

**THE 1st AND 2nd LETTERS OF**

**PETER**

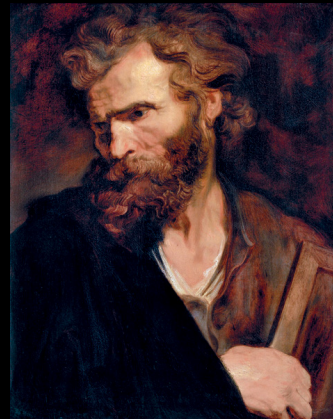
*"Simon Says..."*



**THE LETTER OF**

**JUDE**

*"What Goes Around,  
Comes Around"*



STEVE GLASER



## INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS OF PETER AND JUDE

Because of their many similarities, the letters of Peter and Jude are often taught together. In fact, Peter's second letter and Jude's twenty-five verse missive parallel each other in so many ways that scholars have debated for centuries not only which was written first, but if one consulted the other's writing. Did Peter rely on Jude, Jude rely on Peter, or were both dependent on some unknown oral tradition or document.

Though all theories are plausible, many Biblical scholars today believe Jude's letter was written first and Peter expanded on its themes. The reasons for this speculation vary and none are conclusive. Regardless, the similarity between the two letters is not debated.

### SIMILARITIES OF JUDE AND 2nd PETER

#### JUDE

#### 2 PETER

4- *"For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

2:1- *"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction."*

6- *"And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day"*

2:4- *"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment"*

7- *"just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*

2:6- *"if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly"*

8- *"Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones"*

2:10- *"and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones"*

9- *"But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'"*

2:11- *"whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord."*

10- *"But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively."*

2:12- *"But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction"*

11- *"Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion."*

2:15- *"Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from*

*wrongdoing,”*

12- *“These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear; shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted”*

2:13- *“suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.”*

12,13- *“wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.”*

2:17- *“These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved.”*

16- *“These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.*

2:18- *“These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage”*

17,18- *“But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.”*

3:2,3- *“that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires”*

Some argue that a work cannot be the inspired Word of God if some parts are replicated from another. But copying from another source does not negate inspiration. Luke notes his historical record was copied from others and many New Testament writers quote from other inspired letters. No-one questions their inspiration. Both Jude’s and Peter’s letters are deemed inspired by God.

When God repeats Himself, He’s obviously trying to tell us something important. “The repetition of identical material is not wasted ink. Whether Jude used 2 Peter or Peter used Jude, the crucial thing for believers is to take heed to the words that God has repeated twice for one’s own admonition” (Jared Garcia, *Exegetical Tools, “The Literary Relationship Between Jude and 2 Peter”*).

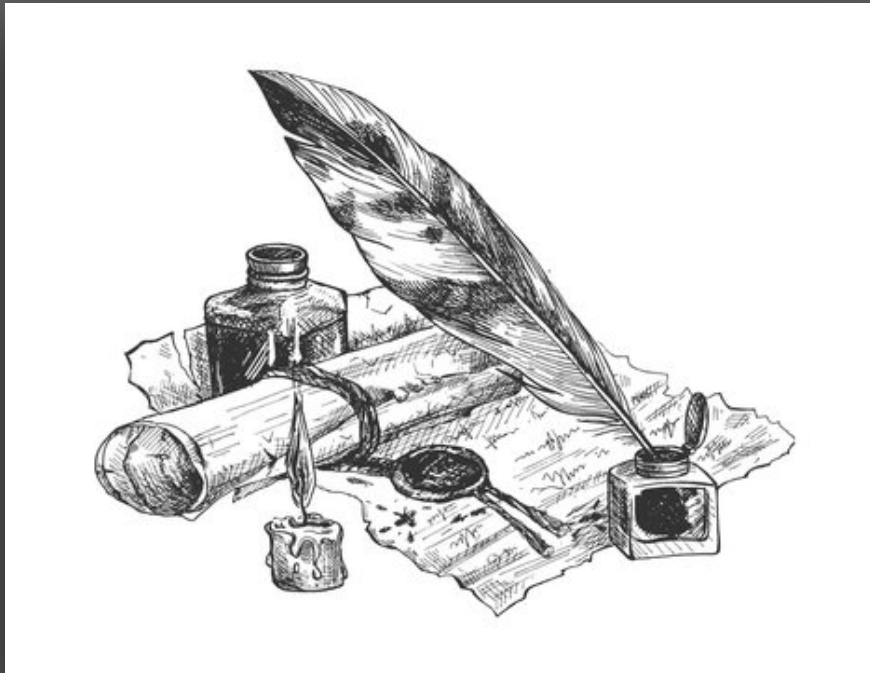
While the theme of Peter’s first letter was that Christians should expect suffering in this world, his second letter warned against scoffers who would infiltrate the church with false teachings. Jude’s letter plainly stated judgement awaited these blasphemous individuals—what goes around, comes around. It was a call to defend the faith, not just from those outside the church, but also from within its own walls.

“The church today does well to receive this exhortation. Amid the swirling and conflicting claims to truth in the world today, including even the claim that no one religion can claim the full truth, the church must contend for the faith. This especially includes contending for truth within the church itself, protecting believers against false doctrine. For false doctrine always brings godlessness along with it” (ESV Bible, <https://www.esv.org>).

Like us today, Peter and Jude lived in a real world of suffering and deceit. They experienced first hand the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ— one as a trusted friend, the other as a beloved half-brother. Let’s see what they can teach us about surviving this twenty-first century.

*Steve Glaser*

# PETER'S



# LIFE



## INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS OF PETER

Any study of the two letters written by Simon/Peter would be incomplete without an examination of the man himself. Simon Bar-Jonah (son of Jonah) was chosen by Jesus because of his leadership qualities—some innate, others learned.

Simon was brought to Jesus by his brother, Andrew, who had followed John the Baptist. They traveled one-hundred miles from their home town of Bethsaida to the lower Jordan River area east of Jerusalem where John the Baptist preached of the coming Messiah.

John 1:40-44- “*One of the two who heard John (The Baptist) speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.*

*Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, the son of John (Jonah). You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).”*

Simon/Peter and his brother, Andrew, were fishing partners of James and John, the sons of Zebedee and Salome. A few short months after Simon/Peter first encounter Jesus, he, Andrew, James, and John were fishing by the Sea of Galilee when Jesus approached them to become His full time disciples.

Matt 4:18-22- “*While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*

*Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”*

Peter, his wife, and mother-in-law eventually settled a short journey west from Bethsaida along the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee in the city of Capernaum. This city became the launch-pad for much of Jesus’ earthly ministry. Peter became Jesus’ right-hand-man in His chosen group of twelve apostles.

### **FOUR LISTS OF THE APOSTLES**

( Mat 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Lk 6:13-16; Acts 1:13)

1. Simon/ Peter
2. Andrew
3. James
4. John
5. Phillip
6. Nathaniel/ Bartholomew
7. Matthew/ Levi
- 8 .Thomas
9. James (Son of Alphaeus)
10. Simon (The Zealot/ the Canaanite)
11. Judas (Son of James)/ Thaddaeus
12. Judas Iscariot
- (13. Matthias)

Within the Bible's pages, Simon/Peter was named more than any other individual other than Jesus, was spoken to by Jesus more than anyone, was rebuked by Jesus more than anyone, and was the only apostle to rebuke Jesus (Matt 16:22; Mark 8:32). No one confessed Jesus more boldly than Peter. Yet, when push came to shove at Jesus' crucifixion, no one denied Him more publicly:

Matt 26:-69-75- *"Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man."*

*And immediately the rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly."*

### **Simon/Peter Vacillated Between Two Personas**

#### **"Simon"**

Name used in secular context ( i.e.. family, occupation)

Brash, vacillating, undependable ( John 21:3)

Name used by Jesus to rebuke him (Lk 22:2;  
Mk 14:37-38; Jn 21:15)

#### **"Peter"**

What Jesus wanted him to become

The "rock" ( John 1:42)

Name used by Jesus to praise him

**DO YOU HAVE TWO SIDES?**

**WHAT ARE YOUR TWO SIDES?**

**ARE THEY COMPLIMENTARY OR DIVERGENT?**

Despite Simon/Peter's vacillation, Jesus decided to use Simon's **innate attributes** to **mold** Peter into the **leader** He needed him to become:

(Much of the following is a summary taken from John MacArthur's excellent book —  
"Twelve Ordinary Men")



## **PETER'S INNATE LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES**

(1) **Inquisitiveness**

(2) **Initiative**

(3) **Involvement**

### **(1) Inquisitiveness - Knowledge is Power**

Peter was not afraid to **ask difficult questions**:

Matt 15:15- *"But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us."*

Luke 12:41- *"Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?"*

Mat 18:21- *"Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"*

Mat 19:27- *"Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?"*

**ARE YOU AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS?**

**WHY?**

**HOW IS KNOWLEDGE POWERFUL?**

### **2. Initiative**

(a) Peter exhibited **drive, ambition, energy, boldness, and decisiveness** in protecting Jesus

Mat 26:51- *"And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear."*

(b) Peter was **first to answer questions**:

Matt 16:13-20- *"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."*

*He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

*And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of*

heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.”

**DO YOU HAVE A DRIVE FOR CHRIST?**

**DO YOU INITIATE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT JESUS?**

**DO YOU RADIATE ENERGY FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN BELIEFS?**

### **3. Involvement**

Peter was always in the **middle of the action**

Mat 14:26-29-“ *But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid. And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.*”

John 18:15-“*Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest,*”

**DO YOU GET INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE ACTION OR ARE YOU JUST A BY-STANDER?**

**WHY?**

**WHAT DOES INVOLVEMENT LOOK LIKE IN THE YOUR LIFE?**

Next, Jesus then took Peter’s **innate** abilities (“nature”) and **modeled** for him

#### **Seven Further Attributes**

Peter needed to **learn** for leadership (“nurture”)

#### **PETER’S LEARNED LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES**

- (1) **Integrity, Trustworthiness, Respectability**
- (2) **Submission**
- (3) **Restraint / Self-Control**
- (4) **Humility**
- (5) **Unselfish Love**
- (6) **Compassion**
- (7) **Courage**

## (1) **Integrity, Trustworthiness, Respectability**

(a) Jesus **molded** this “ordinary man” (Acts 4:13) into a **leader** by being an **example** to Peter.

- Jesus demonstrated that **Respect** produced **Trust** that **Motivated** people to follow His **Leadership**

- Peter eventually led 5000 to Christ in one day when he boldly defied the Sadducees by proclaiming Jesus’ resurrection despite the potential consequences.

Acts 4:5- *“And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand”*

(b) Peter’s **integrity** and **trustworthiness** would not allow him to stop preaching about Jesus

Acts 4:18-19- *“So they (Sadducees) called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”*

## **CAN YOU LEAD EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT RESPECT?**

### **HOW DID PETER EARN RESPECT?**

### **HOW DO YOU EARN RESPECT?**

## (2) **Submission** (to Jesus and secular leaders)

(a) Though He didn’t have to, Jesus submitted to the temple tax of half a shekel (2 drachma = 2 days wages) as decreed (Ex 30:11-16) and paid for His and Peter’s tax with the coin ( stater = shekel = 4 drachma) found in the fish

Mat 17:24-27- *“When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?” And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free.*

*However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”*

(b) Peter later wrote of Submission (1 Peter 2:13-18)

### WHY IS SUBMISSION AN IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP QUALITY?

### WHO IS A LEADER SUBMITTED TO?

### WHEN IS SUBMISSION NOT CALLED FOR IN YOUR LIFE?

## (3) Restraint / Self-Control

(a) Peter was a slow learner of this quality as evidenced in the garden when Jesus had to replace the ear of the soldier that Peter cut off.

Luke 22:50-51- *“And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him.”*

(b) Peter later wrote of Self- Control ( 1 Peter 4:7)

### WHY IS SELF CONTROL SO HARD?

### GIVE EXAMPLES OF RESTRAINT IN LEADERSHIP

### WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF RESTRAINT?

## (4) Humility

(a) Jesus had to **destroy Peter’s pride** (“*I will never be made to stumble*”)

Matt 26:31-35- *“Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”*

*Peter answered him, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!” And all the disciples said the same.”*

Luke 22: 54-62- *“Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.” But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying,*

*“Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.”*

*And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.”*

*And he went out and wept bitterly.”*

(b) Peter later wrote of **Humility** ( 1 Peter 5:5-6)

### **WHAT IS HUMILITY?**

### **WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF A LEADER'S PRIDE?**

### **HOW CAN A LEADER KEEP PRIDE UNDER CONTROL?**

## **5. Unselfish Love**

(a) Jesus taught of **Unselfish Love** at the Passover Seder

Luke 7:44-47- *“Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”*

(b) While the apostles once **argued** as to which one of them would be **greatest**, Jesus chooses to **wash their feet** at their last supper together

Luke 22:24- *“A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.”*

John 13:1-17- *“Now before the Feast of the Passover; when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper.*

*He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

*He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!”*

*Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”*

*When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.”*

*For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”*

(c) Peter later wrote of **Unselfish Love** (1 Peter 4:8)

### **WHAT IS UNSELFISH LOVE?**

### **HOW CAN A LEADER DEMONSTRATE UNSELFISH LOVE TO THOSE HE LEADS?**

### **WHO'S FEET DO YOU WASH?**

## **6. Compassion**

(a) Jesus let Satan put Peter to the test to shake him up so that he would later be better equipped to show **empathy for other's suffering**

Luke 22:31-34- *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” Peter said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”*

Lk 22:61-62- *“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.”*

(b) Peter later wrote of Compassion (1 Peter 5:8-10)

**HOW HAS GOD BROKEN YOU TO HELP YOU EMPATHIZE WITH OTHERS' SUFFERINGS?**

**HOW CAN A LEADER DEMONSTRATE COMPASSION?**

**HOW DID JESUS MODEL COMPASSION?**

## **7. Courage**

(a) Jesus didn't teach Peter a wild, impetuous false courage, but rather a **mature, thought out, settled, willingness to suffer** for His sake

John 21:18-19- *"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."*

(b) Peter later courageously spoke before the Sanhedrin

Acts 4:18-20- *"So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."*

Acts 5:27-32- *"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."*

*But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."*

(c) Peter later wrote of Courage (1 Peter 1:3-7)

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FALSE AND TRUE COURAGE?**

**WHY MUST A LEADER BE COURAGEOUS?**

**HOW DOES ONE LEARN COURAGE?**

**Peter would eventually use both his innate and learned leadership skills to:**

- \* Preach at Pentecost where 3000 souls were saved (Acts 2:14-41)
- \* Heal the lame (Acts 3:1-10; 9:36-42)
- \* Raise Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-42)
- \* Introduce the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10)
- \* Write two epistles (1,2 Peter)

**WHY SHOULD YOU WANT TO BE A LEADER?**

**WHAT GOOD HAS COME FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP?**

**HOW CAN YOU BECOME A BETTER LEADER?**

**PETER ALSO MADE MISTAKES !**

- Peter had to be rebuked by Paul

Gal 2:11-14- *“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I (Paul) opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”*

**HOWEVER**

- Peter later rectified his mistakes as when he defended Paul’s ministry to the full counsel

Acts 15:7-14- *“And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.*

*Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.*



*And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.*

*After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.”*

**Peter learned that all great leaders must acknowledge their failures rather than try to cover them up!**

**HAVE YOU MADE MISTAKES?**

**HAVE YOU RECTIFIED YOUR MISTAKES OR TRIED TO COVER THEM UP?**

**WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR MISTAKES?**

### **Peter's Post-Resurrection Career**

“Many of us are familiar with the impulsive and headstrong Peter from the Gospels. What do we know of his career after the resurrection? From 1 Cor and Gal we can glean that he initially was the leader of the Jerusalem church (Gal 1:18; Acts 1-5, 8-11; Acts 12:17)...

