life and development than in external matters. More of who we are than what we do. It is always the "heart" with God...which He alone sees, while man looks on the exterior.³³

"Gentle and quiet spirit..." "Considerate and humble" is the meaning of "gentle." Often the word "meek" is used, but this word doesn't mean the same today as it did years ago. Today we think of "meek" as "fearful", "shy", "retiring", "feeling threatened" and the like. But this is not the intent of the original at all. Here, "gentle" is an inner attitude toward another person that exudes an understanding of one's position in relation to another's. In like manner, "quiet" does not refer to the vocal expression at all, but to an inner quality of "rest", "confidence" and

³¹ See the discussion on this in the appendix.

³² Albert Barnes' notes on the Bible. e-Sword.net.

³³ I Samuel 18:7; Jeremiah 17:10, 20:12; John 7:24; Hebrews 4:13; Rev. 2:23.

"tranquility" from which a woman both speaks and conducts her relationship with her husband.

"Precious in the sight of God..." carries the idea of tremendous, priceless value. These attributes reflect complete faith and confidence in God without hesitation or fear.

5: Peter draws upon the examples from prominent women in the history of Israel. He calls them "holy" women, which we have learned means "set apart to God and His service." These women placed their complete trust and hope in God and were able to adorn themselves with the inner qualities described above.

Because they did this, they were able to be "submissive" to their husbands, that is recognize their husband's God given position and responsibility and respond accordingly based in their secure relationship with God themselves.

6: Peter points particularly to Sarah, Abraham's wife. She obeyed him calling him "lord". This underscores the point about position. "Lord" is the word "sir" in our vernacular. It is a term of respect. The same word is used by the disciples when addressing Jesus, and when we use it, it means the same thing. We tend to attach the idea of "king" or "ruler" to the word "lord", but that is not necessarily how it is to be understood in human relationships. In spite of the teachings of some religions, there is only one Lord and Savior, one God and Creator and it is not us.

"Obedience" means "to listen to and comply with his decisions." In Abraham's case, His decisions effecting Sarah were particularly difficult as she was required to pack up and move many times over the course of their sojourn. But she also knew that Abraham was following God's directives, not just a whim. If a husband, (like Isaac for example) was less sensitive to the leading of the Lord, she, like Rebecca may have manipulated the situation to comply with God's will. But the point is that Sarah's will was submissive to God's and when God led Abraham she had no problem going with him. This does not mean that the decisions are made unilaterally by the husband alone. Counsel with his wife, family and trusted advisors were common. "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD." Proverbs 19:14

In daily life, women of those times were well prepared for the traditional role of wife and mother. Tradition and cultural standards were followed without question. A husband really didn't have much to say or do when it came to his wife's role.

She went right out and took charge in her given responsibilities. The husband did the same in his. There was a mutual understanding as to how things were to be run, some by the wife, some by the husband. In many cases the wife was the stronger leader and her presence was felt and admired by both her husband and the community. Note proverbs 31:10-31 for example.

This was totally different than our chaotic culture today. Values concerning faithfulness to God and each other, the home and children, and raising them in the way of the Lord were paramount. Little of this exists today. Both husband and wife were committed to the same goals and values from childhood. Sexual purity was common until marriage, and one married another with the same faith and principles they had themselves. Divorce almost unheard of, and dedication to home and God took precedent over everything else. Not so in our society, and even in Christian homes much of the time. So called American values, independence and total self centeredness is drummed into us from birth. What "I think" is paramount even over what God says.

"You have become her children if you do what is right..." The word "right" is "ἀγαθοποιέω", (ah-gah-tho-poi-eh-oh). This is a great word! It is only used twenty times in all the New Testament. Basically it means "to make good", that is, "to express or create goodness", or "to generate benefit" to whatever or whoever you encounter. In this case, it is the attitude toward one's husband that is the context. "Creating goodness" for her husband and in all she does likens her to Sarah. Too bad we don't have a women's society called "Sarah's daughters".

"... without being frightened by any fear." "Frightened" is "pho-beh-oh" but "fear" is "pto-eh-sis" to be "startled", "alarmed" or shocked".

This dispels the idea that when one is to "fear" her husband or even "fear" the Lord, it does not mean to walk about in "bowel loosening terror." Quite the contrary, the relationship between a husband and a wife is to be one of harmony and mutual love and honor.

7: "In the same way..." Referring to what? This could be understood in several ways. But most likely it refers back to Abraham as the example of a husband's love and understanding toward his wife. This is the immediate context and applies properly to Abraham's relationship to Sarah. So, like Abraham, a husband is to "dwell or reside together" in an "understanding" way with his wife. This is as good

a translation as any. Literally it is "according to knowledge". The word "knowledge" has so many nuances that the context is the only way to define what it means in any particular context. In this case the word "knowledge" means that the husband recognizes that his greater physical strength is not to be used as the instrument of his position. In most relational uses of the word "knowledge" it would indicate an intimate knowledge of the character and inner workings of the wife, so the husband can relate to her in a way that fills her with admiration, not fright.

Peter does not specifically call the wife "a weaker person" but instructs the husband to treat her in a way that considers her weaker physical strength, since she is a woman. This suggests that Peter recognizes the general physical strength of a man as greater than a woman and the husband is not to use his greater physical strength to intimidate his wife. In fact, the wife is often much stronger than the man in other aspects of their relationship.

In any case, he is to show her, "'honor' as a fellow heir of the grace of life." The word "honor" is "τιμην" (tih-mane). It recognizes the value and worth of an individual and treats them accordingly.³⁴ This makes two things apparent right away. One, there is a role each is to adopt in the marriage and, 2. There is no inequality in the kingdom of God in terms of value or standing.³⁵

In Biblical times, the Jewish husband took his role and responsibility seriously. The heritage he and his wife would leave their descendants was uppermost in his mind. Seldom did they do what they did apart from considering the effect it would have on future generations. Gratifying themselves without consideration of the future would have been largely unheard of.

"...so that your prayers will not be hindered." "Hindered" is "prevented", "interfered with", or "detained". "Disregarded" may be a better idea. The curious thing is that the prayer efficacy is related to how a husband both views and treats his wife. This is unique to apostolic teaching.

If Peter had included the idea of "oneness" in the relationship, then division, one spouse alienated from the other, could be seen as effecting prayer. Perhaps he

³⁴ Note the chart in the appendix contrasting "Honor and Respect".

³⁵ See the appendix regarding the movement in marriage from a tradition "chain of command" to a oneness and unity as intended in the beginning.

concludes that his readers already know this being Jewish in their upbringing.

Here he speaks only in terms of "fellow heirs", equal and one in this regard. Paul's point in Galatians 3:28-29 fits in here as well, 28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29: And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

So in honoring his wife as a "fellow heirs" of the grace of life, the husband cannot lift himself over his wife with some assumed spiritually important superiority. The burden is on him in his understanding and honoring of his wife if he expects to receive "respect" in return.

3:8-12

8: To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble in spirit; 9: not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. 10: For, "THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT. 11: "HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT. 12: "FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD HE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL."

8: This summary is the point for all that have been addressed. "Harmonious" is "like minded". Translations include, "being of one mind", "have a unity of spirit", "be like minded", "in agreement." "Sympathetic" is the transliteration of the Greek "συμπαθής" (sum-pah-thehs) and means, "with passion (or suffering)". To suffer with another is the idea. Paul said in Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." "Brotherly" is "philadelphia", love of the brother and sister in the Lord. "Kindhearted" is to feel the compulsion from deep within to care for others in need. "Humble in spirit" is to consider oneself as less important than another, even if one holds a place of authority over them.

9: The normal impulse might be to return an insult with an insult. But Peter wishes us to train ourselves to return any insult or evil with only the wish for a

blessing for the person. This means to wish them well and hold no ill feelings towards them.

10-12: To buttress his argument Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16. The point of this quotation is that successful living and pleasing God is not accomplished by returning evil for evil. Any Christian within structures of relationship or authority, are not to react in a negative way to suffering, evil or insult heaped upon them.

3:13-17

13: Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? 14: But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. **AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,** 15: but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; 16: and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. 17: For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

13: Peter continues his admonition to his readers to respond to insult, suffering and false accusation with gentleness and grace. His rhetorical question is to be answered, "No one." If they continue to do good ("ah-go-thos" – to bring goodness and benefit to others) in the midst of, and in spite of persecution, harassment and the like, the result will be far better than if they were to respond with insult and anger.

14: And even if they were to suffer while doing good, and living in a righteous manner, then they would be blessed because they would share Christ's environment as he alludes to momentarily.

"AND DO NOT FEAR..." Peter adapts Isaiah 8:12b, "... And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of *it*." Perhaps he also thinks of Isaiah 51:12, "I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass...", and of course, John 14:1, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."

15: "... but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts..." This means to set Him in prominence, apart and above all else that would attempt to take precedence, especially our own emotions and reactions that would not be Christ like in the face of attack and persecution.

"... always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you,..." "Being" is supplied and unnecessary. There is no question that each Christian needs to prepare him or herself to give a word about why they believe what they believe. Those words should include both the personal and the factual core of the matter. Something like, "When I came to believe in Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior, my life was changed. Not because of what I did, but because of what He did. He is God's son and the love of God was demonstrated when His son, Jesus died on the cross for my sins and yours. All this is verified and made real by His resurrection from the dead, the foundation of our faith and hope. Through Jesus we all by faith can be recipients of God's grace and mercy and experience the hope of eternal life."