Though Saul's persecution scattered believers from Jerusalem, Peter, with the other apostles, remained behind. Not long thereafter, Acts tells of Peter and John following in Philip's footsteps and journeying to Samaria for pastoral and investigative reasons, and continuing from there throughout Judea.

Acts records Peter's flight from Jerusalem (12:17) during the reign of Herod Agrippa (perhaps in 43?). When he returned in ~ 45, James was the senior leader of the Jerusalem church. With John, the three of them serve as leaders, with James foremost.

Powell summarizes, “...[Peter] was a missionary who traveled with his wife (1 Cor 9:5), ...he was highly respected as a leader in the church (Gal 1:18, 29), ...and many people traced their identity in Christ to his ministry or influence (1 Cor 1:13; cf. Acts 2:41-44; 4:4; 8:25).

He does not seem to have been regarded as an innovative theologian or as one who was clearly identified with distinctive doctrine or practices. Even Paul seems to regard him as a key player in the church who is just one among many who are all basically doing the same thing: proclaiming the true gospel of Christ (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 15:11).”

Peter's death is described in 1 Clement 5:2-4 (Clement was bishop of Rome in the late first century AD.), “Because of jealousy and envy the greatest and most upright pillars were persecuted, and they struggled in the contest even to death... Peter bore up under hardships not just once or twice, but many times; and having thus borne witness, he went to the place of glory he deserved.”

In the second century, Tertullian indicts Nero for their deaths, referring to Rome as, “a fortunate church... where Peter had a passion like that of the Lord, where Paul was crowned with the death of John the Baptist (who was beheaded) (*Praescriptione* 35).

How did the churches Peter was writing to fare? Four decades later (~112), Pliny, governor of one of the areas to which Peter writes, notes that “many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes” were associated with the church. He further complains that “the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms.”

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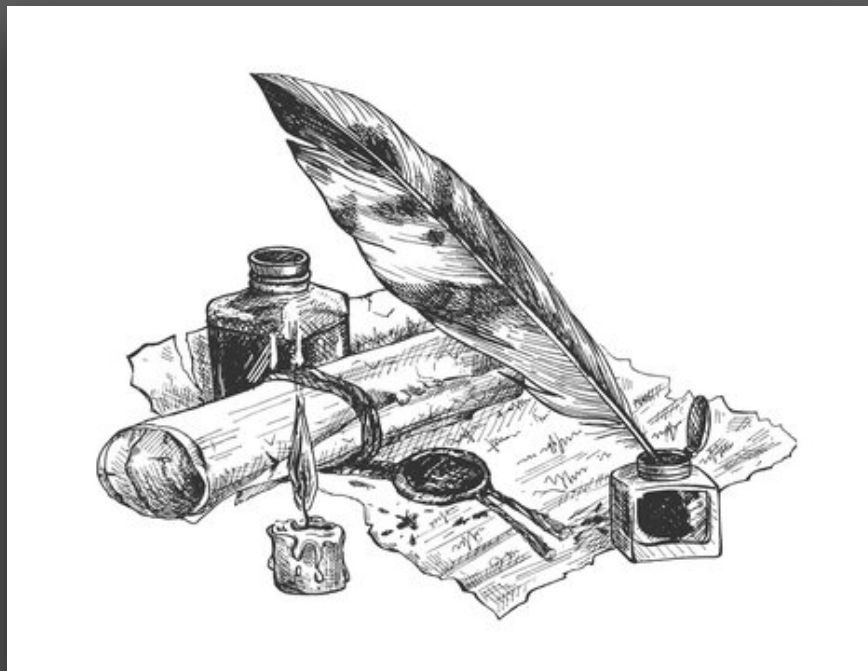
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## **Jesus Told Peter He Would Eventually Die A Martyr**

(John 21:18-19)

**Eusebius cites Clement (early church father) who stated that  
before Peter was crucified head down,  
he was first forced to watch the crucifixion  
of his own wife !**

# PETER'S



# FIRST LETTER



# CHAPTER ONE

**1 Peter 1:1-“*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*  
*To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,*  
*and Bithynia,*”**

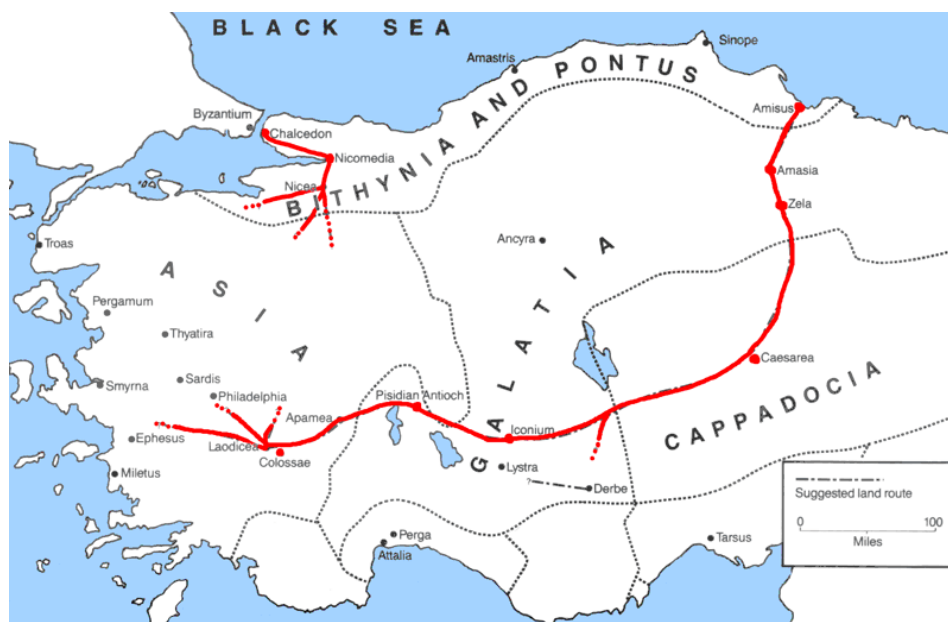
The letter begins with “*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,*” declaring his authorship. Though some modern theologians have tried to claim Simon Peter, one of Jesus’ inner circle, was not the author, their aspersions fall short. Both internal and external evidence supports Peter’s authorship and the early church upheld this view.

Sometimes the word “apostle” simply means “messenger” of Christ; but Peter’s claim here had more significance. He was stating that he was one of “the twelve” apostles designated by Jesus as authoritative messengers and interpreters of the gospel— his letter was certainly received as such by the “*elect exiles of the Dispersion.*”

The word “*elect*” (“*eklektois*”) precedes the term “*exiles*” (also translated “*strangers*”- “*parepidemois*”), meaning those to whom Peter addressed this letter were chosen (*elected*) by God. Often in Old Testament writings, only the people of Israel were designated as being the “*chosen elect*” of God (ie. Deut 4:37; 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2). But as we will see later, these letters were also clearly written to believing Gentiles. Peter was claiming that the whole church of Jesus Christ is the “Israel” of God— His chosen people.

They were “*exiles of the Dispersion*” not because of some geographic expulsion, but because of the suffering they would experience as a result of their faith. “At least fifteen times in this letter, Peter referred to suffering; and he used eight different Greek words to do so” (Warren Wiersbe, “*The Bible Exposition Commentary- NT Vol 2*”).

Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia were regions of Asia Minor (current day Turkey) to which the letter was circulated by a messenger. “The [later] reference to Babylon in 5:13 is almost surely a reference to Rome, indicating that Peter wrote the letter from Rome to the churches of Asia Minor” (So Michaels, “*1 Peter*”).



## WHO WAS PETER?

## WHAT IS APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY?

## HOW ARE YOU A MEMBER OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE?

**1 Peter 1:2-***“according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:  
May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

In this one verse, Peter alludes to the Trinity (“Father,” “Spirit,” and “Jesus Christ”) and introduces not one, not two, not three, but four additional theological concepts:

- (1) “foreknowledge of God the Father,”
- (2) “in the sanctification of the Spirit,”
- (3) “for obedience to Jesus Christ,”
- (4) “for the sprinkling with His blood.”

The meaning of the phrase “those who are elect exiles” (vs 1) ... according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...” has been debated by theologians for centuries. Whether “foreknowledge” (“prognosis”) implies “pre-destined” (Calvinism) or simply “fore-seen” (Arminianism) is a topic for another time. Regardless, scholars agree that God foreknows His “elect” or “chosen.”

The next theological concept regarding these “elect exiles” is the “sanctification of the Spirit.” Sanctification is usually referred to as “a progressive work of God that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives” (Wayne Grudem, “*Systematic Theology*”).

Others believe this particular “sanctification” may refer to one’s initial conversion. “As the gospel is proclaimed, the Spirit sanctifies some by bringing them to faith, by bringing them into the realm of the holy” ( Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”). Whether this sanctification refers to conversion or the progression to becoming more Christ-like, the Holy Spirit is intimately involved.

“Obedience to Jesus Christ” is a necessary step for a Christian. Though by grace we are saved through faith as a gift of God, and not of our own works (Eph 2:8-9), so also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:17).

The “sprinkling with His blood” is Christ’s greatest gift to a believer. “*He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification*” (Rom 4:25). “Justification is the instantaneous legal act of God in which He:

- (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and
- (2) of Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us and
- (3) declares us to be righteous in His sight” (Wayne Grudem, “*Systematic Theology*”)

## WHAT DOES GOD KNOW?

## WHAT IS SANCTIFICATION?

## WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

**1 Peter 1:3—*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”***

Peter begins by offering a blessing to God for our re-birth as Christians. The term “*blessed*” (“*eulogetos*”) can also be translated as “*praised*” (NIV translation). Just as we cannot take personal credit for being physically born, we also can’t take credit for our spiritual re-birth— it is something that happens to us. Though we deserve judgement and wrath, God bestowed “*His great mercy*” upon us and “*caused us to be born again.*”

Jn 3:3-7- “*Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”*

Because of our re-birth, we have a “*living hope.*” This “living hope is one that is genuine and vital, in contrast to a hope that is empty and vain” (J.R. Michaels, “*1 Peter*”). Despite the troubles of this world, our hope is grounded and secured “*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*” Our hope is in the blessings of a future resurrection and eternal life.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REBORN?

## WHAT IS HOPE?

## WHO/WHAT IS YOUR “LIVING HOPE?”

**1 Peter 1:4—*“to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,”***

An inheritance is defined as something received from someone after their death. Jesus’ death has left us an inheritance beyond this world. Our inheritance is an incredible future of a new heaven and a new earth in which we live side by side with God.

2 Peter 3:13- “*But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*”

Rev 21:1-4- “*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

This inheritance cannot fade, perish, or be defiled. Unlike worldly possessions, it will last forever. Our inheritance is not secured in a vault, but instead is being prepared and guarded for us in heaven by Jesus Himself.

John 14:2- *“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?”*

“The Old Testament is rich in its usage of the inheritance metaphor. The terms for “*inheritance*” occur over two-hundred times, most frequently in Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Psalms. While Jewish inheritance laws were specific and complete (Num 27:8-11), almost all references to inheritance in the Old Testament are theological, not legal. In the theological sense, to inherit means to receive an irrevocable gift with an emphasis on the special relationship between the benefactor and the recipients...

For the believer in Christ, heirship is a natural result of justification— He saved us, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:5-7). Since all believers are children of God, they are necessarily heirs of God” (Rom 8:17 ; Gal 4:7) (“*Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*”).

### WHAT IS AN INHERITANCE?

### WHAT IS YOUR INHERITANCE?

### WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR INHERITANCE?

**1 Peter 1:5- *“who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”***

Once again, Peter unloads a plethora of theological principles in one short phrase. He first equates the believer’s “inheritance” with “salvation.” Salvation is defined in the KJV Dictionary as:

- (1) The act of saving; preservation from destruction, danger, or calamity
- (2) The redemption of man from the bondage of sin and liability to eternal death, and the conferring on him everlasting happiness. This is the great salvation.

“Salvation” is often thought of as a past or present condition bestowed on the believer upon the acceptance of Jesus’ sacrifice. But, though “justification” is an immediate gift, “salvation” is actually a promised future event “*to be revealed in the last time.*” Additionally, the question must be asked, salvation from what exactly?

“Salvation” is certainly not a promise of preservation from the physical and psychological destruction, dangers, and calamities of this world. Christians around the world are persecuted for their faith every day. Instead, “salvation” is the promise of freedom from the trials of this world after the return of Christ

Peter additionally states that continued faith is a prerequisite for that salvation. But, with so much pressure from the world, it’s often difficult to maintain one’s faith. Fortunately, Peter also states that believers are “*being guarded through faith...by God’s power.*”

“God’s power does not shield believers from trials and sufferings, but it does protect us from that which would cause us to fall away... God’s power protects us because His power is the means by which our faith is sustained (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).



## WHAT IS SALVATION?

## WHAT IS SUSTAINED FAITH?

## HOW HAS GOD'S POWER SUSTAINED YOUR FAITH FOR SALVATION?

**1 Peter 1:6-7—*In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

Though believers in Christ rejoice in the promise of salvation, the trials of this world still cause grief. “The rejoicing is not because one enjoys persecution or because one denies the reality of pain and suffering (or because one ignores it, as in the “*apatheia*” of the Stoics); rather, it is because the Christian has an eschatological perspective.” (Peter Davids, “1 Peter”- “Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary”)

The question is not “if” trials will come, but “when, why, and for how long?” In this verse Peter gives a simple answer to one of these questions. Trials are allowed to “test” the “*genuineness of your faith.*”

Trials are part of life. They are sometimes “*necessary*” — put there for a reason. Trials are physical, emotional, or financial hardships from without or spiritual temptations from within. The Greek meaning of the word ‘*trial*’ implied an examination toward an end goal. We’re meant to learn from our trials and emerge stronger as a result.

The Greek word for ‘*testing*’ originally meant analyzing coins with the intent of removing all impurities. Testing coins ensured their value. Likewise, testing our faith ensures our value. Testing of our faith brings steadfastness and strengthens our character.

A steadfast faith is “*more valuable than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire.*” A steadfast faith will “*result in praise and glory and honor*” at the second coming of Christ when Jesus is revealed.