"...with gentleness and 'reverence'." "Gentleness" is mildness, and humility. "Reverence" is the same word translated "fear" or "respect". It is "phobos" and indicates a response appropriate to the position another holds.

16: "And keep a good conscience...so that those who revile you will be put to shame." The point is that one must behave or conduct oneself in such a manner that their conscience is not plagued with regret because it recognizes the cause of slander as being legitimate and thus bring shame on Christ. Then, those who revile the believer will be put to shame when they find out that their attack has been without basis or merit.

17: Peter repeats the essence of verse 13 with which he began this paragraph, "For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong." Not that God wills one to suffer for doing right or to suffer at all, but if a believer is experiencing suffering it must be due to "doing right" rather than for doing wrong which would bring disgrace upon Christ.

3:18-22

18: For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19: in which also He went and made proclamation to the

spirits *now* in prison, 20: who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the* water. 21: Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22: who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

18: This passage is not some rabbit trail Peter includes to provoke theological discussion. His point is that Christ's suffering was for doing right. He was falsely accused, insulted, mocked and tortured to death.

Peter has already written about the example all believers should emulate in 2:21-24,

21:For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22: WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23: and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; 24: and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

19: Verses 19-22 are parenthetical. The theme is picked up again in 4:1. However, the point of the following is to underscore the purpose Christ fulfilled in His suffering, namely bringing the lost back to God. His suffering and death, though unjust with accusation lacking merit was met with forgiveness and grace. And even those who were disobedient and corrupt but lost in the flood were not forgotten by God. So the suffering and death of Christ became a means to proclaim God's redemption even to them as Christ was made alive in the spirit.

Now as to the content of this passage (only a verse and a half), it is of course without precedent and we do not know where or how Peter came into this knowledge. Apparently, spirits of the departed wicked are kept in some state referred to by Peter as a "prison". In a spiritual essence Christ was able to proclaim a message to these spirits and we must assume that they had opportunity

to make some sort of decision about their status with God. These are likely the same spirits who are raised from the dead at following last trumpet at the second resurrection and judged.

20: Yet Peter passes by this as if insignificant and focuses on the flood and Noah's rescue from it. There is a correspondence between the flood and baptism Peter points out. In both instances, rescue is demonstrated by escaping from a watery grave. The water, the same force that destroyed the world lifted Noah and his family to safety. Baptism, picturing death and burial is the element that corresponds with and identifies the believer with Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

21: At the same time, the water is seen as a cleansing image, not of the body but of the conscience, leaving the "old sinful man" behind.

This refers back to verse 16 where Peter noted, "...and keep a good conscience..." The conscience is cleansed of guilt of sin, and now is to be filled with the conscience and mind of the living Christ – as Peter will explain. Regardless, it is not the ritual of baptism that actually accomplishes salvation as God had promised, but the power that brought about the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

22: The point is that the suffering Peter's readers may endure is not without recognition, and that assurance of their salvation and heavenly inheritance is secure and real, based on Jesus resurrection and ascension. Their response to such suffering, then, ought to be like Christ's – full of understanding, forgiveness, grace and mercy. Only in this way is it possible for those who perpetrate insult and persecution upon the believer to be moved to the Lord, whether it be a government official, employer, family member, neighbor or even a spouse.

Note: In this chapter Peter repeats the theme of suffering for doing good, as Christ did, five times.

CHAPTER FOUR
Text, Exegesis and Explanation

4:1-2

1: Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2: so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

1: These two verses carry over from chapter three verse 18, and are a continuation thereof, 19-22 being parenthetical. Peter's repeated theme of suffering for doing good and not for doing evil is the core of his teaching. In this way, one shares the experience of Christ. To understand where this verse fits in we will translate as specifically as we can.

The original reproduced here: (Χριστοῦ οὓν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὀπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας,...) translates literally,

"Therefore, Christ suffered in the flesh also you arm yourselves with the same mind because (or so that) the one who is suffering in the flesh is being made to cease from sin."

In suffering so, Christ's "purpose" ("mind") had the good of others in view, specifically their salvation, or as Peter said in 3:18, "to bring us back to God". So should be the purpose of the believer in the way he or she handles suffering, returning a blessing and not reviling or reacting in a harsh manner so that others will be drawn to God and not repelled.

"... because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." Since Christ was sinless, this comment refers to believers who suffer unjustly rather than for some sinful behavior.

There are a number of ways to understand the intent of this comment. First, is to note that the common denominator helps make sense of this comment. It is the mandate to, "arm yourselves with the same purpose (or mind)". In adopting the mind, purpose and attitude of Christ towards those who persecute and inflict pain

upon Him and those who are His, those who suffer cannot respond according to the flesh and sin, but according to the Spirit and the will of God as did Christ.

Second, suffering in the flesh removes the desire and temptation to sin. This suffering is actual physical pain. One becomes so focused on the pain and injury that sin is the last thing that comes to mind at that moment.

This also helps us understand that one way "sin" is understood is as a drive of the flesh. The drive of the flesh and the focus of the mind can combine to motivate the actions deemed "sinful" in the scripture. But when the body is in pain, the mind seeks relief for the pain not the furtherance of some sinful act.

2: Because of this understanding, the believer has the power and will to resist the bent of the flesh and mind to engage in sin – defined by Peter as the "lusts of men". Therefore, one's life should be lived according to the will of God, not according to the fleshly lusts of men.

4:3-6

3: For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 4: In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign *you*; 5: but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6: For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to *the will of God*.

3: There are two ways to understand what Peter is saying here. First, and most popular among interpreters, is that his readers once lived in a manner common to the Gentiles (as described in the remainder of the verse) but now they do not do so. This is based on the continuation of the thought from verse 2. The term "lusts of men" corresponds to "desire" (or will) of the Gentiles. "...having pursued..." reveals the former activities of his readers. This could reflect a similar concern found in chapter 1:13, 2:10-11. Some are also persuaded that this reveals that some of the readers are themselves Gentiles who had indulged in these activities, but now do not do so but occasionally fall in this regard.

I am not convinced that this is the intent of the passage, though it certainly could be. It might also be that although Peter's readers have had time to indulge in these sinful acts common to the Gentiles, they have refused to do so and have suffered ridicule (verse 4). "...having pursued..." then, refers specifically to the activities of the Gentiles, not the readers. This might be borne out by verse 5, "they" will give an account.

At this point, I am given pause as I re-read the epistle so far and move on to 4:17-18. There is quite a contrast between the assurances given in 1:3-9 and the rather stark warnings in 4:15-18, hinted at in 4:1-6. What else is going on that Peter feels the need to be rather harsh about the assembly?

Though not specifically mentioned in I Peter, there was apparently an influence from false teachers beginning to invade or having invaded the Christian community. This comes from the forceful content of II Peter where he is quite adamant about false teachers. Chapter 2 is especially poignant. Now there is no question that false teachers had invaded the churches in the first century. Many who listened to these erudite, educated and persuasive men were swept away by their teachings and the church became a hot bed of controversy and contention. It is possible that this epistle reveals an awareness of this influence and its effects in chapter 4.

If there is teaching that permits some sort of debauchery within the body of Christ, this could be the influence of one sect of Gnosticism. Believing that the material universe was essentially evil, one Gnostic group taught that once a person was enlightened and had transcended into the spiritual reality, the evil material body could do what it wished without any repercussions on the individual. So debauchery was acceptable. This might have been one growing influence in some of the churches to whom Peter is writing. His epistle is general and to be circulated and it is also possible that he is addressing in one epistle problems that exist in one or more churches but not others.

Otherwise, it is difficult to ascertain the change of tone. Another reason is that within some of the communities to whom Peter writes there are two groups, one faithfully struggling and the other seem to be "pretenders" indulging themselves in the fleshly lusts of the world. (4:14-19; 5:14) But regardless, Peter recognizes something in the "household of God" that needs cleansing. This is understandable if the first century church is anything like the modern one. In any case, those who are causing this disturbance will be judged.

Finally, Peter may feel an urgency about the spiritual condition of the church and its witness to the community due to the sense and impression the early church had that the return of Christ was near. (Note 4:7)

6: For what purpose has the gospel been preached to those who are dead, and to what is Peter referring? The immediate context is 4:5 where God stands ready to judge the living and the dead. This appears to reprise the theme of 3:18-20 regarding the disobedient in Noah's day to whom Christ went in the spirit and made proclamation. Apparently, the gospel has been preached to those now dead so they will be able to live spiritually, assuming faith is the result of the preaching. Though their lives in the flesh may be subject to judgment, their faith will save them.

This is not to say that there is an additional chance for those who died in unbelief since the death of Christ to be given another chance to believe. Hebrews 9:27 states clearly, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment..." There are many similar statements in scripture.

Some will argue that those who have never heard the gospel will be given some after death opportunity. Other than extrapolating this from this passage, there is really no other place this idea can be gleaned. If this was so, it would seem to make the mandate for evangelism unnecessary.

4:7-11

7: The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer. 8: Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. 9: Be hospitable to one another without complaint. 10: As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11: Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7: II Peter 3:1-11 also reflects this idea. The first century church believed that Christ's return was near at hand. After a few decades, this expectation was changed as we see in II Peter 3.

But due to the expectation, Peter counsels his readers to be or "sound judgment"

which means to be prudent and clear in one's thinking. "Sober" is simply "free from intoxication". Both of these are essential for prayer.

8: "Above all"... is literally, "first of all"- "keep fervent...etc. "Fervent" carries with it the sense of "intention". One's fervent "intention" in their life is to "love one another." This is the "agape" love so often associated with God's sacrificial love for us. This is counting another person as worthy of one's personal sacrifice for their benefit, including a joy in so doing. He stated the same thing in 1:22.

"Love covers a multitude of sins." The idea here is that Love does not count another's sins as noticeable or important. I Corinthians 13:4-8 comes immediately to mind.

4: "Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, 5: does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong *suffered*, 6: does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7: bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8: Love never fails;..."

Love is not offended. Therefore, as Jesus' love covered (and took away) the sins of the world rather than bringing condemnation for them, so should then love of the brethren for each other.

9: "Hospitable" is literally a love (phil-eh-oh) of strangers. Here Peter limits it to one another, although this could include the community. The "compliant" or "grumbling" likely would stem from the thought that since this is commanded by the apostle, one is obligated to do this whether one wants to or not since it requires work, time, trouble and expense. But the thought must include seeing the blessing that comes from such hospitality and the opportunity to share the love and word of God with others. So cheerfulness and excitement ought to be the order of the day when it comes to this kind of sacrifice for others.

10: Again, Peter adds in the concept of serving one another as a characteristic of the Christian way of life. In this case it is with a "gift" received. "Gift" is "charisma".

"The word stems from the root, "caris" and has the meaning of a spiritual gift freely given by the graciousness of God and given directly to a person. Paul uses it once where he wishes to impart some spiritual gift from himself to others. But it is

usually referred to as being from God's gracious hand and imparted to people in the church. These gifts differ from person to person and are personal gifts, irrevocable, which we are to put to use. They are favors bestowed upon the believer by the grace of God. It may be a God given ability or an inspired natural talent consecrated to His use."

"We possess them for the benefit of others in the body of Christ and for our own as well as we are blessed in using them. Paul writes of these gifts in Romans, chapter 12. Luther notes that Paul writes all this, "In the interest of unity; for nothing is likely to cause so much division as when people do not stay within the proper bounds of their calling, but neglect their own ministry and bread in upon others. God does not give every person all gifts, as we learn from I Corinthians 12:4-11, where the Apostle unfolds the meaning of our text to its widest extent. Since it is God who distributes all gifts, but does not bestow all of them on a single person, no one exalt himself as though he had all and others none; for by this (arrogance) the unity of the church is destroyed. The Greeks have an excellent saying: "Let everyone practice the art which he has learned."

"The context teaches us clearly the God desires a complete worship of Himself rooted and grounded in love, a love that expresses itself in acts of service and kindness to our fellowman."³⁶

"...employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Literally and simply, "serve one another" as "beautiful managers" of the "many colored" "grace of God".

11: The "gifts of grace" include "speaking" and "serving". Paul lists these in more detail in Romans 12:6-8. These are personal talents or abilities that god wishes to be used in the assembly for the building up of the body. Some "so called" gifts are not actually personal but energized by the Holy Spirit and are called manifestations of the Spirit. These are found in I Corinthians, chapter 12. (See footnote 36)

Here, in the case of those who have a gift from God for speaking, they are to do so speaking the "utterances of God." This suggests an exposition of Scripture

³⁶ From the author's work entitled, "A Brief Word Study Concerning The 'Gifts' Of The Holy Spirit", found online at: www.bibleclassroom.org under "Bible Studies" – "Topical Studies".

interpreted under the Gospel (New Covenant) in expounding the grace of God in Christ. They had no New Testament in those days, so this was an important service.

If a person had the gift of "service" this meant he or she has a gift of perceiving and then meeting the needs of others and making them comfortable. This also suggests the leadership or authority to do so. The word is often used in the terms of an administrator or one who ministers to another with the skill to do so. It can include emotional, spiritual and mental comfort or ministry as well as physical.

This person is to serve by the "strength" God supplies - that is God's power is the resource for the service, not one's own resources.

The ultimate goal for this speaking and service is so that in all things, "God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

All credit for anything done for the Kingdom of God goes to the King because without Him none of it would be possible and we would not exist as His people.

4:12-16

12: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13: but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14: If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15: Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 16: but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.

12-13A: There are two groups addressed here. The first is the faithful in Christ. The second is those who are living a lie, professing to be believers but living a corrupt life.³⁷ Because of the latter, God will use the "fiery ordeal" to purify the

³⁷ This seems apparent from Peter's closing as well in 5:14 where he says, "Peace be to you all who are in Christ" suggesting that there may be those in the community he address that are not in Christ. Otherwise, why say it this way?

body. But if some suffer for their testimony of Christ or suffer for doing good in His name, it is cause for rejoicing. The term "fiery ordeal" is an analogy, not a literal prophecy but reveals an intensity in suffering. Yet, at the same time, in the history of the church, there were multitudes of believers burned at the stake for their faith in Christ.

Again, "for your testing" means "to bring out the beauty and value of what you are made of for all to see so Christ will be glorified.

13B-16. "...at the 'revelation'" is the word "ἀποκάλυψις" (ah-poc-ah-lups-sis) from which we get the word "apocalyptic". It is used 18 times in the New Testament, ten in reference to the "appearing" of Jesus once again at the end of the age. Peter uses it in this sense here. It is also used in the sense of one receiving a "revelation" from the Lord for the strengthening of the body. The word means to "uncover or reveal that which has been hidden".

Here, as one shares the sufferings of Christ (and they vary in intensity) one rejoices and is blessed for multiple reasons. 1. Because it is for being a believer and servant of Christ, doing good rather than being, "a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler..." (verse 15), 2. Because in so suffering one will "jump for joy" (literally) at His coming rather than be ashamed (verse 16) because they have lived a dishonest and corrupt life.

So Peter intimates that there may be those within the fellowship, in one or more churches, (as this is a circular epistle) that are committing acts that are unacceptable to the Christian community. This has him quite adamant that God will use the "fiery ordeal" for the purification of the body. Some will suffer unjustly because of it and others will find it a judgment on their conduct.

4:17-19

17: For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18: AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? 19: Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

17-18: Well, what is he after here? Remembering 1:3-9,³⁸ this seems almost like a contradiction. The issue for Peter is that there is within the "household of God" those who are involved in ungodliness, or corruption of some sort. The "fiery ordeal" will be that which will cleanse the corruption out of the household of God. Peter is serious about the need for a holy and gracious people of God.

Looking at the details of the verse, first, the word "judgment" is the Greek word "kree-mah" and indicates decisions and directions relating to the guilty. It points to the deliberating process first and the enactment of a decision second. Often it is used of the judge himself. "Kree-noh" is closely related to this word. And, though close to the Greek word "kree-sis" it stops short of this word which indicates the sentence itself, "condemnation" or whatever sentence is handed down.

The term "household of God" means the assembly of the church, the body of Christ.³⁹ This is clear by Peter's use of the word "us". In Peter's mind, there may be the passage in Ezekiel 9:1-11, worth reviewing. God, in a vision given to Ezekiel, desires to bring cleansing to His people. Verse 4 of this passage reads,

"The LORD said to him (*a man clothed in linen*), "Go through the midst of the city, *even* through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." (*Italics mine*)

Those without this mark are to be slain.

The point is that God's people "sigh and moan" over the corruption and abominations in their midst, and are not participants in it. This appears to be Peter's point as well.

However, we needn't draw the conclusion that this judgment means loss of

³⁸ [3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4: to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5: who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6: In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7: so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8: and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9: obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."]

³⁹ I Timothy 3:15

salvation or condemnation for the truly saved. Paul helps us understand this in I Corinthians 11:31-32 where he states, 31: "But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. 32: But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." The word "judged" here is also "kree-noh".

This fits in with the idea found in Hebrews 13 that God uses circumstances to train and strengthen His people for the future. Judgment is not punishment due to a past indiscretion but discipline or training for the future. It also fits in with Romans

8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." This does not mean that times will always be pleasant. These passages are all found within a context of suffering or persecution.

Here, the immediate context is verses 12-16, a "fiery ordeal". Verse 18 and following are comments defining that "ordeal". Verse 17 and 18 are in a parallel construction with 18 emphasizing 17 using a quotation. they are not intended to state different themes.

18: Peter quotes Proverbs 11:31 from the LXX. The Hebrew reads in the NASB translation, "If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!" The NASB is close in the literal sense of its translation, but the intent of the Hebrew, as in most of Proverbs 11, is a parallelism. Its intent is, "If the righteous are rewarded in the earth, the wicked and sinner will be also" - "according to their works" is the implication.

The word "difficulty" in the translation of verse 18 is inadequate in helping us get a full picture of what Peter is trying to say. The Greek is "moh-lis" in the LXX and here in the GNT. But it is an awkward translation in that it doesn't convey the thought of the apostle to us when we read it ourselves and try to understand it.

There are several ways to understand what this could mean. Is the idea that; 1. The "righteous" do not feel the need of salvation and so persuading them is more difficult? Like in Luke 15:1-2, or Matthew 9:13, and 23:28? Or: 2. if believers themselves are constantly on the verge of losing their salvation, what then will be the consequences for non-believers? Or: 3. If under the "fiery ordeal" believers will find perseverance to the end difficult, what then of non-believers? Or: 4. Is the

emphasis on the outcome of the "righteous" (believers) or on the "unrighteous" (unbelievers)?

J. Schneider⁴⁰ sees it this way. "In the Hebrew the saying applies itself to recompense in this life, but the author uses it of recompense in the last judgment. The reference of the section in which verse 18 stands is to the suffering of Christians, which are regarded as the fiery glow and beginning of judgment. They make great demands on Christians and above all represent a great temptation. Only with great difficulty will Christians pass through this hard time and stand in the divine judgment. The author wants to spur his readers on to faithfulness and to show them the seriousness of their responsibility."