*“but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”* (Romans 5:3-5)

## WHAT TRIAL ARE YOU FACING?

## HOW ARE YOU HANDLING THE TEST?

## HOW'S YOUR FAITH HOLDING UP?

**1 Peter 1:8-9-“*Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*”**

The writer of the book of Hebrews stated about ‘faith’ :

*“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”* (Hebrews 11:1)

Like us today, the readers in Asia Minor had never laid eyes on Jesus; “yet they had heard of his character, his preaching, his sacrifice for sin, and his resurrection and ascension, and they had learned to love him” (*Barnes Note on the Bible- Bible [hub.com](http://hub.com)*). They believed in Him with a faith even beyond that of one of Jesus’ original twelve apostles:

*“Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* (John 20:28-29).

“Have you ever thought to yourself, ‘If only I could have seen him with my own eyes, my faith would be much stronger?’...

The world around us says, ‘Seeing is believing.’ But that is not true. Most of the people who saw Jesus in the flesh did not believe in him. The religious leaders by and large rejected him...

Though the common people heard him gladly, they had no clear idea of who he was or why he came (see Matthew 16:13-14). Certainly they did not grasp that he was the Son of God from heaven, the Savior of the world, King of Kings and Lord of Lords...

Only a few people, a tiny handful it seems, grasped his true identity. You can even argue that seeing Christ in the flesh only confused matters. (Ray Pritchard, Keep Believing Ministry- “*Loving the Unseen Christ*”).”

Every Christian must know Jesus Christ personally. Fortunately, through the power of the Holy Spirit, He is as alive in us today as when He walked on the earth.

“Knowing God is not an optional part of the Christian life; it is the Christian life. Jesus said,

*‘And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent’* (John 17:3).

The English word ‘*know*’ in this verse is a translation of the Greek word ‘*ginosko*,’ which, in this context, means an experiential knowing, not simply an intellectual understanding of facts about God or Jesus or the Bible” (Thomas A. Tarrantson, C S Lewis Institute, “*Knowing God Personally*”).

Experientially knowing Christ is not only the ticket to a “*joy that is inexpressible,*” but also the key to the “*salvation of our souls.*”

**DO YOU KNOW JESUS INTELLECTUALLY?**

**DO YOU KNOW JESUS PERSONALLY?**

**HOW?**

**1 Peter 1:10-11—*“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.”***

The Bible is filled with prophets. Their job was to speak God’s truth, reveal God’s plans, and stimulate God’s people out of lethargy. Additionally, they sometimes spoke of things to come—prophecy.

John Walvoord in his *“Every Prophecy of the Bible”* lists 1,000 Biblical prophecies— half of which have already been fulfilled. Biblical scholars of eschatology estimate that one-fourth of the Bible was written as prophecy and more than 300 Old Testament prophecies predicted a coming Messiah.

(Of note, the chance of one person fulfilling only 8 of those prophecies is  $10^{17}$ . The chances of one person fulfilling 48 of those prophecies is  $10^{157}$ . Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies of the Messiah. Try calculating that and you’ll get a massive headache!)

Though God inspired the Old Testament prophets to write of the coming Messiah, they sometimes questioned the meaning of what they wrote. They *“searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating”* regarding the grace and *“subsequent glories”* that would be bestowed upon future believers through the *“suffering of Christ.”*

What do you think David and Isaiah questioned as they wrote the following inspired words?

## **Psalm 22**

*“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?”*

*O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

*In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*

*All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; “He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”*

*Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.*

*Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.*

*Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.*

*I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.*

*For dogs encompass me—a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

*But you, O Lord, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog!*

*Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!*

*I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:*

*You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!*

*For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.*

*From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him.*

*The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!*

*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.*

*For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.*

*All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive.*

*Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.”*

### **Isaiah 53**

*“Who has believed what he has heard from us? [  
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

*For he grew up before him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,  
and no beauty that we should desire him.*

*He was despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

*Surely he has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.*

*But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.*

*All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.*

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,  
yet he opened not his mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so he opened not his mouth.*

*By oppression and judgment he was taken away;  
and as for his generation, who considered  
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,  
stricken for the transgression of my people?*

*And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

*Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;  
he has put him to grief;  
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,  
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;  
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*

*Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;  
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,  
make many to be accounted righteous,  
and he shall bear their iniquities.*

*Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,  
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,  
because he poured out his soul to death  
and was numbered with the transgressors;  
yet he bore the sin of many,  
and makes intercession for the transgressors.”*

## WHO/WHAT ARE PROPHETS?

## WHAT IS PROPHECY?

## WHY WERE/ARE SOME PROPHECIES VEILED?

**1 Peter 1:12-***“It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”*

The prophets may not have fully understood their own prophecies; but it was revealed to them that the events they predicted would occur not in their life-time, but some time in the distant future. Even the angels would “*long to look*” at what was now being revealed to the believers to whom Peter addressed this letter.

Unlike God, angels have never been omniscient. But they have accumulated great knowledge by observing everything around them over eons of time. Their collective wisdom grows every day, but they can’t read minds and will never know as much as God. God had His own timetable for His press releases.

Through the work of “*the Holy Spirit sent from heaven*,” the “good news” previously hidden was finally being “*announced*.”

Eph 3:10-11-*“so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,”*

Today, as Christians, we have the privilege of announcing the same “good news” of the gospel. But it is much more than a privilege— it’s a responsibility. Jesus’ command to His apostles also applies to us:

Matt 28:16-20-*“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

## WHY/ HOW DID GOD TIME HIS PRESS RELEASE?

## WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL?

## WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN SPREADING THE GOSPEL?

**1 Peter 1:13-“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”**

The word “therefore” implies the instructions found in this verse (and beyond) refer to steps believers are to take for being given the great inheritance/salvation through Christ. They are commanded to first prepare their “minds for action.” Literally the command in the Greek is to “gird up the loins of your mind” (“*anazosamenoi tas osphyas*”), meaning tuck your shirt in, roll up your sleeves, and get ready to do some serious work.

“Hope will not become a reality without disciple thinking. Thinking in a new way does not happen automatically; it requires effort, concentration, and intentionality” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

The second command is to be “sober minded”— a warning against becoming inebriated by the temptations of the world.

“Spiritual sober-mindedness includes the ideas of steadfastness, self-control, clarity of mind, and moral decisiveness. The sober-minded Christian is correctly in charge of his priorities and not intoxicated with the various allurements of the world.” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”)

Thirdly, Christians are to set their hope on the future “revelation of Jesus Christ.” It’s a command to never lose sight of the end game—the future coming of Christ that will usher the beginning of a New Earth and a New Heaven to be enjoyed forever where no tears will ever be shed again.

### **HOW ARE YOU GIRDING THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND?**

### **ARE YOU BEING SOBER-MINDED?**

### **WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR?**

**1 Peter 1:14-16-“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**

God demands obedience from His children. Peter commanded these believers “not be conformed” to the desires of their former passions. Since it was written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy,” they were to be “holy”— separated from the world.

Christians are to be “in the world,” but not “of the world.” Jesus spoke these words to His apostles:

John 15:18-19-“If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

In His prayer to His Father, Jesus didn’t ask for His followers to be taken out of the world, but rather be protected within it.

John 17:14-15-“I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”



As a child of God, a believer's "holiness" stems from God. Through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are to separate ourselves from the evils of the world and live to please God.

Lev 19:2- "*Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*"

Lev 20:7- "*Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.*"

Lev 20:26- "*You shall be holy to me, <sup>w</sup>for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*"

"Here is the mindset we should have: 'Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus' (Romans 6:11). Any time we face temptation, we should say, 'I'm dead to that! That was part of my old life! I am a new creation in Christ!' (see 2 Cor 5:17)..."

To live a holy life, to separate ourselves from sin, we must see ourselves as God does—as born-again children of the Most High, clothed with the righteousness of Christ. ("*How Can I Live A Holy Life*," Got questions.org)."

### **WHAT IS HOLINESS?**

### **HOW CAN YOU LIVE 'IN THE WORLD' BUT NOT BE 'OF THE WORLD'?**

### **WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SEPARATE FROM TODAY?**

**1 Peter 1:17- "*And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,*"**

Though we are children of God, we should not expect leniency for our aberrant behavior— He "*judges impartially according to each one's deeds.*" The "*fear*" we should have is that of a child who fears punishment by his father for bad behavior.

Fear is a good thing— it keeps us on the strait and narrow. Though our sins are ultimately forgiven through the mercy of Christ's sacrifice, we should still conduct ourselves with a measure of fear while on this earth ("*throughout the time of your exile*").

Rom 3:23- "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*"

Whether we receive the life-consequences of our actions now or the loss of heavenly rewards in the future, our sins have repercussion. It's just wise to have a little fear of the Lord!

Prov 9:10- "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight*"

### **DO YOU FEAR THE LORD?**

### **WHY?**

### **HOW IS THE FEAR OF THE LORD THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM?**



**1 Peter 1:18-19-“*knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*”**

This second half of the verse describes the flip side of living with a healthy fear of the Lord— being ransomed from the “*futile ways*” inherited from ancestors. The phrase “*futile ways*” can also be translated as “*vain*” ways— a term often applied to the worship of idols as being nothing, worthless, and unable to help. Neither the idolatrous worship (futile theologies) or the self-righteous behavior (futile behaviors) handed down from father to son would be able to save them.

As Martin Luther once said,

“Human piety is a vain blasphemy, and the greatest sin that a man can commit.”

Unlike power and influence, redemption cannot be bought with “*gold and silver*”— it’s not for sale on the discount aisle of Walmart. Redemption can only be purchased “*with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*” Christ died for our redemption. It’s a costly gift we should never take for granted!

**WHAT IDOLATROUS BEHAVIORS HAVE YOUR PARENTS PASSED DOWN TO YOU?**

**WHAT IDOLATROUS BEHAVIORS ARE YOU PASSING DOWN TO YOUR CHILDREN?**

**WHY IS HUMAN PIETY SUCH AN EGREGIOUS SIN?**

**1 Peter 1:20-21-“*He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 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.*”**

“What is decided from all eternity is not simply that Jesus Christ should come into the world, but that He should fulfill a certain role” (Michaels, “1 Peter”). “God determined before history even began (“*before the foundation of the world*”) that the Christ would appear at this particular junction of history as redeemer” (Thomas Schreiner, “The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter; Jude”).

Gen 1:1-“*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*”

John 1:1-5-“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*”

The “*last times*” began with the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (the “*Word*” who was present “*in the beginning*”) and will end with His second coming. God “*raised him from the dead and gave him glory.*” As the apostle Paul once said:

1 Cor 15:17-“*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.*”

Christianity is founded on the absolute certainty of the resurrection. Without it, the cornerstone is removed and the entire structure collapses. But for over two thousand years the edifice still stands tall— not even swaying from the strong winds of skeptics or rocking from the seismic proclamations of its enemies.

You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to discover the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. In a court of law, the case would be a slam dunk. Even a novice defense attorney could ably defend the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The facts are overwhelming, the witnesses are plentiful, and the conclusions are irrefutable.

"As a result of God's eternal plan and priceless payment for sin, *"faith"* and *"hope"* can be placed in Him" (Walvoord and Zuck, *"The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament"*). Through Christ, we become *"believers in God."*

### **WHEN/WHAT WAS GOD THE FATHER'S ROLE IN REDEMPTION?**

### **WHEN/WHAT WAS JESUS' ROLE IN REDEMPTION?**

### **CAN YOU DEFEND JESUS' LIFE, DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION?**

**1 Peter 1:22-23-***"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;"*

Some scholars argue that *"obedience to the truth"* signifies conversion with resulting submission to the gospel (ie. Schreiner). Others claim it refers to the ongoing process of *"sanctification"* (ie. Grudem). Regardless, one of the goals of *"obedience to the truth"* is to enable believers to *"love one another earnestly from a pure heart."*

"A purified life allows one to love purely those who share the same faith. This kind of loving (*"agapesate"* from *"agape"*) can come only from a changed heart, from one whose motives are pure and who seeks to give more than he takes" (Walvoord and Zuck, *"The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament"*). Because believers are begotten by God as a new creation (*"born again"*), we are to love one another.

Unlike human seed that is *"perishable"* (resulting in earthly death), the *"seed"* that enables us to be *"born again"* is *"imperishable."* This imperishable *"seed"* is the *"living and abiding word of God"*— the gospel of Jesus Christ. The life it generates and sustains is imperishable.

### **WHAT IS OBEDIENCE TO TRUTH?**

### **WHAT IS AGAPE LOVE?**

### **WHAT IS THE IMPERISHABLE SEED THAT HAS ALLOWED YOU TO BE BORN AGAIN?**

**1 Peter 1:24-25-***"for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you."*

Isaiah 40:6-8- *"A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."*

Whereas men's words wither and fade, "*the word of the Lord lives forever.*" The Word of God is living and enduring.

"The word of the Lord in Isaiah, which represents the promise that God will restore His people from exile and fulfill His promise to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), is ultimately fulfilled in the gospel proclaimed to the churches in Asia Minor...

The new exodus, the return from exile, and the fulfillment of all God's promises to Israel have become a reality through the gospel. The promises made in Isaiah are fulfilled in the proclamation of the gospel" (Thomas Schreiner, "*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*").

**WHY/HOW DO MEN'S WORDS WITHER AND FADE?**

**WHY/HOW DOES GOD'S WORD NEVER WITHER AND FADE?**

**HOW DOES THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL COMPLETE THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES?**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU READ GOD'S WORD?**



# CHAPTER TWO

**1 Peter 2:1-“So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.”**

Because of the great gift of grace given to believers, Christians are instructed to put aside sins that tear at the social fabric of the church— “malice,” “deceit,” “hypocrisy,” “envy,” and “slander.” They destroy the threads of love that bind a church body together.

“Malice” is defined as the desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another (*Merriam-Webster*). It’s a part of our old nature with which every every Christian struggles. People who believe they’ve been treated unfairly often think in terms of how they can hurt back the ones that hurt them.

“Deceit” is the action or practice of concealing or misrepresenting truth (*Oxford*).

“Deception is just another form of lying, but with a stronger degree of wrong because the deceiver purposefully misleads others into believing that a lie is really what is true” (Steven Harper, “*The Dangers of Deception*,” *Lakeview Church of Christ*).

“Hypocrisy” is defined as the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one's own behavior does not conform-- pretense (*Oxford*). The Greek word for ‘hypocrite’ meant “play acting.”

“Envy” is a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck (*Oxford*).

“Envy is a gnawing worm, a green-eyed monster, the relentless ache of the shriveled heart. At the same time, envy is a subtle chameleon with many faces. It masquerades as the smooth flattery of imitation one minute and righteous indignation at injustice the next” (Joe Rigney, “*Envy and Rivalry in Ministry—The Great Danger Facing the Young, Restless, and Reformed*,” *Desiring God Ministry*).

“Slander” is the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation (*Merriam-Webster*). Joseph Roux (French clergyman, 1834 - 1905) once described slander as:

“A verdict of guilty pronounced in the absence of the accused, with closed doors, without defense or appeal, by an interested and prejudiced judge.”

Instead of following into the traps of these sins, the church body is called to...

“*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you*” (Eph 4:31-32).

**HOW DOES MALICE DESTROY A CHURCH BODY?**

**HOW DOES DECEIT DESTROY A CHURCH BODY?**

**HOW DOES HYPOCRISY DESTROY A CHURCH BODY?**

**HOW DOES SLANDER DESTROY A CHURCH BODY?**

**1 Peter 2:2-3—*“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.”***

Though some scholars conclude that the readers were new Christians since they were compared to “*newborn infants*” (ie. Kelly, “*Peter and Jude*,” Cranfield, “*1 & 2 Peter and Jude*”), such a judgement is mistaken since the the readers are not identified as infants in the faith (Grudem, “*1 Peter*”). Instead, these maturing Christians were instructed to thirst for “*pure spiritual milk*”— spiritual growth.

“Spiritual growth is always marked by a craving for and delight in God’s Word with the intensity which which a baby craves milk” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”).

The Greek word for “*pure*” (“*adolon*”) implies the “*spiritual milk*” longed for should not be blended or diluted with falsehoods. God’s Word is just that— undiluted, guileless, rational, and able to sustain the soul.

“Spiritual growth is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus Christ. When we place our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins the process of making us more like Him, conforming us to His image... Spiritual growth is a lifelong process that depends on our study and application of God’s Word” (2 Tim 3:16-17) and our walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-26)” (“*What Is Spiritual Growth*, “*Got questions.org*”).

“*Taste*” is experiential— it’s unable to be adequately described with words alone. Just reading about God is not the same as experiencing Him. But, once “*tasted*,” God’s Word is unquestionably deliciously “*good*.” Just as an infant craves his mother’s milk, you’ll “*long for*” more and more and more.

## **WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH?**

## **HOW ARE YOU GROWING?**

## **WHAT HAVE YOU TASTING ABOUT GOD?**

**1 Peter 2:4—*“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,”***

While these Gentile converts came to believe in Jesus, many more rejected Him. God chose Christ as the “*chosen and precious*” foundation on which the church was to be built.

Isaiah 28:16- “*therefore thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”*

Psalms 118:22- “*The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.*”

Eph 2:20- “*built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,*”

Acts 4:10-11- “*let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.*”

“In Acts 4:10-11— where Peter also cited Psalm 118— it seems that the rejection of Jesus as the cornerstone was fulfilled in His death, whereas His vindication or being honored by God occurred at the resurrection” (Thomas Schreiner, *“The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter; Jude”*).

Christ, as the *“living stone,”* is not a temple foundation made of gold and costly stones, but of living, redeemed people. Jesus gives life to the whole spiritual temple that has its foundation built on Him. He is indeed a *“precious”* corner stone.

### WHAT IS A CORNERSTONE?

### WHY/HOW IS THE CHURCH BUILT UPON CHRIST AS ITS CORNERSTONE?

### WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CORNER STONE IS REMOVED?

**1 Peter 2:5-6—*“you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’”***

All believers are now members of God’s *“spiritual house.”* As *“living stones,”* each has been built up to be a part of God’s *“holy priesthood”* and share similar responsibilities of the Levitical priests of old:

### “OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS AND NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER-PRIESTS”

( John MacArthur, *“The MacArthur Bible Commentary”*)

- both by elect privilege (Ex 28:1; John 15:16)
- both cleansed from sin (Lev 8:6-36; Titus 2:14)
- both clothed for service (1 Peter 5:5; Ex 28:42; Lev 8:7; Ps 132:9, 16)
- both anointed for service (Lev 8:12; 30; 1 John 2:20)
- both prepared for service (Lev8:33:9:4, 23; Gal 1:16; 1 Tim 3:6)
- both ordained for obedience (Lev 10:1)
- both are to honor God’s Word (1 Peter 2:2; Mal 2:7)
- both are to walk with God (Mal 2:6; Gal 5:16, 25)
- both are to impact sinners (Mal 2:6; Gal6:1)
- both are to be messengers go God (Mal 2:7; Matt 28:19, 20)

As His priests, all of God’s people now have direct access to Him through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He alone is the only intermediator needed. Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice— *“whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.”* Our *“spiritual sacrifices”* are *“acceptable to God through Jesus Christ”*— the *“chosen and precious cornerstone.”*

### WHAT IS A PRIEST?

### WHAT WAS THE ROLE OF LEVITICAL PRIESTS?

### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS A MEMBER OF GOD’S HOLY PRIESTHOOD?

**1 Peter 2:7-8—“So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.”**

The “*honor*” bestowed a believer is that of final vindication on the day of judgement. But, for those who choose to “*reject*” Jesus as the cornerstone, a different fate awaits. “*They stumble because they disobey the Word*”— Jesus Christ. They make Him a “*stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.*” They choose to reject His grace and will someday face Him as their final judge— a destiny of their own making.

Matt 21:42-44- “*Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him”*

Why and how unbelievers are “*destined*” to reject Jesus is subject to some debate. In Scripture there is a dichotomy between God’s sovereignty and man’s free will. “The word “*destined*” (“*tithemi*”) often refers to what God has appointed to occur (Act 1:7; 13:47; 20:28; 1 Cor 12:18.28; 1 Thes 5:9; 1 Tim 2:7) ... However, Biblical writers never exempt human beings from responsibility, even though they believe God ordains all things (Rom 9:14-23)” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

God sometimes uses a person’s hardened heart to accomplish His greater good (ie. the hardening of the hearts of Pharaoh, Sidon, and those who crucified Jesus). “This ‘judicial hardening’ is God’s active role in blinding an already rebellious person in his rebellion so as to prevent his repentance for a time. God’s motive is to accomplish a greater redemptive purpose through the person’s rebellious actions (often including the potential redemption of those being judicially blinded)” (Leighton Flowers, “*The Potter’s Promise— A Biblical Defense Of Traditional Soteriology*”).

However, it is Biblically clear that some will choose to continue in their rebelliousness unto death and will suffer the eternal consequences of their choice— “*the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces.*”

**HOW/ WHY DO SOME CHOOSE TO STUMBLE OVER GOD’S CORNERSTONE?**

**HOW/ WHY DOES GOD SOMETIMES JUDICIALLY HARDEN A REBELLIOUS HEART?**

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO PREVENT SOMEONE FROM BEING BROKEN TO PIECES?**

**1 Peter 2:9-10—“ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”**

These Christians (as opposed to those who rejected the “*cornerstone*”) are described as:

- (1) “*a chosen race*”
- (2) “*a royal priesthood*”
- (3) “*a holy nation*”
- (4) “*a people for His own possession*”



“Peter called these Gentile Christians by the titles God gave to Israel in the desert (Peter Davids, “1 Peter”- “Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary”):

Ex 19:5-6- “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. ”

Isaiah 43:20-21- “The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise”

“With Israel’s rejection of Christ, God created a new body of people through whom He now seeks to accomplish the same purposes He sought to achieve through Israel, but by different means” (Bailey and Constable, “Nelson’s New Testament Survey”).

God’s new “chosen race” (“My chosen people”), a term previously only applied to Israel, now included both Gentile and Israelite believers in Christ. Where once these Asian converts were “not a people” (had no identity), they were now “God’s people”— a “holy nation” set apart as God’s “own possession.”

As previously noted in vs 5, Christians are now members of “a royal priesthood” and have direct access to God. We’ve been “called out of darkness into His marvelous light” and “receive His mercy.”

### **WHAT’S SPECIAL ABOUT BEING A MEMBER OF GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE?**

### **HOW ARE YOU EXERCISING YOUR DIRECT ACCESS TO GOD AS A HIS PRIEST?**

### **WHY/HOW ARE YOU BEING HOLY?**

**1 Peter 2:11-12-“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”**

In these verses “the focus shifts from the relationship believers have with one another (1:13-2:10) to the relationship with the unbelieving world— an unbelieving world that is suspicious of and hostile to believers” (Thomas Schreiner, “The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude”).

Peter called these Christians to be set apart from the pagan culture surrounding them— like “*sojourners and exiles*” in a foreign land. They were to abstain from the passions of the flesh that waged war against their souls.

Moral conflicts are inevitable in life. Like the childhood game of ‘tug of war,’ our ‘flesh’ is in a constant tug of war with the ‘spirit.’ Each pulls in opposite directions to gain favor in our lives. They never pull in the same direction because they’re diametrically opposed to each other. Our desires, both of the flesh and of the spirit, are in constant conflict. One wants to be twenty-four karat pure—the other, not so much.

These Christians were called to conduct themselves with honor among unbelieving Gentiles who engaged in immoral behaviors. They were to let their “good deeds” speak for them against the accusing words of evildoers.

Matt 5:16-“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Peter hoped their “good deeds” would not only act as a defense against evil doers, but also serve as an outreach to the unsaved. He longed that unbelievers might choose salvation through Jesus Christ when they witnessed the holiness of His believers and would “*glorify God on the day of visitation*” (judgement day).

### **WHAT ARE THE PASSIONS OF THE FLESH?**

### **HOW DO YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF HONORABLY IN A HOSTILE WORLD?**

### **WHY DO YOU DO “GOOD DEEDS?”**

**1 Peter 2:13-15-***“Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.”*

Despite being set apart from the world, Christians must still live in the world. Peter extolled Christians to be subject to ruling authorities “*for the Lord's sake*” who is the creator of government in the first place. By being obedient to governing authority, these Gentile Christians would “*put to silence the ignorance of foolish people*” who feared that their aloofness was dangerous to societal norms.

However, secular authority is never the ultimate authority— God holds that office. As Christians, our beliefs are often in conflict with the secular world. Sometimes we must take a moral stand putting us in legal jeopardy. It's always right to follow God's commands over man's rules.

Acts 4:18-20 -*“So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”*

But, that doesn't negate the legal ramifications of our actions. If we choose to break an unjust law, we must also be willing to suffer the legal consequences because we're still subject to the governing authorities instituted by God.

Rom 13:1 -*“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”*

### **WHAT SECULAR AUTHORITIES RULE OVER YOU?**

### **DO YOU ALWAYS OBEY THEM? WHY? WHY NOT?**

### **WHEN SHOULD YOU NOT OBEY?**

### **WHY/HOW SHOULD YOU ACCEPT PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEDIENCE?**

**1 Peter 2:16-17-“Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”**

As ransomed people, Christians are freed from the final ramification of sin. But that freedom should not be used as “*as cover-up for evil*.” Just because we “can” do something doesn’t mean we “should.” Our “*freedom*” should always edify God and bring others to Christ.

1 Cor 10:23-24; 31-33-“*All things are lawful,*” *but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor*”

1 Cor 10:31-33-“*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.*”

We are either slaves (“*servants*”) to sin or slaves to God— the two masters are mutually exclusive.

Rom 6:15-23-“*What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!*”

*Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?*

*But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*

*I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*

*For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*

*But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

Peter instructed these Christians to “*honor*” both the common man (“*everyone*”) and governing bodies (“*the emperor*”). In addition, they were to “*love*” their fellow brothers. But, most importantly, Peter admonished them to “*fear*” God. He alone, as supreme ruler of heaven and earth, held their ultimate fate in His hands.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**WHO IS YOUR MASTER?**

**1 Peter 2:18-19-***“Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.”*

Household “servants” were instructed to respectfully “subject” themselves to their “masters.” It was similar to a command given by Paul:

Eph 6:5-8- *“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.”*

However, unlike the Greek word Paul used in the the book of Ephesians (“*duoloi*” = “bondservant” or “slave”), Peter used a different word to describe these particular individuals (“*oiketai*”- meaning a “household domestic servant”— “bonded” or “free”).

Slavery was never a divinely designed relationship— it is not God’s will that one man should own another as a piece of property. Despite this fact, slavery prevailed in the ancient world. The first secular evidence of slavery comes from the ancient text, *Code of Hammurabi*, which referred to slavery as a common practice that had been in place for thousands of years at the time it was written in 1754 B.C.

Ancient society was founded upon slavery and *Levitical Law* was not designed to suddenly disrupt this master-servant relationship. *Levitical Law* merely acknowledged it and regulated a level of servitude that was already established.

But, unlike the many barbaric practices of slavery in surrounding pagan cultures, *Levitical Law* embraced certain restraining measures. The medieval Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, described the *Levitical* rules regarding the treatment of slaves as exhibiting “*mercy, compassion, and forbearance.*”

Using *Levitical* principles, He codified *Talmudic Law* regarding slavery:

*“You are in duty bound to see that your slave makes progress; you must benefit him and must not hurt him with words. He ought to rise and advance with you, be with you in the place you chose for yourself, and when fortune is good to you, do not grudge him his portion” (“Guide for the Perplexed”)*

## **“Servant, Bondservant, or Slave?”**

(Justin Taylor, “*The ESV Translation Committee Debates the Translation of “Slave,”*” *Gospel coalition.org*)

“The ESV (*English Standard Version*) Translation Oversight Committee met in the summer of 2010 (at Tyndale House in Cambridge, England) ... to translate the Hebrew word **‘ebed** and the Greek word **doulos**.

A particular difficulty is presented when words in biblical Hebrew and Greek refer to ancient practices and institutions that do not correspond directly to those in the modern world. Such is the case in the translation of **‘ebed** (Hebrew) and **‘doulos** (Greek), terms which are often rendered **“slave.”**

These terms, however, actually cover a range of relationships that require a range of renderings—either **“slave,” “bondservant,”** or **“servant”**—depending on the context.

Further, the word **“slave”** currently carries associations with the often brutal and dehumanizing institution of slavery in nineteenth-century America. For this reason, the ESV translation of the words **‘ebed** and **doulos** has been undertaken with particular attention to their meaning in each specific context.

Thus in Old Testament times, one might enter slavery either voluntarily (e.g., to escape poverty or to pay off a debt) or involuntarily (e.g., by birth, by being captured in battle, or by judicial sentence). Protection for all in servitude in ancient Israel was provided by the Mosaic Law.

In New Testament times, a **doulos** is often best described as a **“bondservant”**—that is, as someone bound to serve his master for a specific (usually lengthy) period of time, but also as someone who might nevertheless own property, achieve social advancement, and even be released or purchase his freedom.

The ESV usage thus seeks to express the nuance of meaning in each context.

Where absolute ownership by a master is in view (as in Romans 6), **“slave”** is used;

where a more limited form of servitude is in view, **“bondservant”** is used (as in 1 Cor 7:21-24);

where the context indicates a wide range of freedom (as in John 4:51), **“servant”** is preferred.

Footnotes are generally provided to identify the Hebrew or Greek and the range of meaning that these terms may carry in each case.”