But since 18 is a parallel to 17, the emphasis is on those who are in unbelief or disobedience. The difficulty is in enduring the "fiery ordeal" with obedience, faith and grace until one stands before God. If believers find this to be an extreme effort, what will be the outcome for unbelievers? I believe this is the emphasis Peter wishes to make.

19: This verse seems to buttress our conclusion in understanding Peter's point. "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God..."

Suffering "according to the will of God" does not mean that it is God's will that we suffer, but how we handle the suffering and what our response is to it in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation" as Paul puts it in his epistle to the church at Philippi,

"...so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16: holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain." Philippians 2:15-16

Paul has similar concerns and views regarding the witness of the church to the world and how important it is.

"Shall entrust their souls..." The only recourse when one is suffering or being persecuted, tortured or killed is to trust their "souls" (their life) to God. "God is

⁴⁰ The "Theological Dictionary of The New Testament", Volume 4, pages 735-736, Eerdmans Publishing, 1967.

faithful" is Peter's emphasis, and he will honor His children when they do right in the midst of their pain. "Doing right" means the way one lives and acts in the community whether suffering or not.

CHAPTER FIVE Text, Exegesis and Explanation

5:1-4

1: Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2: shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to *the will of God*; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3: nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4: And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1-4: "therefore" ...because of the struggles, persecution and challenges many in the body face, it is up to those who have experience in so many circumstances - and have been able to persevere through them with faith - to bring support, encouragement, admonitions or comfort to those who are in the throes of difficult times. Peter "exhorts" the elders to do so and addresses them directly. "Exhort" is the Greek, "παράκαλέω" (para-kah-leh-oh) having a variety of applications. It basically means to "call alongside". Depending on the context, the word is translated variously as: to call to or for, to admonish, exhort, encourage, appeal, beg, beseech, comfort, conciliate, encourage, entreat, implore, plead, or urge.

This word is used of the Holy Spirit Himself as in John 14:16 and 26 where it is translated "helper". The intent of the word is for one person to come alongside another to render aid, in the sense of the translations offered above depending on the circumstances and need.

"Elder" is the Greek, "πρεσβύτερος" (pres-bu-ter-ohs) from which we have the transliteration "presbytery". Literally, it means an older man, aged or one with white hair. In Leviticus 19:32 we read, "You shall rise up before the grayheaded

and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD." Proverbs 16:31 puts a condition on this, "A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness." But it is to be noted that the "elders" being referred to in the apostolic writings are not just aged men but those who hold an approved position of leadership in the church [called an "overseer" ("episcopos")] and have met certain qualifications. These qualifications are found in I Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:4-11.

I Timothy 3:1-7,

1: "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. 2: An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,⁴¹ temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3: not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. 4: *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5: (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), 6: *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7: And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Titus 1:4-11

4: "To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. 5: For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6: *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7: For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8: but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-

⁴¹ "...the husband of one wife..." Means "only married once". The exception is, if a previous spouse died and he remarried. A divorced and remarried man is not to be considered due to the fact that his divorce means he was failing in his role as a husband and may also indicate a leaning toward lust of unfaithfulness. This is a consideration the church must take seriously prior to enrolling such a man in the place of "overseer". to him, "divorce" may be seen as an "okay" out when counseling others.

controlled, 9: holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. 10: For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11: who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain."

Peter notes himself as a "witness of the sufferings of Christ." He was there throughout the ordeal. To share suffering for the name of Jesus would be the greatest honor to Peter. Like Paul, he carried a lifetime of regret over his denial of the Lord and at abandoning Him in His darkest hour.

Still, he was a "partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed." This could likely refer to several events witnessed by Peter in his sojourn with Christ, not the least of which would be the resurrection of Christ from the dead. But His transfiguration, walking on the water, raising the dead and the miracles of healing, other miracles, as well as Jesus' ascension would have made up some of the glory Peter speaks of.

2-3: The metaphor Peter uses for these elder/overseers is that of a shepherd tending his flock of sheep. There are special attributes of these shepherds. First, exercise "oversight". "Oversight" is "ἐπισκοπέω" (epis-koh-pay-oh) from which we get our term "Episcopal". It comes from two words, epi and skopos. "epi" means "over" and "skopos" means to "carefully look over". We get our term "skeptical" from the Greek. There is a hill called Mt. Skopus is across from Jerusalem to the East upon which is the Garden of Gethsemane. On its summit one can see the entirety of the holy city. The shepherd is to watch over the flock with extreme care. Second, this is to be done freely, willingly and not under compulsion. "Compulsion" is "ἀναγκαστῶς" (an-agh-kas-tohs). From its root we get our term "agony". This is the same root used in I Corinthians 9:7, "Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Third, oversight is to be done "according to God" (the "will of" is supplied, but adequate.) This means in the way Christ served us in all He said and did. Fourth, this is not to be done for monetary gain. Fifth, eagerness is the reason to help others and guide them. There is to be no self serving attitude in this office. Sixth, "Lording over" those under one's care is prohibited. These people are the heritage of the Lord placed in the overseers care.

The overseer is to serve them in the manner of Christ, not seek to be served.⁴² A friend was telling me of a man at his place of business who was promoted to general manager and felt it necessary to make sure everyone knew he was now the big shot general manager. Uh, uh in the Lord's work. Rather, Seventh, these leaders are to be examples to the flock so that the sheep will emulate them as you they Christ's leadership, that of serving others at one's own expense rather than seeking to be served.

4: The term "Chief Shepherd" refers to Christ and implies that the overseers in the church are "under-shepherds" to Christ so to speak. "Appears" is "phan-eh-rah-oh" and is another word that references Christ's return. At that time those who have been good shepherds will receive (wear on their heads) an unfading (perpetual) crown (wreath) of glory. This is a metaphor of course, imagery representing Christ's approval.

5:5-7

5: You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.** 6: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7: casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

5: As the shepherd/overseer/elders are subject to Christ, so younger men ought to be subject to their elders. From verse 3 this obviously means not serving them but receiving service from them. It is to the benefit of the younger men that they learn how to conduct themselves. One day they will be the elders and will need to know how to be good shepherds themselves.

All, however, whether shepherds or sheep (in the analogy) need to be clothed with humility. "Humility" is treating others as more important than oneself. It includes responses to others filled with gentleness, kindness, patience and compassion. Paul uses this word in Colossians 3:12-13 where he writes,

⁴² Matthew 20:25-28, 25: "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. 26: It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, at 27: and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28: just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.'"

"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

Peter quotes Proverbs 3:34 (from the LXX) to buttress his point. The Hebrew puts it this way, "Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted." This version lends itself to the following admonition.

6-7: Obviously, to "humble oneself under the mighty hand of God" is to place God in a position as more important than oneself, but at the same time it is God who promises, provides and protects all those who are His.

The term "mighty hand" is only found here in the New Testament. It is an anthropomorphism meaning that Peter uses human terms to convey a spiritual reality. God is not flesh and blood and has no "hands" in the sense we think of. But the imagery conveys the intent. This phrase and such similar ones are frequently found in the Old Testament.⁴³

Coming under God's mighty hand is to come under love and infinite power. In living a life of humility and submission, one will find him/herself exalted "at the proper time". "Exalted" is to lift or elevate from a humble state to a place of honor. The "proper time" can be two fold. First, in this age one might be elevated to the role of shepherd or some other role of leadership or service. Or, perhaps, in the context of verse 7 (see the comment there), one who is suffering under the heel of persecution may well be released and restored to a place of freedom and dignity. Second, in the age to come, it may be fitting that this would occur in the fulfillment of the kingdom. Or both. It also could mean a simple spiritual "lifting up" or encouragement as well.

7: In any case, this is much like the theme of 4:19 ("Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right"), this verse urges those who are "anxious" to cast all their troubles upon Him. I remember an illustration given by one pastor that encouraged people to visualize all their troubles and cares, placing them in a bag, and bringing them to God's throne and leaving them there at God's feet. God does care for His

⁴³ Exodus 3:20, 6:6, 7:5, 9:15; Deuteronomy 3:24; Job 30:21; Ezekiel; 20:33 etc.

sheep and, in due time, (the proper time) all who humble themselves before God will be lifted up.

Psalm 27:1-6 may have been in Peter's mind here.

1: A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread? 2: When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. 3: Though a host encamp against me, My heart will not fear; Though war arise against me, In spite of this I shall be confident. 4: One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple. 5: For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. 6: And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

5:8-9

8: Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9: But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

8: "Sober spirit" – "be on the alert" are two ways of saying the same thing. This is called a parallelism. "Sober" is not to be under the influence of intoxicants. It implies a seriousness coupled with an undistracted watchfulness. On the contrary, one must be "alert". "Alert" is "gregoreo" and means "awake" and "watchful."

The next phrase often brings to the surface all sorts of ideas that are not actually true and fall into the very thing that this verse is warning against. So let's look at the verse carefully. "Adversary" is "ἀντιδικος" (an-ti-dee-kohs) meaning "against what is right or just." It also includes being against the condemnation of those who are attacked for emphasizing that which is just or good. The personification of this attitude is the devil, (diabolos - meaning "to cast against"). Bottom line, the devil is interested in good and righteousness appearing bad in the eyes of man and evil appearing good in the eyes of man. In this way his nature and purpose is cloaked and God's purposes thwarted as he sees it.

In the context, the issue is suffering (verse 8 and also the larger context). In what way would the devil roar and seek to devour someone in this context? Well, what is heard most often is that suffering and evil are coming from God and he is the source of evil, pain, suffering and tragedy. One too often hears the question, "Why is God doing this to me?" "Or, "Why didn't God prevent this from happening?" Or, "How come God doesn't answer my prayer and deliver me?"

Rather than point out that the question is based on a false premise, the "authorities" answer something like, "Well God is doing this (or has done this, or allowed this) for a reason", or "for a higher purpose", or, "for your good, blah, blah, blah", all answers that assume that God caused the tragedy in the first place. Both the questions and the answers play right into the hands of the devil because they are totally based on a false premise, a lie which states that God is the cause of it all. This lie is the work of the father of lies and preached and taught by ignorant and deceitful people who purport to be teachers and preachers of the truth and of light. Note the following verses,

II Corinthians 11:3-4, 3: "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ. 4: For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully." (Paul is sarcastic here)

II Corinthians 11:13-15, 13: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14: No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15: Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds."

II Thessalonians 2:9-12, 9: "...*that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10: and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11: For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is

false, 12: in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

John 8:44, "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

II Corinthians 2:10-11, 10: "But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11: so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes."

9: "Resist him, firm in your faith..." "Resist" is "ἀνθίστημι" (ahn-this-tey-mee) from which we get our word "antihistamine" and simply means to "stand against", and in this case it is the lie, and the liar. To do so one must be firm in the truth and in their faith in it. "Firm in your faith...." In what? It has to be in the faithfulness and care of God as stated in 4:19 and 5:7 rather than be dissuaded about God' care through the lying deception of teachers who would put doubt in the hearts of the faithful about how much God loves and cares for them as only the chief shepherd would. It has to be in the truth of the simplicity of devotion to Christ, the Good shepherd.

By the way, I have heard some preachers teach that to bond with a straying sheep, a good shepherd will deliberately break the leg of that sheep and then carry the sheep on his back until the leg heals so that the sheep will not stray again but bond to the shepherd. This is a falsehood. The source comes from a report by Dr. Bob Munger who reported that a nomadic shepherd in the middle-east told him he did this. But some preachers say that God works this way. However, this is neither Biblical nor the way shepherds actually work. Even in the middle-east, dogs are used to keep the sheep together. In the scriptures, the good shepherd leaves his flock to find the lost sheep and when finding it greatly rejoices. He doesn't break the sheep's legs.⁴⁴ Quite the contrary. In John 10:11 Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. And in 10:15 He said, "...even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My

⁴⁴ See: Matthew 18:12-14.

life for the sheep." And in 27, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

The sheep follow the shepherd because they know of the shepherd's care for them and that he will protect them from the predators even if it means his life. One has firm faith in the Lord's goodness and is not persuaded that God is the source of pain, suffering and evil. In verse 12 Peter says that he speaks the "true grace of God" and that they are to stand firm in it. So the "standing firm" is in God because of His grace, goodness, faithfulness and so on which stands in contrast to the despot God He is often portrayed by ignorant teachers.

Literally, "...knowing that your brethren in the world are undergoing the same suffering you are." So to encourage his readers, Peter tells them they are not alone. Others in the world who are faithful to God are suffering for their faith. It is not God who is the source of suffering. They should be encouraged that though others of their brothers suffer also, they remain steadfast in their devotion to the Lord. The Lord is not trying to produce some sort of "Stockholm Syndrome" among His followers so as to manipulate assurance of their loyalty.

5:10-11

10: After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. 11: To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.

10: The fulfillment of the promise of this verse depends on their entrusting themselves to a God who is faithful and cares deeply for them. Suffering is common to the body of Christ in circumstances where their faith in Him is strongly opposed by either the community or the governing authority. The believer's only recourse is not to curse God, but to cast himself upon God for whatever the future holds in this life. If it is death, then the verse holds true. If it is life here, the verse holds true. The attitude of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is worthy of emulation. Here is the account from Daniel 3.

14: "Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, 'Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? 15: Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of

music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, *very well*. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?' 16: Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17: 'If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18: 'But *even* if *He does* not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.' 19: Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with wrath, and his facial expression was altered toward Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. He answered by giving orders to heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20: He commanded certain valiant warriors who *were* in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in order to cast *them* into the furnace of blazing fire. 21: Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their *other* clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire."

They were delivered unharmed. But many have suffered such torments to death remaining faithful to God.⁴⁵

11: This doxology is to underscore that in all things, God has dominion over the outcome. The word "Amen" is from the Hebrew and means a confident rest of faith in God in the prayer or statement.

5:12-14

12: Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard *him*), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! 13: She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and *so does* my son, Mark. 14: Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be to you all who are in Christ.

12: Silvanus is "Silas" who accompanied Paul on his second missionary journey . and whose name is listed as a sender of I and II Thessalonians.⁴⁶ Peter was likely

⁴⁵ Polycarp comes to mind. Though tied to a stake with ample wood to burn him there, he was not killed by fire, but had to be executed with a sword. He refused to recant his faith in Jesus. See: "The Ante-Nicene Fathers, volume I, "The Martyrdom of Polycarp" by Eusebius.

⁴⁶ Acts 15.

barely literate and would not have been able to produce the quality of Greek in the two epistles.⁴⁷ So Peter used Silas (Silvanus) as an amanuensis

His epistle is brief, he claims, but the emphasis is on the grace of God in which they are to stand firm.

13: See the introduction, pages 5 and 6 for comments about "Babylon". "...my son Mark..." refers to John Mark, the author of the Gospel of Mark. Adam Clarke has a nice summary about "Mark",

"And ...Marcus my son" - This is supposed to be the same person who is mentioned (Acts 12:12), and who is known by the name of John Mark; he was sister's son to Barnabas, (Colossians 4:10), his mother's name was Mary, and he is the same who wrote the gospel that goes under his name. He is called here Peter's son, i.e. according to the faith, Peter having been probably the means of his conversion. This is very likely, as Peter seems to have been intimate at his mother's house. See the account in Acts 12:6-17."⁴⁸

John Mark also left the first missionary journey when Paul decided to continue into Asia. He is mentioned many times in the New Testament, and became close to Peter. He was a regular follower of Jesus, called a disciple, but not one of the twelve.

14: "Greet" includes the idea of "embracing", "saluting", "welcoming" and so on. The "kiss of love" is indeed a kiss, but not in the fleshly sense, as the word "love" is "agape" and recognizes one who is in the body of Christ and thus especially treasured and valued. It represents an, "I am here to do anything for you as Jesus would do." "I love you in the Lord." This is not to be motivated by fleshly lusts.

"Peace be to you all who are in Christ" suggests that Peter recognizes that there are those in the assembly that may not be in Christ. For those that are, what Peter has written is designed to bring grace (verse 12) and peace to those in Christ, not stress and fear.

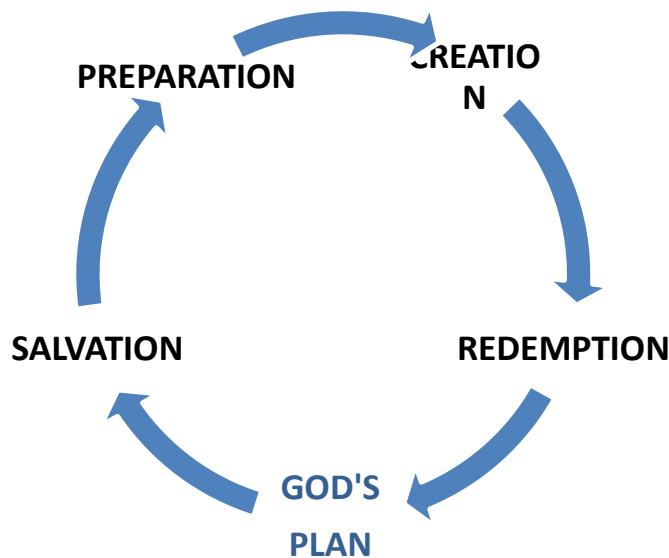
⁴⁷ Acts 4:13 note Peter and John's lack of education. "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." "Uneducated" is "illiterate", untrained in reading, spelling and writing. See also: The introduction, page four, paragraph one.

⁴⁸ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, 1810-1826, found on: www.e-Sword.net

APPENDIX

I. God's plan at work

First, in everything God does or does not do, He has an Irrefutable, unstoppable, inexorable, invincible intent and objective. This is revealed in the first chapters of Genesis and threads its way through the book until the end of Revelation. To summarize, I have supplied a diagram below suggesting four key themes of God's intent and objective. They are preparation, creation, redemption and salvation.



Though there is no order as they are inextricable from each other and explain God's purpose in it all, recognizing that nothing in heaven or on earth can keep it from being accomplished. However, redemption of mankind is the primary focus of His plan, and salvation by faith the culmination of His purpose.

The elements of the entire plan was completed before creation was even accomplished. Here are some passages to that fact:

Matthew 25:34, "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You

loved Me before the foundation of the world."

Ephesians 1:3-4, 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4: just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him..."

Hebrews 4:3, "For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, 'AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,' although His works were finished from the foundation of the world."

Hebrews 9:26, "Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

I Peter 1:20-21, 20: "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21: who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

Revelation 13:8, "All who dwell on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain."

Revelation 17:8, "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come."

There are so many more passages that point to God's plan in these four elements.