Whether the individual was a **“servant,” “bondservant,”** or **“slave,”** he was to become subservient to his **“master,”**—regardless if that person was *“good and gentle”* or *“unjust.”* Concerning the latter, Peter stated that it was a *“gracious thing”* to endure *“sorrows while suffering unjustly.”*

Obedying a *“good and gentle”* boss is easy. But being under the authority of an *“unjust”* employer is much more difficult. So how should a Christian conduct himself in the workplace? The answer is simple:

“Christian employees should work for their bosses as if they are working for the Lord Himself...

When we keep in mind that everything we do can be an act of worship (1 Cor 10:31), we will relate to supervisors in the workplace in a way that represents Jesus well...

We can show respect to our bosses, even if they are not respectable. We can give honor, even when our bosses are not honorable. We can obey commands, even when they seem unfair...

Of course, we can also appeal decisions we believe are wrong, but we can do so while still conveying integrity and respect (1 Tim 5:1). The only biblically supportable reason to defy a boss is if the boss demands we do something illegal or against God's will (see Acts 5:29)...

Christians should treat their bosses in such a way that would not prevent them from sharing Christ with their bosses, if the opportunity arises. When we do everything with an eternal purpose in mind, we have wisdom in sticky situations and never have to fear that we have brought reproach to the name of Christ"

("How Should a Christian Treat His/Her boss,? Got [questions.org](http://questions.org)).

**IS YOUR WORLDLY MASTER "GOOD AND GENTLE" OR "UNJUST?"**

**WHY/ HOW SHOULD YOU OBEY YOUR WORLDLY MASTER?**

**WHO IS YOUR ULTIMATE MASTER? HOW SHOULD YOU OBEY HIM?**

**1 Peter 2:20-21-***"For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."*

"What credit is it" if one suffers what is rightfully deserved for sinful, disobedient behavior? Being "beaten" (literally or figuratively) is what we should expect for ungodly behavior. But when we suffer unjustly for doing "good," it's a "gracious thing in the sight of God" because it mimics Christ's unjust, undeserved, exemplary suffering.

"The ultimate reason that suffering exists in the universe is so that Christ might display the greatness of the glory of the grace of God by suffering in Himself to overcome our suffering. The suffering of the utterly innocent and infinitely holy Son of God in the place of utterly undeserving sinners to bring us to everlasting joy is the greatest display of the glory of God's grace that ever was, or ever could be" (John Piper, "The Suffering of Christ and the Sovereignty of God," Desiring God 2005 National Conference).

While on earth, Jesus was a model for our suffering. He willingly took a demotion in status from creator of the world (Col 1:16-17) to mere human being— a position lower than the angels (Heb 2:9). He suffered slander for doing righteous deeds (Matt 9:34). He suffered the loss of His family's respect (Mark 3:20-21). He suffered disgrace (Matt 27:28-31). He even suffered death for us (John 3:15-16). What do we really have to complain about?

**WHAT PUNISHMENT HAVE YOU RIGHTLY SUFFERED?**

**WHAT PUNISHMENT HAVE YOU UNJUSTLY SUFFERED?**

**WHY/HOW SHOULD YOU MIMIC CHRIST IN YOUR SUFFERING?**

**1 Peter 2:22-24—*“He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”***

Jesus committed no sin. He spoke no lie. He neither threaten those who threatened Him, nor paid back their evil with evil. He trusted in His Father, God Almighty, to judge all justly— even unto His death “*on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness*” and be “*healed by His wounds.*”

Have you ever wondered about the dichotomy of Jesus’s absolute power verses His gentleness and self-control? What man, with absolute power, could resist the temptation to lash out in justifiable rage against those who want to revile and destroy him? Yet gentleness in the face of adversity is what Jesus modeled for us. Self-control was the tool He used on His way to Calvary to save us.

We should bridle our ambitions, ego, and selfish desires in favor of advancing God’s Kingdom. Even in defense of the Truth, we’re called to do so with gentleness and self control. As Peter says later:

1 Peter 3:15-17- *“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.”*

### **WHAT DECEIT COMES FROM YOUR MOUTH?**

### **WHO HAVE YOU THREATENED TO PAY BACK EVIL WITH EVIL?**

### **WHY/HOW SHOULD YOU MIMIC JESUS’ SELF-CONTROL?**

**1 Peter 2:25—*“For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”***

Where we were once as lost as strayed sheep, “*there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Rom 8:1). He is our “*Shepherd*”— a term alluding to His tenderness. But Jesus is also called an “*Overseer*”— a designation of authority over our “*souls.*”

“(The word) “*returned*” does not in the Greek imply that they had at first been under the Shepherd’s care and had left Him. The word is that which is often rendered “*were converted,*” and only indicates that they turned round and moved in a contrary direction” (Elliott’s Commentary, “*1 Peter,*” [Bible Hub commentaries.com](http://BibleHubcommentaries.com))

“Here also is an allusion to Isaiah 53:6, (“*All we like sheep have gone astray*”). The figure is plain. We were like a flock without a shepherd. We had wandered far away from the true fold, and were following our own paths. We were without a protector, and were exposed to every kind of danger...

This aptly and forcibly expresses the condition of the whole race before God recovers people by the plan of salvation. A flock thus wandering without a shepherd, conductor, or guide, is in a most pitiable condition; and so was man in his wanderings before he was sought out and brought back to the true fold by the Great Shepherd” (Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, “*1 Peter*,” *Bible Hub commentaries.com*).

**WHERE HAD YOU STRAYED BEFORE BEING FOUND?**

**IN WHAT CONDITION WERE YOU FOUND?**

**WHERE WERE YOU FOUND?**

**ARE YOU GLAD YOU’VE BEEN FOUND?**

**HOW DO YOU SHOW IT?**



## CHAPTER THREE

**1 Peter 3:1-2-“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct.”**

Peter exhorted wives to be “*subject to*” their husbands with the hope of even winning an unconverted husband over to the gospel of Christ. They were not to do it with nagging, but with “*respectful and pure conduct*.”

The command for a wife to be “*subject to*” her husband has been debated (and misconstrued) for centuries. Far too many understand this as an admonition for a wife to blindly follow her husband after leaving her brain at the altar. They mistakenly equate one’s submission as an inequality of personhood—but nothing could be Biblically further from the truth.

Men and women have been created by God to be equal in their personhood because men and women are made equally in God’s image. **One sex was not created to be better or worse than the other!**

Gen 1:27-“*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*”

Gen 5:1-2-“*This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.*”

The relationship of husband and wife is Biblically one of inter-dependence and equality in status:

1 Cor 11:11-12-“*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.*”

Gal 3:27-28-“*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

“The New Testament was countercultural in promoting the equality of women. Indeed, Jesus’ treatment of women was revolutionary in that He treated them with dignity and respect, and hence His stance towards women was paradigmatic for the early church” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

However, **some degree of submission is necessary in any functional relationship**. If everyone is in charge then no one’s in charge and chaos ensues. The Hebrew word “*hypotasso*” (meaning “*submission to authority*”) is used repeatedly throughout Scripture as a relational necessity:

- *Submission* of Jesus to the authority of His parents (Lk 2:51)
- *Submission* of citizens to governmental authorities (Rom 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13)
- *Submission* of church members to church leaders (1 For 16:15-16; 1 Peter 5:5)

- *Submission* of church to authority of Christ (Eph 5:24)
- *Submission* of servants to their masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18)
- *Submission* of Christians to God (Heb 12:9; James 4:7)

With regard to a wife's relationship to her husband, "voluntary submission is in view" (Slaughter, "1 Peter 1:3"). And despite what many men believe, "husbands do not have the responsibility to ensure that wives submit to them" (Thomas Schreiner, "The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude").

But, just as there are different "roles" within the Trinity between God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there are different "roles" ordained for husbands and wives to maintain order in the marriage relationship. God the Father has authority over the Son, though the two are equal in deity. So too, in a marriage, a husband has authority over a wife, though they are equal in personhood and importance. **They just perform different "roles."**

1 Cor 11:3-*"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."*

A wife is to submit to her husband only as a leader — never as a tyrant or as her superior. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. What wife would not respond with submissive respect to a husband who met that tall order?

Eph 5:25-*"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church"*

Eph 5:33-*"However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."*

The simple truth is that both husband and wife are to be in such a close, intimate union with Christ that their union may be spoken of as **"one."**

### **"Six Things Submission Is Not"**

From Article by John Piper  
Founder & Teacher, [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org)

1. *Submission* is **not** agreeing on everything.
2. *Submission* does **not** mean leaving one's brain at the altar.
3. *Submission* does **not** mean a wife shouldn't try to influence her husband.
4. *Submission* is **not** putting the will of a husband before the will of Christ.
5. *Submission* does **not** mean getting all of one's spiritual strength through a husband.
6. *Submission* does **not** mean living or acting in fear.

## WHAT IS SUBMISSION?

## WHAT IS A WIFE'S ROLE IN A MARRIAGE??

## WHAT IS A HUSBAND'S ROLE IN MARRIAGE?

**1 Peter 3:3-4—“Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.”**

Peter wasn't saying "braiding of hair" or "putting on of gold jewelry and clothing" is forbidden— only that beauty should be more than skin deep. A "gentle and quiet spirit" is much more attractive and is "very precious in God's sight." The roadmap to inner beauty was described in great detail in the book of Proverbs where a mother wrote to her son:

Prov 31: 10-31- *"An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.*

*The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

*She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.*

*She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands.*

*She is like the ships of the merchant; she brings her food from afar.*

*She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and portions for her maidens.*

*She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.*

*She dresses herself with strength and makes her arms strong.*

*She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.*

*She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.*

*She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.*

*She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.*

*She makes bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.*

*Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.*

*She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers sashes to the merchant.*

*Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.*

*She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

*She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

*Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:*

*“Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”*

*Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”*

*Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.”*

What man wouldn't find this Proverbs 31 woman attractive and desirable? What man wouldn't be honored to have her at his side all the days of his life? What man wouldn't want to love her as Christ loves the church. I found my “P31” many years ago—I pray you have too!

### **WHAT IS INNER BEAUTY?**

### **WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL ABOUT YOUR WIFE?**

### **WHAT DOES GOD FIND “PRECIOUS” ABOUT YOUR WIFE?**

**1 Peter 5-6- “For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.”**

Peter used as an example the “*holy women*” (ie. “*Sarah*”) who were married to the patriarchs (ie. “*Abraham*”) to describe how submission with a gentle and quiet spirit was a godly endeavor. “These women were called “*holy*” (“*hagiai*”) because they lived in a way that was pleasing to God; they were “set apart” for His purposes...

These women did not submit to their husbands because they believed their husbands were superior to them intellectually or spiritually. They submitted to their husbands because they were confident that God would reward all those who put their trust in Him” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Wives today are to emulate Sarah and her offspring as they are called “*her children*.” They are to “*do good*”—a favorite expression of Peter meaning to live the Christian life boldly in faith. They are “*not to fear anything frightening*” as God will always be at their side if they follow Him.

### **HOW WERE THE WIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS HOLY (SET APART)?**

### **HOW IS YOUR WIFE HOLY (SET APART)?**

### **HOW ARE YOU HELPING HER BE HOLY (SET APART)?**

**1 Peter 3:7- “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”**

“It was an important advance made in society when the Christian religion gave such a direction as this, for everywhere among the pagan, and under all false systems of religion, woman has been regarded as worthy of little honor or respect. She has been considered as a slave, or as a mere instrument to gratify the passions of man...

It is one of the elementary doctrines of Christianity, however, that woman is to be treated with respect; and one of the first and most marked effects of religion on society is to elevate the wife to a condition in which she will be worthy of esteem” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Bible [hub.com](http://hub.com)).

Women are not “*weaker vessels*” intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually, but merely physically. As such, husbands are called to treat them in an “*understanding way*” with special kindness and attention.

Husbands should treat their wives as fellow “*heirs of the grace of life*”— as **equals** in God’s heavenly kingdom. They are to treat their wives with respect so that their “*prayers may not be hindered*,” meaning God may choose to not answer their prayers if they don’t!

### **HOW IS YOUR WIFE A WEAKER VESSEL?**

### **HOW IS SHE INTELLECTUALLY, EMOTIONALLY, OR SPIRITUALLY STRONGER THAN YOU?**

### **HOW DO YOU TREAT HER WITH RESPECT?**

**1 Peter 3:8—“*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.*”**

Peter now addressed the community of believers as a whole. (“*all of you*”). They were to have:

- (1) *unity of mind*,
- (2) *sympathy*,
- (3) *brotherly love*,
- (4) *a tender heart and*,
- (5) *a humble mind*”

Having “*unity of mind*” means living in harmony with both the church body and outsiders as well. Dissensions and divisions are all too prevalent in our selfish society. Even within churches, minor arguments (that often have nothing to do with dogma) have caused schisms in congregations that were once strongly unified in the preaching of the gospel. Peter warned against this and implored his followers to put aside petty bickering for the sake of unity in Christ.

“*Sympathy*” is defined as “the feeling where one understands and cares about someone-else’s problems” (Cambridge Dictionary). It’s being in tune with the needs, joys, and sorrows of other. Christians are called to “*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep*” (Romans 12:15).

“*Brotherly love*” (“*philadelphoi*”) is love expressed within a family. Christians are to love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ— a very special family indeed!

Having a “*tender heart*” means being able to express compassion. Just as each believer has been forgiven of sins, we must be willing to forgive the trespasses of others. Our willingness to forgive others is a recognition of God’s willingness to forgive us.

A person with a “*humble mind*” puts others before themselves. This is often frowned upon in our dog-eat-dog society, but it’s the glue that keeps believers on the right track. As the apostle Paul admonished:

Phil 2:3-4- *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

**HOW DO YOU HAVE UNITY OF MIND WITH OTHER BELIEVERS?**

**HOW DO YOU EXPRESS SYMPATHY AND BROTHERLY LOVE WITH OTHERS?**

**DO YOU HAVE A TENDER HEART FOR SINNERS? WHY?**

**DO YOU PUT OTHERS BEFORE YOURSELF? HOW? WHY?**

**1 Peter 3:9-10-*“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. “For whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.”***

Not repaying evil with evil is an oft verbalized command throughout Scripture:

Rom 12:17- *“Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”*

1 Thes 5:15- *“See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”*

1 Cor 4:12- *“and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure”*

Luke 6:28-29- *“bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic[a] either.”*

Matt 5:38-42- *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”*

Ps 34:12-16- *“What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.”*

You think God's trying to tell us something important? Instead of responding in kind to those who revile us, we are to "bless" them. We don't do it to obtain salvation, but rather as evidence of our conversion. Though our blessing "is not earned by the performance of good works, it never-the-less belongs to those who demonstrate good works" (Michaels, "1 Peter").

**HOW HAVE YOU BEEN PERSONALLY REVILED?**

**DID YOU REPAY EVIL WITH EVIL? HOW? WHY?**

**HOW SHOULD WE REPEND TO EVIL?**

**1 Peter 3:12-*"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."***

Peter continued his paraphrase of Psalm 34:12-16. The Lord will bless those who follow His righteous path and will look favorably upon their prayers. The "eyes of the Lord are on the righteous," but woe to those who choose to do evil— "the face of the Lord is against" them.