I. Redemption.

This is one central theme coursing through scripture and the focus of God's plan. In Genesis three, God promises redemption. In the New Testament, the fulfillment of this promise is still sought, ""But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened." (Luke 24:21)

Peter reflects the fulfillment of this ancient hope when he says, "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ." I Peter 1:17-19

The theme of redemption flows all through the entire Scripture. In the New Testament, redemption is simply God purchasing back people from their sin and their ownership by Satan. This was done at the cross through Jesus' holy sacrifice.

The scriptures seem to present two aspects of redemption. The first is general in that all mankind was redeemed from the ownership of Satan. The second is that those redeemed who chose to place their faith in God through Christ inherit eternal salvation and are termed "The Redeemed" in this special sense.

In the first sense we have verses such as,

"But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained **eternal redemption**. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the **redemption** of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:11-15

"But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed

over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Romans 3:21-26

"And his (*John's*) father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 'Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant--As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—'" Luke 1:67-70 (*Italics mine*)

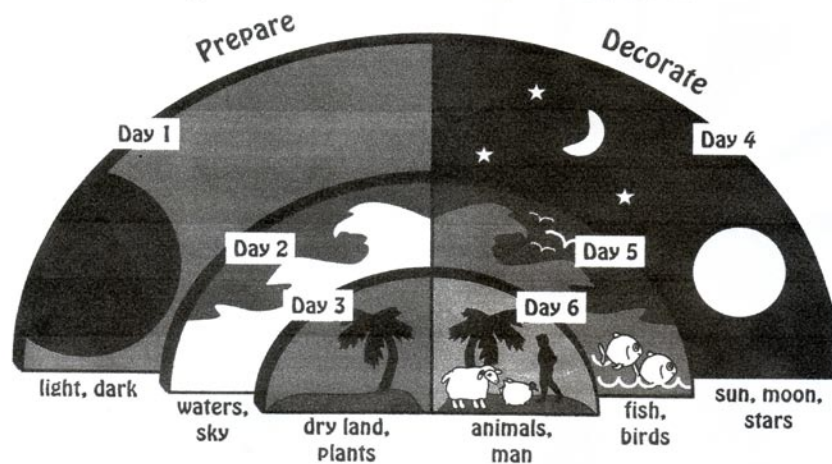
Those wishing to return to Him through faith are called, "The Redeemed". Faith, however, is the key to salvation. And salvation, though offered to all, is only obtainable by faith.

Redemption, however, was already planned, prepared and completed before creation. Let's view these together. Remember, the Lamb of God was crucified before the foundation of the world and Jesus existed, not just prior to Abraham, but prior to the creation of the universe as John states, He, as the Word of God was the creator. Everything God did in creation was in preparation of man's appearance upon the earth, and for his redemption, and then for his salvation upon the condition of faith.

II. Preparation.

The first six days in the creation account are all preparation for the arrival of man and his life on this planet. The picture below is from a 4th grade teacher's book, but illustrates the preparation/fulfillment theme.

The Days of Creation



The Lord is seen as preparing the way for mankind before mankind even gets there. For example, The Lord told Moses, "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared." Exodus 23:20

The Psalmist acknowledges that God has prepared a place for mankind, "You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth." Psalm 65:9

And in Psalm 74:16-17, "Yours is the day, Yours also is the night; You have prepared the light and the sun. You have established all the boundaries of the earth; You have made summer and winter."

And of course, the beloved, "... "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows." Psalm 23:5

Speaking of John the Baptist Jesus said, "This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'" Matthew 11:10

Jesus told His disciples, "He said to them, 'My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.'" Matthew 20:23.

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

Matthew 25:34

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also."

John 14:1-3

Similarly, Hebrews 11:16 says, "But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

In Revelation 21:2, John says, "And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

Preparation is a major theme in Scripture. God is always ahead of man in preparing the way before man arrives, whether it be for Israel in the wilderness, or all through the Old Testament, or in Jesus' declaration to His disciples that He goes to prepare a place for them so that where He is they may be also.

III. Creation.

From before the foundation of the earth, God had planned the creation and all the elements that accompany it including the preparation for, redemption of, and salvation for all who would come to Him in repentance and faith. John tells us,

John 1:1-3, 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2: He was in the beginning with God. 3: All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 10: He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."

Paul notes as well,

Colossians 1:16-17, 16: For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17: He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

Then in a spectacular revelation Paul writes, "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:9-12

Creation begins and ends the scriptures. We have Genesis 1 and 2, but also Revelation 21:1 we read, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea."

Peter agrees with this, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." II Peter 3:13
He quotes the promise of Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind."

Even those who are born again in Christ He says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

IV. Salvation.

Do we need to note that this is the end purpose for which God has done what He has done? From Genesis through Revelation God seeks to save those who are lost. He does so at such a great cost to Himself.

The Lord made His ability to do this clear. In Isaiah 46:9-11 He says,
9: "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, 10: Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; 11: Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned *it, surely* I will do it."

In This passage God speaks about His "purpose" and His "plans". In the New Testament the theme continues.

There are two principle Greek words translated "purpose" in the New Testament.

The first is βουλή. This word occurs in the following verses beyond Luke 7:30: Acts 4:28, 13:36, 20:28; II Corinthians 1:17; and Hebrews 6:17 (-20). This last passage gives us a poignant portrait of the word as it reads, 17: “In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18: so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19: This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20: where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

The other Greek word is πρόθεσις (“pro-thay-sis”) meaning: “To set forth” or “lay before”. The idea of a predetermined plan is in mind and it bears the essence of a “divine” or “sacred” plan or purpose. The first carries with it the sense of a “goal” while the second the sense of a “plan”. Verses using “πρόθεσις” are: Acts 27:13; Romans 8:28, 9:11; Ephesians 1:11, 3:11; Philippians 2:2; II Timothy 1:9 and 3:10.

An example of the idea of a predetermined plan is found in Ephesians 3:11, “*This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,...*”

Again, II Timothy 1:9 reflects this idea, “...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,...

Other Greek words translated “purpose” are from different sources that do not reflect our theme. However, Acts 1:16 does not use the word purpose but suggests the idea of a predetermined plan and the word “foretold” (προειπον) (“pro-ei-pon” – meaning “to say beforehand”) would be tied to the concept of “planned ahead”. Acts 1:16, “Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.” (Psalm 41:9; Ps 69:25, 109:8.)

These four themes, Preparation, Creation, Redemption, and Salvation are central themes to God’s purpose in creating the universe in the first place. His motive for doing so is simply love.

I. "Respecting" one's husband*

Honor

Respect

In Greek- timae, which means “worth” or “value.”	In Greek – phobos (phobia), which means “fear”
Focusing on the value God put in the person	Focusing on a person’s position or on the power
Attaches worth to person as an individual	Acknowledges a person’s position
Shows inside worth	Shows outside worth
Teaches an appreciation of that person	Teaches manners and proper behavior in the presence of others
Builds the hidden bonds that provide strength and lasting unity	Technique to make a family look good on the outside

Obeying because of friendship	Obeying because of the fear (respect) of the position
Gives grace in doing what's right	Concerned with protecting a reputation
Changes heart	Changes behavior
Helps think correctly	Helps act correctly
Produces stronger relationships	Leads to outer conformity, false intimacy and distant relationships

Romans 12:10

Ephesians 5:33

Ephesians 5:21

Romans 13:7

* Chart courtesy of Svetlana Yarrow

Examples;

1. Military. "Fear" ("respect") is for the office or position a superior officer holds and is carried out even though a subordinate may think the officer is not worthy of "honor".

If he (or she) is deemed worthy, both "respect" and "honor" is given. "Honor" reflects the personal attributes, "respect" the position.

2. Husband and wife. In the husband's case, the wife is to act "respectfully" (I Peter 3:2) but does not need to "honor" his disobedient manner.

"Honor" is a recognition of a person's intrinsic godly qualities and goodness and recognizes and attaches worth to the person.

In Ephesians 5:33, the husband is to "love" his wife and she is to "respect" him. This assumes his genuine faith in Christ. She may also "honor" him if he is such a person, but in the transitional model, (chain of command to unity) she is to respect his role as he obeys God. If he does not, she must live her life in quiet, chaste and respectful behavior and allow God to work on him if there is any chance that he will become obedient to God.

3. Authority. A believer is to "respect" (fear) authority of any sort. The idea of "respect" (or "fear") is to have a proper and appropriate response to anyone under whose authority one finds oneself.

III. A Wives "Submission" to Her Husband

A summary of the following teaching regarding this subject in answer to an inquiry.

Dear _____

I would say that in the world, leadership based on the chain of command (also the Old Covenant model - between Genesis 3:16 and the New Covenant that is) - including sacrificial service "head" to "foot" (as it were) is almost non-existent. You might want to read that sentence again. That is, the marriage model until the New covenant was that based on Genesis 3:16. This will be discussed in the document following.

If this model, including Jesus' illustration and teaching on what it means to be the "head" (servant of all, not served by all) exists at all, the best picture of this model in action might be the "business to customer relationship." But within the business itself (employer to employee) even this model is not often evident (though they require it of their employees when they deal with customers) and is often distorted if it is. The reason for this is the motive for money. So we often have inconsistency and hypocrisy in business. Yet there are businesses who adopt the model throughout their organizations, but they are rare.

But, in the world, the New Covenant model - taking the Old and making it a means to oneness and harmony through the means Christ describes and models for us - is non-existent as far as I can tell. This would mean that owners bring their

employees to equal status with themselves in every way. Oneness. I don't think it exists anywhere. Yet, in the Lord, a movement from chain of command to oneness as intended by god in Genesis one and two, is desired.

However, in the Christian marriage and home, too often the world's distortions are learned and applied - a cultural problem no question.

But the Christian marriage and home should demonstrate a submission to Christ as the head of the home who then merges the husband and wife into one with each other and with Him as was intended by God in the first place. The role of both is to adopt Christ's model and attitude toward each other so this process is not hindered.

Then we come full circle to Genesis 1 and 2 again, except for the actual creation of a new heavens and a new earth in the future and completion of the process of God's work in our lives. Yet Jesus told the dying thief that he would be with Him in Paradise (Eden). So, fulfillment and surprises await.

Bob

Now to the document explaining all this.

There are many passages dealing with the marriage relationship and they can be confusing, even seemingly in conflict. For example, Paul writes, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ." (I Corinthians 11:3) We see here a chain of command as the word "head" in this context means "authority" or "chief" as we see in Colossians 1:18, 2:10 and in Ephesians 1:22 and 4:15.

Also in Ephesians 5:22-23 Paul writes, 22: "Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23: For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body."

Peter also writes, "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands..." (I Peter 3:1a)

It is clear what this doesn't mean. In I Peter 3:7 we read,

"You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

This eliminates any definition of "submission" as that of being a "doormat", "subservient", holding some lesser position, rank or importance, and the like. So then what does it mean?

In I Peter 5:5 we have this similar statement, " You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders;..." Why? For whose benefit??? The younger, of course.

The word in the Greek in both cases is "ὑποτάσσω" (hupo-stas-oh). It comes from the noun, "hupostasis". We get our word "stasis" from the latter part of the word. "Stasis" means a state of rest. But there is a great deal more to this word than an English translation would suggest. Essentially it means to set an orderly arrangement in support of a structure, either material or human, such as an authority.

In the early use of the word it conveyed the idea of support. For example, in Greek architecture, the word was used to designate the plans from which a structure was built. Use of the word evolved over several centuries. As the word was applied to philosophical, spiritual and relational contexts it took on the idea of that upon which something else stood, a foundation, a reality behind an appearance, an underlying reality behind something else.

The Jews used it before the time of Christ as representing the plan of God in all things relating to man and history. The intent of the word in every case was relational either to a purpose or a goal. In other words, it could not stand alone without a counterpart. It was one element in the completion of something.

This idea fits well with the plan of God for man and woman in creation. Without both, there would be no people for God's plan of redemption to effect. In the New Testament, the intent of the word was to indicate the role of the wife, but not by herself. In concert with her husband, God's work in and through them could only occur. Each has a proper role to play in achieving the goal. The wife, then, is seen as God's special provision so that His plan can be achieved. Thus she is to be treated as such.

So in the New Testament, the root meaning came to be "that which is orderly arranged beforehand or under". It is used often in the context of a plan or purpose upon which a purpose to be achieved. In Hebrews 11:1 we read for example, "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The word "assurance" is "hupo-stas-oh" and means "foundation" or "basis".

So in the clear intent of the word, to be "submissive" or "subject" to one's husband is to be the corresponding partner that provides him with the means to fulfill God's purposes in your marriage and family. But this doesn't raise the woman's importance above her husband any more than the husband's importance is raised above the woman's. But there are differing roles that combine to accomplish God's purposes in the design. Paul said in I Corinthians 11:11-12, "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man *has his birth* through the woman; and all things originate from God."

So then, how is it that she is able to fulfill this role? Where does she get the strength, insight and means to accomplish this? Well, believe it or not, that is the role of the husband. Again, in I Peter 5:5-7, Peter makes a similar statement,

5: "You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.** 6: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7: casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

Why would the younger men find it beneficial to place themselves under the elders? For whose benefit? Then, what is to be the attitude of both roles? In light of this, it is no surprise that his role is also different than one would expect.

The incorrect assumptions of many about the role and place of the husband and wife often stem from a misunderstanding of Paul's teachings such as found in passages like I Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

Paul wrote this to the church at Corinth to straighten out the mess and confusion

over the place and role of women in that church. Paul had to deal with the incredible problems and conflicts in the Church of Corinth (and Ephesus in writing to Timothy) including the problem and confusion of gentile women trying to bring their formerly pagan roles and practices into the church. So he inserted the headship model.

Then after discussing some of the controversy there, he writes, "However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman." His comment prior to verse 3 was, "Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you." The "traditions" were the means of keeping peace in the relationship, but not in achieving the purpose for marriage as God had designed it in the first place. These "traditions" came into being because the Old Testament has little to say about the marriage relationship and how it is supposed to function.

So there is no "superiority" in this headship model. In fact the headship model is not an authoritarian model but a service model. This is different than most understand it today.

Jesus made this clear, as does Paul. There is no glorification of the headship role and not some subservience to some higher authority as is the common understanding of these terms. Quite the contrary. The spiritual (non-worldly) understanding that the head is to love and serve those in his or her realm of God ordained responsibility - recognizing their equal status before God and not holding some dominance and control over them.

This is the difference between authoritarian and authoritative. Authoritarian is where one individual is subordinated or subjugated to another. Authoritative is exercising a positive, duly sanctioned power toward another for their benefit. It includes the idea that one has knowledge and wisdom and knows what he or she is doing.

Here is what Jesus taught in Matthew 20:25-28,

"But Jesus called them (*His disciples*) to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your

slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Italics mine)

Then in John 13:12-17 Jesus said to His disciples as He washed their feet,

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

The reason Paul wrote about the relationship between a husband and a wife using a chain of authority structure in the way he did is because he understood what headship means in God's mind. So he wrote to all of us to grasp this when he said,

Philippians 2:5-8, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

So Paul wrote,

"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies." The husband acts in Christ's stead to help prepare her for their mutual purpose as God has directed. In this way, they become the "one" that God intended in the first place. We'll come back to that. But bottom line, the wife's "submission" is simply allowing herself to be served so she can better fulfill God's purpose for the marriage.

The trick in being a husband and "head" of the wife is realizing that what this means is that he is to serve, not be served. Unlike the world, (as Jesus pointed out) those with the role of leadership are to be servants, whether male or female. In the

husband's case, if he was to be like Christ, he would immediately abdicate his so called "throne", empty himself, and become the servant of his wife and family to the point of death.

As Jesus said, "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:43-45

But these relational structures become a means to the end of oneness and unity as is so often mentioned in the Bible. Here's what I mean.

The very first thing mentioned about people in the very first chapter of the Bible is marriage. The very last chapter in the Bible also references marriage. The rest of the contents of the Bible include marriage as a portrait of the relationship of God with His beloved people. And in these the move from division or independence to oneness is clear. Here are some texts noting "marriage" at the beginning and end of scripture:

The Beginning of the Bible:

Genesis 1:26-28, "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Though the word "marriage" is not specified denoting the relationship between the man and the woman, we must conclude this was the idea from the command to be "fruitful and multiply". The same holds true of the account in Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:18-25, "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.' Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought *them* to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall

upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man."

"The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

In order to fulfill the plan and purpose of God, the man was found inadequate in himself. So woman was created as well to make the incomplete, complete. The idea here is oneness, harmony, unity, in mind, spirit and body. Together they make possible all God has in mind for them to be and to do. They have nothing to cover up so they are neither embarrassed nor afraid. There is no fear because they are in fellowship with their creator, who loves and cherishes them. He grants them dominion and freedom to replenish the earth.

So marriage becomes and is to be a teaming up of a man and a woman to join God in His continuing creation process, bringing more people into the world, people being the purpose for which everything else was created to support. In Genesis 5:2 both a plurality and a unity are expressed when it says, "He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man ("Adam") in the day when they were created." In other words, as one, mankind defined.

The End of the Bible:

Revelation 22:17, "The Spirit and the bride say, 'come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

The essence of faith, which we will discuss later on, and the essence of the kingdom of God, involves the bonding of a people with God. The scripture also describes this spiritual relationship as a family, a household, a building in the Spirit, a citizenship and a priest-hood. The bonding cement is love, the strength of it is the Spirit, and the future of it is outside of this realm, eternity.

So marriage actually reveals the nature, purpose and plan of God. At least it is supposed to. It is an earthly picture or shadow of a multitude of spiritual and eternal realities. So we, as Christians, should view marriage as having more importance and sanctity than does the world. We are partners with God toward His divine purpose. Thus we work at making it conform to the holy ideal God has set

before us. At least we hope to start out that way. But we find ourselves stumbling along.

The very purpose of this document is to aid us flawed individuals to achieve a higher level of marital bliss as we strive toward the mutual goal God has set before us. That goal is to develop a unity, harmony, and oneness in witnessing to the world the glory of God and bringing many into His kingdom.

Remember, this oneness expresses the very nature of God Himself who said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." The declaration of Scripture is that God is One, not two.

In Christ, under the New Covenant, this oneness supersedes the common, and Jewish understanding, that the husband has some supremacy over the wife. To be sure, there are differing roles, but no difference in the level of importance of each party. For example in Genesis, before the "fall"⁴⁹ you will not see any sense of difference in importance between the man and his wife, only unified oneness. After the "fall", you see the directive given by God that the man will rule over his wife. However, in Christ, we are redeemed from the "fall", and should seek to restore the unity of the relationship in marriage as it was intended to be.

Even Jesus referred to "the beginning" when man and woman were created in a discussion about divorce under certain circumstances permitted by Moses due to the hardness of a person's heart and noted that, "from the beginning it has not been this way."⁵⁰

But the consistent theme in the scriptures is a restoration to unity of all things in Christ. Here are some passages that indicate God's goal in these matters.