"The phrase *eyes of the Lord* is an anthropomorphic expression that ascribes humanlike qualities to God. The initial encouragement we receive from knowing that the Lord's eyes are upon the righteous is that God is omniscient and sovereign over all creation...

God knows everything (1 John 3:20) and sees all people, both the evil and the righteous. His eyes "*are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good*" (Proverbs 15:3). Nothing escapes the Lord's purview...

The "*righteous*" Peter referred to are born-again Christians who live out their new lives in Christ, practicing unity, love, compassion, sympathy, and humility. They don't repay evil for evil and don't retaliate with insults when they are insulted. Instead, they pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing" ("*What does it mean that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous- 1 Peter 3:12?*" "[Got questions.org](http://Gotquestions.org)").

**WHAT DO GOD'S EYE SEE?**

**WHAT DO GOD'S EYE SEE IN YOU?**

**ARE YOU RIGHTEOUS?**

**1 Peter 3:13-14-*"Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,"***

**What, Me Worry?**



Whether you grew up in the 20th or 21st century, you probably know the fictitious fellow to the left. The poster was originally a 19th century advertisement for painless dentistry and was the origin of the motto,

**"WHAT, ME WORRY?"**

In 1956, a *MAD Magazine* cartoonist named Harvey Kurtzman claimed the character for his magazine and the iconic lad was re-named Alfred E. Neuman. Kurtzman stated, "It was a face that didn't have a care in the world."

Peter tried to instill the same attitude in those who follow Christ. If we are "zealous for what is good," God will be beside us. We might "suffer for righteousness' sake" in this world, but we will be "blessed" in the next.

We are instructed to not "fear" or be "troubled" by those who want to harm us. God is always beside us. Perhaps we could take a lesson or two from carefree Alfred E. Neuman and say,

**"WHAT, ME WORRY?"**

**WHAT ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT?**

**WHY ARE YOU WORRIED?**

**ARE YOU READY TO GIVE YOUR WORRIES TO GOD?**

**1 Peter 3:15-17—*"but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil."***

"Apologetics" is showing good reason and evidence to support or contradict a particular belief.

"Christian Apologetics" includes defending the Christian faith by pointing to truth in:

Philosophy,

Science,

Evolution,

Logic,

and the Bible itself.

As Christians, we have solid evidence supporting our faith and are instructed to always be "*prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks*" for that rationale. The Truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a standard that has remained unshaken for over 2000 years.

Here are some simple truths about truth. "Truths are discovered, not invented... If something is true, it's true for all people, in all places, at all times... Truths do not change and are not affected by attitude... All Truths are absolute Truths— Truth is not relative... A Truth can change a belief, but a belief cannot change a Truth." (Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, "*I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*") .

In our defense of Christianity, we are instructed to speak Christ's Truth "*with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience,*" even if slandered and reviled. "*For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*"



## WHAT IS TRUTH?

## WHAT IS THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL?

## HOW DO YOU DEFEND THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL USING PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, EVOLUTION, LOGIC, AND THE BIBLE?

**1 Peter 3:18—*“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,”***

After telling his audience to always be prepared to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ, Peter succinctly presents the gospel in this one verse:

- (1) *“For Christ also suffered once for sins”*
- (2) *“the righteous for the unrighteous”*
- (3) *“that He might bring us to God”*
- (4) *“being put to death in the flesh”*
- (5) *“but made alive in the spirit”*

The apostle Paul was a bit more wordy in his presentation of the gospel:

1 Cor 15:1–6—*“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received:*

*that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,*

*that he was buried,*

*that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,*

*and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

*Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.”*

In simple terms, the Christian gospel is the Truth of salvation bestowed on sinful believers by the death, burial, resurrection, and return of Jesus—the Christ prophesied in the Old Testament.

Always be prepared to present this “good news” to anyone who has ears to hear. It’s not our responsibility to lead them to Christ—but it is our job to present the Gospel in a rational and loving way.

## HOW DO YOU PRESENT THE GOSPEL?

## WHERE DO YOU PRESENT THE GOSPEL?

## WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN PRESENTING THE GOSPEL?

**1 Peter 3:19-20-***“in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.”*

To understand these verses one must first examine the books of Genesis, 2 Peter, Jude, and the apocryphal book, 1 Enoch:

Gen 6:1-5-*“When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.*

*Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”*

*The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them.*

*These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.*

*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

2 Peter 2:1-10-*“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.*

*And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*

*For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (literally “Tarsus”) and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;*

*if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

*if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,*

*and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,”*

Jude 5-7-*“Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he*

*has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”*

1 Enoch 6-11- *“And when the sons of men had multiplied, in those days, beautiful and comely daughters were born to them. And the watchers, the sons of heaven, saw them and desired them. And they said to one another, ‘Come, let us choose for ourselves wives from the daughters of men, and let us beget for ourselves children”*

Michael S. Heiser ( *“The Unseen Realm- Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible”*) states:

“Scholars agree these passages are about the same subject matter. They describe an episode from the time of Noah and the flood where “*angels sinned.*”

**That sin, which precipitated the flood, was sexual in nature;** it is placed in the same category as the sin which prompted the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The transgression was interpreted by Peter and Jude as evidence of despising both authority and the boundaries of “*proper dwelling*” for the parties concerned.

All of those elements are transparent in Genesis 6:1-4. There is simply no other sin in the *Old Testament* that meets these specific details— and no other ‘angelic’ sin *at all* in the *Old testament* that might be referent.”

The offspring of these particular fallen angels and humans were called the “**Nephilim**” 1 Enoch describes these individuals as giants. The word “*Nephilim*” occurs twice in the *Hebrew Bible*. In both cases the *Septuagint* (the Bible translation from *Hebrew* into *Greek*) also translated the term as “*giant*” (“Gk; “*gigas*”). These giant *Nephilim* (**the ungodly offspring of divine and human cohabitation,**) played an important role throughout the *Old Testament*.

This transgression had consequences:

### **It grieved God...**

Gen 6:6-7-“*And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”*

### **... and led to the imprisonment of the fallen angels who mated with humans ...**

Jude 6-7- *“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*

1 Peter 3:18-20—*“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which **he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah,** while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.”*

Peter stated Jesus “**went and proclaimed to the spirits** (these fallen angels) **in prison** (“**Tarsus**”).” It meant that Jesus, after His death and resurrection, proclaimed victory over these demonic spirits that have been “kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day.”

(Throughout the Bible, various words are translated into our concept of the word “**Hell**.” This often leads to confusion as each has a unique meaning depending on **context**. There are **four specific words** rendered “**Hell**” in our *English* translations of *Scripture*— *Sheol*, *Hades*, *Gehenna*, and *Tartarus*.

In the *New Testament*, the *Greek* word “**Tarsus**” appears **only once** and is often translated “**Hell**” in our *English* version of *Scripture*. But, Peter (2 Peter 2:4-6) used this word in referring only to the **place of confinement for these evil angels**. It’s a **temporary place** where these particular fallen angels who sinned are now confined.)

Because of man’s participation in this transgression and their overall wickedness,

**...God caused a flood to destroy mankind.**

Gen 7:11-12—*In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights... And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.”*

**WHY DID GOD NEED TO IMPRISON THESE PARTICULAR FALLEN ANGELS?**

**WHY DID GOD CAUSE THE FLOOD?**

**HOW/WHY DID JESUS PROCLAIM VICTORY AFTER HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION?**

1 Peter 3:21-22—*“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.”*

In these verses, Peter equates Baptism with the Flood because both cause death. Whereas the waters that prevailed on earth for 150 days destroyed all of mankind except for 8 individuals, the water of Baptism represents death to a previous life of sin and shame. Baptism “*saves*” us not because of the physical act of cleansing, but as our representation of “*an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*”

Baptism is simply a public act demonstrating our commitment to the gospel. It’s an admission that we are not able to obtain salvation on our own— we cannot do enough good works to have a “*good conscience.*”

Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, God the Father no longer looks at us as the sinners we are. Instead, He looks at all believers through the blood splattered prism of Jesus and sees new creatures destined for paradise.

Christ has now “*gone to heaven and is at the right hand of God,*” all “*angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him*”— both good and bad. But a day is soon coming when He will return to create a New Heaven and a New Earth where every knee will bow and every knee will confess Jesus is Lord.

Phil 2:9-11-“ *God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”

**WHAT IS BAPTISM?**

**WHERE WERE YOU BAPTIZED?**

**WHAT DID YOUR BAPTISM PERSONALLY REPRESENT?**



## CHAPTER 4

**1 Peter 4:1-2—*“Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.”***

Like Christ, believers should expect to suffer. Peter instructs us to “arm” ourselves for this suffering. The word “arm” is a military term. “The martial language indicates that discipline and grit are needed to live the Christian life, particularly in view of the suffering believers encounter. Indeed, believers must arm themselves with the attitude that suffering is inevitable” (Thomas Schreiner, *“The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude”*).

Eph 6:10-18- *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

*Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.*

*In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*

*praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints”*

The person who willingly suffers for Christ’s sake is no longer a slave to sin— *“whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”* This obviously doesn’t mean we will never sin again, but rather that we will not continue practicing sin as a way of life. We’ll no longer live for *“human passions but for the will of God.”*

1 John 3:6- *“No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.”*

1 John 5:18- *“We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.”*

“A believer will struggle with sin and sometimes give in, but giving in to sin is no longer normative. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, we are being sanctified. As we are led by the Spirit, we will walk more and more in obedience to the Word of God. (*“What does it mean that believers do not continue to sin?”*, [Got questions.org](http://Gotquestions.org)).

## HOW ARE YOU ARMING YOURSELF FOR SUFFERING?

### DO YOU SIN?

## HOW IS SIN NO LONGER NORMATIVE IN YOUR LIFE?

**1 Peter 4:3-“For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.”**

Peter next lists a hodgepodge of sins that a believer should put in his past— “*sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.*”

“**Sensuality**” is defined as the gratification of the senses or the indulgence of appetite (*Merriam Webster*).

“Sensuality is an abuse of our God-given gifts. Those caught up in sensuality abuse the gift of sight by feasting the eyes on forbidden images such as pornography. They may feast the ears on ungodly conversation, jokes, or music (Eph 5:4). Those given to sensuality will indulge in “wild parties” (1 Peter 4:3), drug and alcohol abuse (Prov 20:1), sexual immorality (Hosea 4:10–11), and foolishness (Mark 7:21–22). The sensual follow the sinful desires of the flesh without boundaries or restraint” (“*What Does The Bible Say About Sensuality*”, *Got question.org*).

“**Passion**” is the very powerful feeling of sexual attraction, love, hate, anger, or other emotion (*Cambridge Dictionary*). We’re to give up the ungodly passions of our flesh and transfer our passion to Christ for “*those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires*” (Gal 5:24). We are instructed to redirect our passions:

Rom 12:9-13-“ *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Out do one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*”

“**Drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties**” (that may have once upon a time been enticing), will no longer have a hold on us if we set our eye on Christ. We are to live in a way that is different from the ways of the world. Christians are called to be like Jesus and walk in the ways of His righteousness and holiness.

“**Idolatry**” is “the worship of idols or excessive devotion to, or reverence for some person or thing” (*Merriam-Webster*). It’s anything that replaces God.

“Idolatry extends beyond the worship of idols and images and false gods. Our modern idols are many and varied. Even for those who do not bow physically before a statue, idolatry is a matter of the heart—pride, self-centeredness, greed, gluttony, a love for possessions and ultimately rebellion against God. Is it any wonder that God hates it?” (“*What Is The Definition Of Idolatry?*” - *Got questions.org*).

## WHAT IS PASSION?

## WHAT WERE YOUR PASSIONS BEFORE BECOMING A CHRISTIAN?

## WHAT ARE YOUR PASSIONS NOW?



**1 Peter 4:4-5—“*With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*”**

Have you ever been maligned for not participating in the sins of your past life? If not, why not? The Christian life is an “about face” to the ways of the world and should be apparent to all around us. It shouldn’t surprise us when past friends and colleagues express dismay when we won’t join them in their “flood of debauchery.”

Peter instructs us to not be chagrined by the temporal suffering we’ll experience from those who want us to fail in our Christian walk. Eventually, they will have to “give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

Romans 12:2- “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*”

**DO FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES MALIGN YOU FOR NOT JOINING THEM IN THEIR DEBAUCHERY?**  
**IF NOT, WHY NOT?**  
**HOW DO YOU NOT CONFORM TO THIS WORLD?**

**1 Peter 4:6—“*For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.*”**

Some try to use this confusing passage (“*For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead*”) to proclaim post-death repentance is possible—the “**Post Mortem View**” of evangelism.

Historically, this “***Post Mortem***” theory was espoused in the third century by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, but it fell out of favor in Western theology after the time of Augustine. It’s currently the view of those affiliated with the *Church of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)*.

Others claim this passage indicates that every single person, while dying, has an encounter with Jesus Christ and can thus come to understand what Jesus has done for their *Salvation*. This “**Final Option Theory**” of salvation claims God makes belief in the Gospel message accessible to everyone. During the process of death, a person can make a fully free act of belief with the full knowledge to either accept or reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a minority view held by some *Roman Catholics*.

Still others claim God will ultimately save all people through Christ’s sacrifice regardless of whether they believed, disbelieved, or had never heard the explicit gospel message itself—the “**Universalist View**” of salvation.

Condemned as a heresy by the early church, ***Universalism*** is renounced by most of Biblical *Christianity* because Scripture indicates some people will indeed suffer eternal divine judgment due to their rejection of God and the saving grace of His Son. Not all people will be saved! (i.e. Acts 4:12, Matt 25:32-33, Matt 25:41, Matt 25:46)

Any notion of Christ’s universal redemption or of second chance “to those who die before Christ... is thoroughly inconsistent with the theology, ethics, and aim of 1 Peter as a whole” (*Elliott, 1 Peter*).

The NIV translation of this verse inserts the word "**now**" in its translation to indicate it refers to those who were "*spiritually dead*."

*"For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are **now** dead, so that they might be judged according to human standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit."*

But the word "**now**" is not actually in the Greek text.

Most believe the actual meaning might be better understood in *eschatology* terms— the gospel was preached to **believers** (who are now physically dead) that they "*would live in the spirit the way God does*."

## WHERE DID YOU FIRST HEAR THE GOSPEL?

## DO YOU WANT TO BE JUDGED BY YOUR FLESHLY BEHAVIOR?

## HOW WILL GOD JUDGE YOU?

**1 Peter 4:7-9**—*"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."*

The presence of Jesus on earth was the beginning of the last stage of human history. After His death, burial, and resurrection, the only thing left will be His return— "*the end of all things*." No one knows when that day will come, but it's certainly "*at hand*" (Rom 13:11-12, , Phil 4:5, Heb 10:23-25).

Peter admonished his reader to behave like the "*end*" could come any day. There's an oft quoted anecdote about Martin Luther being asked what he would do if the "*end*" came today. He supposedly said,

*"I'd plant a tree and pay my taxes,"*

meaning he'd live every day as if it was his last. Whether the quote is true or not, the principle is profound. We should always be "*self controlled and sober-minded*" each and every day as "*the end of all things is at hand*."

"The realization that God is bringing history to a close should provoke believers to depend on Him, and this dependence is manifested in "*prayer*;" for in "*prayer*" believers recognize that any good that occurs in the world is due to God's grace." (Thomas Schreiner, "*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*").

With the "*end*" in mind, believers are to "*keep loving one another earnestly*." The word translated "*earnestly*" ("*ektene*") was a term used to describe the taut muscles of an athlete straining to win a race. It meant to give love everything you've got "*since love covers a multitude of sins*." Christians are called to overlook the sins committed against us and always be ready to forgive those who trespass against us.

Prov 10:12- "*Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses*."

"*Hospitality*" is defined as the act of being friendly and welcoming to guests and visitors (*Cambridge Dictionary*). The word is derived from the Latin word "*hospes*" meaning "*host, visitor or stranger*." The Greek word for hospitality actually means "*love of strangers*." Hospitality is a mark of the Christian community.

Rom 12:13- "*Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality*."

Heb 13:2- "*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares*."

**HOW ARE YOU “PLANTING A TREE AND PAYING YOUR TAXES”  
AS IF IT WAS YOUR LAST DAY?**

**HOW DO LOVE EARNESTLY?**

**HOW DO YOU SHOW HOSPITALITY**

**1 Peter 4:10-11—“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

Every Christian has been graciously given at least one spiritual “gift” by God to be used to strengthen the Church. Peter divides these gifts into two categories— “Serving gifts” and “Speaking gifts.” The apostle Paul gives more detail:

**SERVING GIFTS**

(Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:9-10, 28-30)

**Giving**

**Leading**

**Mercy**

**Helps**

**Healing**

**Miracles**

**SPEAKING GIFTS**

(Rom 12:6-7; 1 Cor12:10, 28-30; Eph 4:11)

**Apostleship**

**Prophecy**

**Teaching**

**Tongues**

**Exhortation**

Gifts are given to edify others, not oneself. They’re not given that believers may boast of their gifts, but instead are given “*in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ*” because “*to Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.*”

**WHAT SPIRITUAL GIFT HAVE YOU BEEN GIVEN BY GOD?**

**HOW ARE YOU USING IT?**

**HOW ARE YOU GLORIFYING CHRIST WITH THE USE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT?**

**1 Peter 4:12-13—*“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”***

In school, there are usually two types of tests—“pop tests” and “planned tests.” We take them, not as “*though something strange was happening,*” but as something expected when we take any class. Tests are good for us— they act as a barometer of our comprehension of the material and give us feedback of things we still need to learn.

Peter wanted to be sure that these believers would “*not be surprised*” by any “tests” put before them. They were to expect “*fiery trials*” as par for the course and “*rejoice insofar as they shared Christ’s suffering.*”

“Tests” are never pleasant, but they are necessary. They ensure our value and strengthen our character. Would you really trust anyone who had never been tested in life? Christ passed His “test” with flying colors. How are you doing?

**WHAT “POP TESTS” HAS LIFE GIVEN YOU?**

**WHAT “PLANNED TESTS” HAS LIFE GIVEN YOU?**

**ARE YOU SURPRISED WHEN TESTS COME YOUR WAY? WHY/ WHY NOT?**

**1 Peter 4:14-16—*“If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.***

Suffering insults “*for the name of Christ*” is admirable— we will be blessed as “*the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon*” us. But suffering for Christ is not the same as suffering for what we rightly deserve for bad behavior. Peter warns us not to “*suffer as a murderer or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler.*”

The word “*insult*” means to treat or speak insolently or with contemptuous rudeness (*dictionary.com*). It’s giving or intending to give offense (*Merriam Webster*).

The Biblical definition of “*insult*” gets more descriptive— “whoever says to his brother ‘*Raqa*’” (the Aramaic word “*r ēq ā*” meaning ‘*imbecile*’ or ‘*blockhead*’ ). Have you ever been called a “*imbecilic blockhead*” for following Christ? Good, you’re blessed!

Murder and theft are both sins and crimes against society. They deserve punishment. Peter emphasized that the suffering received for these infractions was not the same as suffering for Christ. One is deserved, the other not.

“*Evildoers*” are those who go out of their way to do wrong— criminally or morally. They blatantly break God’s laws.

The term “*meddler*” appears nowhere where else in the Bible and is often translated as “*mischief maker,*” “*busy-body,*” or “*troublesome meddler*” in various translation. “Peter wanted believers to refrain from acting tactless and without social graces” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

## HOW HAVE YOU SUFFERED INSULTS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE?

### HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CALLED AN "IMBECILE" OR "BLOCKHEAD" FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN?

### WHY DOES PETER INCLUDE MURDERS, THIEVES, EVILDOERS, AND MEDDLERS IN THE SAME SENTENCE?

**1 Peter 4:16-***"Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name."*

"Shame" can be defined as a painful feeling of regret, self-hate, and dishonor ([vocabulary.com](http://vocabulary.com)). Peter states emphatically that no Christian should have regrets about their choice to follow Christ. There is no dishonor in suffering for His sake. Indeed, Christ Himself even warned against feeling shame in proclaiming the gospel.

Luke 9:26-*"For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."*

Instead, we are to act like the apostle Paul:

Rom 1:16-17-*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"*

Paul stated that his confidence in the gospel message was not misplaced. He felt no regret or disgrace for proclaiming it. If we truly believe in Christ, we will never be put to shame for believing in Jesus.

Rom 10:11-*"For the Scripture says, 'Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.'"*

## HAVE YOU EVER FELT ASHAMED? WHY? WHY NOT?

### HAVE YOU EVER FELT ASHAMED FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN? WHY? WHY NOT?

### WHY CANYOU NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME?

**1 Peter 4:17-18-***"For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And 'If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?'"*

Prov 11:31-*"If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!"*

Peter quotes the above verse found in the book of Proverbs, but replaces "scarcely saved" for "repaid on earth." When combined, the phrases "scarcely saved" (also translated "saved with difficulty") and "repaid on earth" add up to the idea that salvation is a gift that believers will receive after enduring suffering on this earth.

But for those who “do not obey the gospel of God” (unbelievers), a different end awaits “for it is time for judgement to begin at the household of God.” This judgement begins in the present age with believers (“with us”) who receive purifying judgement after suffering. But for those who willingly disobey the gospel (unrepentant sinners), their judgement will end in destruction.

“Suffering may be difficult now, but by participating in the pain of following Christ believers escape the condemnation coming upon the wicked.” (C.E.B.Cranfield, *1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Introduction and Commentary*).

### **HOW ARE YOU BEING JUDGED NOW?**

### **ARE YOU SUFFERING WITH YOUR HEAD HELD HIGH?**

### **WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE FATE OF “THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY THE GOSPEL OF GOD?”**

**1 Peter 4:19—“Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.”**

Peter make four points in this short verse. First, though we may not like the idea, we suffer “according to God's will” — all suffering passes through His hands. Despite His being sovereign, God the Father allowed Jesus to suffer for a greater purpose. Likewise, our suffering is for greater good. It either strengthens our faith or the faith of those around us.

Second, we are to “entrust” our souls to God. It implies fully committing to Him with confidence that He always has our wellbeing in mind despite our suffering. He will never let us suffer beyond what we can endure and will provide the strength needed to get through it.

Third, God is the “faithful Creator” of heaven and earth. He is faithful to His promises. He sees all, and knows all— He will never abandon us in our times of need.

And fourth, we are instructed to always do “good.” Despite the sufferings experienced in this world, we are to keep our eye on the ball and follow Christ' example. Doing “good” led Jesus to the cross. Where is it leading you? Don't worry, you can handle it— God's got your back.

### **WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?**

### **HOW HAVE YOU FULLY COMMITTED TO GOD?**

### **ARE YOU DOING GOOD? WHERE IS IT LEADING YOU?**

# CHAPTER FIVE

**1 Peter 5:1-“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed”**

The term “*elders*” (“*prebyteroi*”) referred to those who had leadership roles in the churches and are mentioned by Peter, Paul, Luke, and James. Peter refers to himself as a...

- (1) "*fellow elder*"
- (2) "*witness of the suffering of Christ*"
- (3) "*partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed*"

Like Peter, “*elders*” undertake many roles within the church. They...

- (1) Lead the flock (1 Tim 5:17)
- (2) Pray for the sick (James 5:14)
- (3) Settle disputes (Acts 15:1-2)
- (4) Guard the spiritual life of the church (Heb 13:17)
- (5) Prayerfully teach the Word of God (Acts 6:2)

The qualification of an “*elder*” are listed in Scripture:

1 Tim 3:1-7- “*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.*

*Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.”*

Titus 1:5-9- “*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.*

*For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.*

*He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”*



Unlike the “*elders*” he addressed, Peter had personally witnessed “*the suffering of Christ*.” He mentioned this because being willing to suffer like Christ was a major theme of his letter. Suffering is what’s expected in becoming a fellow “*partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed*”— the reward believers will receive at the second coming of Christ.

## WHAT IS AN ELDER?

## WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER?

## DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN ELDER? WHY? WHY NOT?

**1 Peter 5:2-3—“*shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.*”**

Peter exhorts elders to “*shepherd*” and exercise “*oversight*” over “*the flock of God*.” A shepherd is one who protects, guides, or watches over a person or group of people. However, “*exercising oversight*” is quickly contrasted with the admonition not to be “*domineering over those*” led. Elders are to lead by “*being examples to the flock*”— not by oppression.

Those asked to be an elder should consider taking the office “*not under compulsion, but willingly*.” If undertaken only out of a sense of responsibility and not joy, the position will soon become burdensome. It’s a serious job requiring a great commitment of one’s time and resources. It’s an honor, but should be undertaken only after prayerful consultation as to what “*God would have*” you “*eagerly*” do.

Additionally, Peter exhorts anyone seeking the office of “*elder*” to never do so out of “*shameful gain*.” Power, prestige, or financial gain must never be the motivation. Judas, one of Jesus’ original twelve disciples, might have become an elder someday had he not succumbed to these egregious sins.

## WHO DO YOU SHEPHERD?

## HAVE YOU TAKEN ON CHURCH ROLES OUT OF COMPULSION OR JOY?

## DO YOU LEAD BY EXAMPLE? HOW?

**1 Peter 5:4—“*And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory*”**

What is this “*unfading crown of glory*”? Well, it may be hard to believe, but our Bible actually promises much more than *Salvation*. God wants to shower us with “*awards*” for the work we do today. Though *faith* is the voucher to get into heaven, our *good works* determine various blessings after we step through God’s door. These will be proportionate to our faithfulness in this world.



Just as the *Olympics* awards **medals** for achievement, God awards “**crowns**” for various accomplishments. These crowns will be special awards for excellence and maximum effort. They will be for those *Christians* who were willing to go the extra mile in accomplishing whatever God called them to do. Most Biblical scholars recognize **five specific “crowns.”**

**The Imperishable / Incorruptible Crown of Victory** (1 Cor 9:24-25)

**The Crown of Rejoicing / Boasting** (1 Thes 2:19)

**The Crown of Righteousness** (2 Tim 4:8)

**The Crown of Glory** (1 Peter 5:4)

**The Crown of Life** (Rev 2:10)

An **award** is a tangible reminder of a specific achievement. It serves as a recognition of merit. We hand out awards at sporting events, business banquets, and school assemblies. In the Bible, **heavenly awards** are referred to as **Crowns**— specifically “**Stephanos crowns**.” These are not the “**diadema crowns**” worn by Kings, but rather a crown given to a victor or champion.

From *Scripture*, we know some believers will be awarded one or more of five of these “**Stephanos crowns**” for their actions here on earth.

## **1. The Imperishable / Incorruptible Crown of Victory**

1 Cor 9:24-25- “*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”*

This is an **award** for **endurance**— bearing pain and hardship despite fatigue and stress. It’s for those who have not stored treasures on the earth “*where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal*” (Matt 6:19), but who instead kept their eye on the ultimate prize- “*an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven*” (1 Peter 1:4).

They gave up much in order to follow Christ to the fullest. It’s an **award** given for the **sacrifices** they were willing to make to successfully complete the mission God had called them to do. This **Imperishable / Incorruptible Crown of Victory** will last for eternity.

**WHAT IS ENDURANCE?**

**WHAT HAVE YOU ENDURED?**

**WHAT HAVE YOU ENDURED FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST?**

## **2. The Crown of Rejoicing / Boasting**

1 Thes 2:13-14- “*And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.”*

1 Thes 2:19-20- “*For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his*

*coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.”*

This *award* has been called the “*soul winner’s crown*.” It’s given to people who engage in *evangelism*. They eagerly share their testimony of Christ and the Gospel of Grace with others. In the *New Testament*, the apostle Paul earned this *crown* after winning the *Thessalonians* to faith in Jesus. He called those he *saved* his “*joy*” and his “*crown of boasting*.”

### WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

### HOW / WHY DO YOU EVANGELIZE?

### WHO BRINGS A PERSON TO CHRIST?

## 3. The Crown of Righteousness

2 Tim 4:6-8- *“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”*

There are two definitions of *righteousness* in our Bible. The most important one is we’ve been given an *imputed righteous* as the result of Jesus’ death on the cross. God no longer sees our sins because He is looking through the prism of His Son. Of course, just because God no longer sees us as sinners doesn’t mean we no longer sin. Every *Christian* obtains this *righteousness* as a result of belief in Jesus.

The second definition of *righteousness* is simply living a *good* and *righteous* life in actions, words, and deeds. This *crown* is specially designated for those who longed for Jesus’ appearing and lived their life in anticipation of His return. Like Paul, they kept the faith. They knew they couldn’t lead a *righteous* life on their own accord, but they set their gaze on Jesus as He lead the way.

### WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LIVING A RIGHTEOUSNESS LIFE?

### HOW / WHY DO YOU LEAD A RIGHTEOUS LIFE TODAY?

## 4. The Crown of Glory \* \* \* \*

1 Peter 5:1-4- *“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”*

This is a *service award* for all those who shepherd a flock of believers. They are the Sunday school teachers, pastors, and elders who **teach the Word of God**. If they willfully and faithfully lead their flocks into the ways and knowledge of God, they “will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

**DO YOU SHEPHERD A FLOCK?**

**WHY DO YOU SHEPHERD A FLOCK?**

**HOW DO YOU SHEPHERD A FLOCK?**

**WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SHEPHERDING A FLOCK?**

## **5. The Crown of Life**

Rev 2:10- “*Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.*”

This *award* is sometimes called the “*martyr’s crown*.” Jesus will present this *crown* to those who undergo severe hardship, testing, and tribulation for His sake. The *Crown of Life* is awarded to anyone willing to offer the ultimate sacrifice of dying for one’s faith in Christ.