Genesis 2:24, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become **one flesh**."

Matthew 19:5-6, 5: "... and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE

⁴⁹ The term "fall of man" does not occur in Scripture, but is a theological term to describe an assumed condition. In actuality, the Genesis account describes an exaltation, not a fall.

⁵⁰ Matthew 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-12;

TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? 6: So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

Mark 10:8, "AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh."

I Corinthians 6:16, "Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

Ephesians 5:31, "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

Romans 12:4-5, 4: "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

I Corinthians 12:12-13, 12: "For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:14-15, 14: "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15: by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,

John 17:11, "I am no longer in the world; and *yet* they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:20-23, 20: "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who

believe in Me through their word; 21: that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22: The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23: I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."

We can see also that in Christ under the New Covenant the mandate God gave to Adam and Eve has been superseded. Notice that before the disobedience that there was no superiority between the man and woman, and that they were in Paradise. But the mandate, after their disobedience was, "To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.'" (Genesis 3:16) They were then excluded from Paradise.

The word "to rule" here is not the same as the word God used when He gave mankind dominion over the earth in Genesis 1. That word is:

רדה

"*raw-daw*", meaning: to *tread* down, that is, *subjugate*; prevail against, beat down, reign over. This is total dominion and dominance.

The word describing man's rule over woman was:

משל

"*maw-shal*", meaning: to govern, guide, direct and have responsibility for. Having authority over. More in the sense of a sovereign or even a shepherd. The interesting thing is that there is the nuance of both instruction and restoration in the word, where "raw-daw" inflicts power to force compliance.

The point of this is that the unintended application of the meaning of the word (raw-daw) has been applied to the rule or dominance of the male over the female, while the intended meaning, (maw-shal) was set aside. Regardless, both senses are set aside in Christ under the New Covenant. But, in spite of that, we ended up with an attitude that women or wives were to be subjugated to men and that was not God's intent. Men tended to be unjust and insensitive to their wives, and for centuries the church supported this distortion.

Look at how women are treated in the Mid-East and Far-East. These people have no idea either. So, since the "fall", marriage has tended to be less than ideal. It all

came apart in this country in the 60's, but the war has gone on for thousands of years. In Christ, the war is supposed to cease. Most people hope that marriage will bring joy and some happiness. But few find it, even in the church. The misery and divorce rate in the church is no different than among the non-churched demonstrating to me that the church, in all of its preaching and pontificating hasn't had a clue either – for two thousand years.

Still, right in front of God and everybody, the model of the marital relationship is re-established not only as seen in Genesis two prior to the fall but in the example and teachings of Christ and the apostles. There are not, nor have there ever been appropriate models for this marriage concept in human history. Neither the Jewish patriarchal model nor even the fifties “all American family” model comes anywhere near to what God intends. It is clear in Genesis two that oneness is the intention of God for a husband and a wife. Ultimately, the role of each is to bring them both back to the oneness intended from the beginning and ultimately to the Paradise that was lost.

So when two people marry, there is usually more disparity than unity. The husband is given the role to clear this up and bring them into unity. In other words, he is to utilize the proper understanding of God's direction to Adam and Eve. But there is an added element. He doesn't do this alone. He is to come under the direction of Christ who is in oneness with God, so his wife can do likewise and oneness can be achieved. Then, at the same time, the husband and wife are to learn and implement their proper roles within that oneness to achieve a fruitful goal in the kingdom. We mentioned that marriage should reflect a symbiotic relationship between a man and his wife, both contributing achieving goals, each having a different but vital role to play, neither being more or less important than the other. Jesus made a clear statement regarding this concept. The only way fruit can be achieved in a marriage is in likeness as He said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

A simple example is child bearing. Both husband and wife have a different but equally important part to contribute in oneness or no fruit of the womb will be forthcoming.

Now achieving oneness sounds like a really difficult goal. But we are not talking about everyday issues here or someone's personal opinion as opposed to the other,

likes and dislikes, ideas or annoying habits and so forth. We are talking about a relationship that seeks unity and oneness to do and be as God and Christ desires us to do and be in the midst of the daily issues, so they can be resolved in agreement with God, Christ and each other. Marriage in Christ is to be a “we” concept, not an “I” concept, and if there is a lack of we, the husband is to initiate the clearing up of this but not by saying, “I think such and such and you had better submit to it”, but rather seek out the counsel of Christ on the matter and then lovingly serve his family even if it means sacrificing everything he formerly believed about the issue. His wife may even have a clearer counsel of Christ about this than he does, and even his children also. Now, it is a “we” matter. God, Christ and the family all sitting down together to solve the matter. Who sacrifices and initiates first? The head, beginning with God. That is just the way God designed it and that’s that.

So, in oneness, service becomes mutual.

Galatians 5:13 "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

This mandate of Christian conduct is gender non-specific. Freedom includes freedom from gender and role stereotypes for Paul taught in the same context, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise." Galatians 3:26-28

Philippians 2:1-4, 1: "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2: make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3: Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4: do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Romans 12:9-10, 9: "*Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10: *Be* devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;"

Ephesians 5:21, "... and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

Imagine for a moment the answer to this question. Is it tenable that Christ could raise people to take His own place on this earth? That the oneness He prayed for in John 17 would actual come to pass in history? Well, Paul gives us the answer in Romans 12:3-5,

3: "For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. 4:" For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."

And in I Corinthians 12:12-20 ,

12: "For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14: For the body is not one member, but many. 15: If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body. 16: And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not *a part* of the body," it is not for this reason any the less *a part* of the body. 17: If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18: But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19: If they were all one member, where would the body be? 20: But now there are many members, but one body."

And in Ephesians 4:15-16,

15: "...but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, 16: from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

As the unified body of Christ, what is our role?

This is the entire core of Peter's epistle.

One example would be of the orchestra. The conductor (Christ) trains the orchestra to play the music (God's plan) in harmony and beauty. Once all are in sync with both the music and the conductor, his involvement is only for show. Those who would insist on playing a different tune are either corrected, retrained, disciplined or ultimately removed from the orchestra.

Another example would be those performing in a play. The director and his (or her) assistants prepare and rehearse all the participants in the play. Once all the work is accomplished, rehearsals done and everyone is performing their role with excellence, the director is no longer needed. He or she very often will not even come to the show and yet the director generally gets the primary credit.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW NOTES

We discovered that the word "submission" does not mean that a wife is to be a either a "doormat", or "subservient" holding some lesser position, rank or importance, and the like. This is clear from the husband's attitude in verse 7, as well as in many other passages. But what does it mean?

The Greek word is supposed to convey the wife's part in completing the partnership so a purpose or goal can be reached, in this case, God's design and plan for marriage. In other words, neither he nor she can stand alone and achieve God's purpose without a counterpart. The word intends one element in the completion of something.

This idea fits well with the plan of God for man and woman in creation. Without both, there would be no people for God's plan of redemption to effect. In the New Testament, the intent of the word was to indicate the role of the wife, but not by herself. In concert with her husband, God's work in and through them could only occur. Each has a proper role to play in achieving the goal. The wife, then, is seen as God's special provision so that His plan can be achieved. Thus she is to be treated as such.

So in the New Testament, the root meaning came to be "that which is orderly arranged beforehand or under". It is used often in the context of a plan or purpose upon which a purpose to be achieved. In Hebrews 11:1 we read for example, "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." The word "assurance" is "hupo-stas-oh" and means "foundation" or "basis".

So in the clear intent of the word, to be "submissive" or "subject" to one's husband is to be the corresponding partner that provides him with the means to fulfill God's purposes in your marriage and family. But this doesn't raise the woman's importance above her husband any more than the husband's importance is raised above the woman's. But there are differing roles that combine to accomplish God's purposes in the design.

So then, how is it that she is able to fulfill this role? Where does she get the strength, insight and means to accomplish this? Well, believe it or not, that is the role of the husband.

Now, to accomplish this we have the introduction of the headship model by the apostles such as we find in I Cor. 11:2-3, 2: "Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

But then we found out that the idea of being the head of something is to adopt the attitude of Christ who, rather than be served, came to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He then made it crystal clear that, in contrast to the world's idea of headship which demands to be served, His disciples were to follow His example.

This was illustrated by Him in the foot washing ceremony.

Here is what Jesus taught in Matthew 20:25-28,

“But Jesus called them (His disciples) to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your

slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Italics mine)

Then in John 13:12-13 Jesus said to His disciples as He washed their feet,

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

The reason Paul wrote about the relationship between a husband and a wife using a chain of authority structure in the way he did is because he understood what headship means in God's mind. So he wrote to all of us to grasp this when he said,

Philippians 2:5-8, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Now to continue, we want to look at one other element of the foot washing ceremony Jesus performed.

John 13:5-15, 5: "Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6: So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7: Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." 8: Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9: Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." 10: Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11: For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." 12: So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13: "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. 14: "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15: "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

Let's notice Peter's objection. He was in the mind set of the world where the master's feet were washed by the help. But he reversed his position when Jesus made it clear that Peter would have no part of Him if he didn't allow Jesus to wash his feet. So Peter became submissive and allowed himself to be served.

So submissiveness is one allowing him or herself to be served to his or her benefit as we saw in I Peter 5:5-6, 5: "You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.** 6: Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time..."

In order to have a part with Jesus, he not only had to learn to be served by the one who was His Lord, but also to serve others over who he was to become "lord". To what end? That we would become one with Him in attitude and in service.