**WHAT TRIBULATION HAVE YOU GONE THROUGH FOR CHRIST?**

**ARE YOU AFRAID OF SUFFERING FOR CHRIST?**

**ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE YOUR LIFE FOR CHRIST?**

### **WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH A CROWN?**

One final note on *crowns*. You might be wondering what we’re supposed to do with a *crown* once we’ve received it. Do we flaunt it or hide it? Fortunately, we have our answer from the *Book of Revelation*.

Rev 4:10-11- “*The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who is seated on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever.*

***They cast their crowns before the throne**, saying, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.”*

Just as the twenty-four elders honored Jesus, we’ll *fall down before Him* and *cast our crowns before the throne* as an acknowledgement Jesus is the source of any merit within us. It’s only by His Grace that we even have an invitation to stand before Him. We will be forever thankful!

## WHAT DO YOU DO WITH ALL YOUR AWARDS TODAY?

### DO YOU DISPLAY THEM OR HIDE THEM?

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR REWARDS?

**1 Peter 5:5-“Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**

After talking about elder leadership, Peter addressed those who needed to be led. “Younger” believers were to “*subject*” themselves to the leadership of older “*elders*.” But, both the sheep and the shepherds were instructed to clothe themselves in “*humility toward one another*.”

“*Humility*” is defined as “freedom from pride or arrogance” (*Merriam Webster*). Elders have the responsibility to humbly adhere to the moral standards outlined in the gospel. Those under their leadership have the responsibility to humbly follow their guidance when godly advice is given.

Paul quotes from Proverbs to make his point about the need for “*humility*” in both leadership and submission:

Prov 3:34-“*Toward the scorners He is scornful, but to the humble He gives favor.*”

## WHAT IS HUMILITY?

### HOW DO YOU HUMBLY LEAD?

### HOW DO YOU HUMBLY SUBMIT?

**1 Peter 5:6-7-“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”**

Peter equated worry with pride. Pride is defined as a high or inordinate opinion of one's own dignity, importance, merit, or superiority (*dictionary.com*). Anxiety results when we depend on ourselves too much and God too little.

Instead of trying to handle adversities on our own, we're to humble ourselves “*under the mighty hand of God*.” Peter's reference to God's “*mighty hand*” is an anthropomorphous expression referring to His sovereignty and superior strength. We're to cast all our “*anxieties on Him*” because He's not only stronger and better prepared than us for the troubles of this world, but because He really “*cares*” for us.

The pressures of this world are unrelenting and dangerous. They snare men into traps of deceit—destroying the mind, body, and soul. It's only by following the path outlined by God's Word that we'll ever be able to untangle ourselves from the shackles of the world and start to lead the worry free life we so dearly crave.

**HOW HAVE YOU HUMBLING YOURSELF UNDER GOD'S MIGHTY HAND?**

**WHAT ANXIETIES DO YOU NEED TO CAST UPON HIM?**

**WHY DOES GOD CARE FOR YOU?**

1 Peter 5:8-*"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."*

## **The Many Names Of Satan Reveal His**

### **"Modus Operandi"**

(Summarized from Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology")

#### **1. "Lucifer"**

- The name "***Lucifer***" described Satan's **pre-rebellion** status as "***Lightbearer***"
- This original ***light-bearer*** became the ***prince of darkness*** who **blinds** those seeking God

Acts 26:18- *"to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."*

Eph 6:12-*"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, **against the cosmic powers over this present darkness**, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."*

Col 1:13-*"He has **delivered us from the domain of darkness** and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,"*

2 Cor 4:4-*"In their case the god of this world has **blinded the minds of the unbelievers**, to keep **them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God"*

**WHAT IS BLINDNESS?**

**WHAT IS SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS?**

**HOW HAVE YOU BEEN BEEN BLINDED BY THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS?**

#### **2. Satan / Devil- (meaning "accuser, adversary, or slanderer")**

a. **"Accuser"** = a person who claims that someone has **committed an offense** or done something wrong.

- Satan wants to remind people of their **failures** and **sins** to convince them that they are **not worthy** to be in the family of God.
- Satan wants us to be fearful and even **doubt our salvation**

Rev 12:10- "*And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, **who accuses them day and night before our God.**"*"

### **CONVICTION VERSES ACCUSATION**

#### **The HOLY SPIRIT Convicts You**

He uses the Word of God in love

He seeks to bring you back into fellowship with your heavenly Father.

He gets you to focus upon God and His forgiveness

He draws you to the cross of Christ

He leads you to repentance

He moves you closer to the Lord.

#### **SATAN Accuses You**

He uses your own sins in a hateful way

He seeks to make you feel helpless and hopeless.

He gets you to focus your attention upon yourself and your sins.

He drives you away from the cross of Christ

He wants you to experience regret and remorse, but not repentance

He moves you farther away from the Lord

**WHAT IS CONVICTION?**

**WHAT IS ACCUSATION?**

**HOW HAVE BOTH AFFECTED YOU?**

b) **"Adversary"** = someone who **competes against** or **fights another** in a contest game, or argument; a rival or adversary

- Satan and his demons are in **direct opposition to God** and seek to **hinder people** from choosing salvation, living for God, and walking in His freedom

1 Pet 5:8- "*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*"

- Satan has declared **war** and we must **prepare like soldiers**

Eph 6:10-18- *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”*

### **WHAT MAKES ONE AN ADVERSARY?**

### **HOW DO YOU APPROACH AN ADVERSARY?**

### **HOW DO PREPARE FOR WAR?**

- c) **“Slanderer”** = One who makes a **false** spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation

- Satan also attempts to **slander** and **discredit** believers by making **false accusations** about them **before God**
- In the book of *Job*, Satan stood before God to accuse *Job* of having an insincere love for Him; He said *Job* only served God because of the blessings God had given to him

Job 1:9-19- *“Then Satan answered the Lord and said, “**Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.**”*

Job 2:3- *“And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although **you incited me against him to destroy him without reason.**”*

## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SLANDERED BY SOMEONE?

## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SLANDERED BY SATAN?

### HOW?

3. **"Deceiver"** = One who causes someone to believe something that is not true (typically in order to gain some personal **advantage**)

- Scriptures tell us that Satan **masquerades as an angel of light**. Even when Satan appears to be on the side of good, he is only using it as a mask to deceive us. His real intentions are always evil.

2 Cor 11:14-15- *And no wonder, for even **Satan disguises himself as an angel of light**. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds."*

Rev 12:9-*"And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, **the deceiver of the whole world**—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."*

## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DECEIVED BY SOMEONE?

## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DECEIVED BY SATAN?

### HOW?

4. **"Tempter"** = One who entices someone to do or acquire something that they find attractive but **know to be wrong** or not beneficial

- Satan takes every legitimate desire you have and tries to get you to fulfill it in an illegitimate way (ie. sex in marriage vs sex outside marriage)

1 Thes 3:5-*"For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow **the tempter** had tempted you and our labor would be in vain."*

- Satan tried to get Jesus to succumb to **three different kinds of temptation** and he continues to try the same with us:

1) Satisfaction without God

2) Success without God

3) Significance without God

Matt 4:1-11-*"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the*



tempter came and said to him, ***“If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.”*** But he answered, *“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, ***“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down,*** for it is written, *“‘He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”* Jesus said to him, *“Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and ***showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.*** And he said to him, ***“All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.”*** Then Jesus said to him, *“Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”*

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.”

**HAVE YOU SOUGHT SATISFACTION WITHOUT GOD?**

**HAVE YOU SOUGHT SUCCESS WITHOUT GOD?**

**HAVE YOU SOUGHT SIGNIFICANCE WITHOUT GOD?**

5. **Liar** = One who makes false statements made with deliberate intent to deceive

Jn 8:44-“...When he **lies**, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a **liar** and the father of lies”

### **Satan's Three Biggest Lies:**

- 1) *“I don't need God”*
- 2) *“I am like God in glory”*
- 3) *“God needs me”*

**HAVE YOU REPEATED SATAN'S LIES?**

**HOW ?**

**WHY?**

6. **Murderer** = One who unlawfully and premeditatedly takes the life of a human being

Jn 8:44- “...He was a murderer from the beginning...”

Ps 106:37- “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons”

### WHY IS SATAN A MURDERER?

### WHO HAS HE MURDERED?

### HOW HAS HE MURDERED?

7. “**Evil One**” = One who is so profoundly immoral and wicked that he enslaves men

Matt 13:19- “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, *the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.*”

Gal 4:8- “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are *not gods.*”

Jn 8:34- “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, *everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.*”

### WHAT IS SLAVERY?

### HOW HAVE YOU BEEN ENSLAVED?

### WHY WERE YOU ENSLAVED?

8. “**Snake**” = One who is guilty of betrayal, treachery, danger, and guile

- Just as Satan deceived Eve into **betraying God**, and as he put the idea into Judas’ heart to **betray Jesus**, he tries to get us to **betray the trust God has given us**

2 Cor 11:3- “But I am afraid that as the *serpent* deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Lk 22:3-6- “***Then Satan entered into Judas** called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might **betray** him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he consented and **sought an opportunity to betray him to them** in the absence of a crowd.*”

### HOW IS SATAN A SNAKE?

### HAVE YOU EVER BEEN BETRAYED BY A SNAKE?

### HOW YOU BEEN TEMPTED TO BETRAY GOD'S TRUST?

9. **Belial** (or *Beliar*) = One who is “without profit” or “worthless”

- Satan is always trying to sell us a “**bill of goods**” (a misrepresented, fraudulent, or defective article)

2 Cor 6:15-“*What accord has Christ with **Belial**? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?*”

Matt 16:26-“*For **what will it profit** a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?*”

Isaiah 48:17-“*Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “**I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit**, who leads you in the way you should go.”*”

**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SOLD A “BILL OF GOODS?”**

**WHY DID YOU FALL FOR THE SCAM?**

**HOW HAS SATAN SCAMMED YOU?**

10. **Beelzebub** = literally “**ruler of the flies**” or “**lord of dung**”

- Flies are often associated with carcasses and dung. Often, the life cycle of flies use corpses or dung as the source of nutrients for their young, so not only are flies literally submerged in filth for a majority of their lives, their adult lives are devoted to the locating and colonization of new filth.
- Satan is the “**ruler of flies**” who actively seeks out and colonizes within the **filth** of our lives

Matt 12:24-27-“*But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by **Beelzebub, the prince of demons**, that this man casts out demons.” Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by **Beelzebub**, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.”*”

**HOW ARE SATAN’S FOLLOWERS JUST FLIES?**

**HOW DOES SATAN WALLOW IN THE DUNG?**

**WHAT DOES HE FIND THERE?**

11. **Abaddon and Apollyon** = literally “**destroyer**”

- Satan, filled with hatred, attempts to **destroy every good thing** that God has done

Rev 9:11-“*They have as king over them the angel of the pit; his name in Hebrew is **Abaddon**, and in Greek he is called **Apollyon**”*”

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DESTROY?

## WHAT HAS SATAN DESTROYED?

## WHAT HAVE YOU DESTROYED?

12. **"Pseudo-god / World ruler"** = Satan's role as **would be master** of earth and human race. He has authority over this present, **evil world-system**

### a) **"God of this world (age)"**

- This emphasizes Satan's rule and increased activity in the dispensation of the church which will be marked by a continual **increase of apostasy and deception** and by extreme **moral degeneration**.

2 Cor 4:4- *"In their case **the god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*

### b) **"Ruler of this world"**

- This description points to Satan as the unseen **head and energy behind the arrangement of world affairs** as they stand in opposition to the arrangements of God. This includes such things as **internationalism, materialism, humanism, religionism, spiritualism (demonism), hedonism**, etc.

Jn 14:30- *I will no longer talk much with you, for the **ruler of this world** is coming. He has no claim on me,*

Jn 16:11- *"concerning judgment, because the **ruler of this world** is judged.*

### c) **"Prince of the power of the air"**

- This title points to Satan as the head of the demonic hosts (fallen angels) who **operate night and day in our immediate sphere** to fill it with satanic deception, satanic viewpoint, doubts, and temptations.
- The word "**power**" is singular and refers to the **demonic forces** as a **corporate body** that operate as one **under the authority and power of Satan**, their prince (Eph. 6:12)
- "**Air**" is the *Greek* word "**aer**" and most likely refers to the sphere above the earth which evidently forms their base of operations, their sphere of power, authority, activity, and influence. This portrays the prevailing influence or evil sphere in which every individual moves—a **world atmosphere of demonic influence controlled by Satan**.

Eph 2:2- *"in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of*

*disobedience”*

d) **“Strong man”**

Mk 3:27- *“But no one can enter a **strong man's** house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.”*

**HOW HAS SATAN MADE HIMSELF INTO A “GOD?”**

**HOW HAS HE RULED THIS WORLD?**

**HOW IS SATAN JUST A “STRONG” THUG?**

**1 Peter 5:9- “Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”**

Christian suffering is a way of life—*“the same kind of of suffering being experienced by our brotherhood throughout the world.”* We’re called to “*resist*” the devil and “*stand firm*” in our faith. It’s a spiritual battle we will not lose with God on our side.

## **Winning The Spiritual Battle**

(From: *Focus on the Family*, 2019)

- **Admit that you’re a sinner, and ask Christ’s forgiveness for your sins every day.** Then trust God to deliver you from the powers of darkness.
- **Pray and read Scripture regularly.** Spending time with God and His Word will help you know Him better and be assured of His love for you.
- **Remember that God is stronger than the devil.** Christ defeated Satan on the cross, so He can deliver you from Satan’s traps and keep you in the protection of His grace. That’s what the apostle James had in mind when he wrote, “*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*” (James 4:7).
- **Keep a journal of all your thoughts and emotions.** Write as if you were talking directly to the Lord; this will help you be honest with yourself about your struggles. **Re-read what you’ve written** to identify how Satan is trying to deceive you (for example, through fear, bitterness, or shame). **Then shred those pages** as a physical reminder that you’re laying your struggles at the foot of the cross.
- **Turn away from the lies of the devil and his evil spirits.** Consider what you uncovered in your journaling. Pray. Be open to any response the Lord might have.

- **Find a pastor, Christian counselor, or trusted fellow believer you can talk with openly.** Ask them to pray with and for you. Remember: This isn't the kind of thing you can overcome on your own. As James puts it in another biblical passage, "*Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed*" (James 5:16).

**HOW DO YOU RESIST THE DEVIL?**

**HOW DO YOU STAND FIRM IN YOUR FAITH?**

**ARE YOU WINNING THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE?**

**1 Peter 5:10-11-*"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."***

While these Christians (and many more after them) would suffer for "*a little while*," their "*glory in Christ*" would be "*eternal*." The "*God of all grace*" would

(1) "***Restore***,"

(2) "***Confirm***,"

(3) "***Strengthen***," and

(4) "***Establish***" them.

"**Restore**" implies a return to an original state after depletion or loss (*Merriam Webster*).

"**Confirm**" denotes approving someone officially by formal agreement (*Cambridge*).

"**Strengthen**" means to make someone stronger, more forceful, or more effective (*Britannica*)

"**Establish**" signifies putting someone in a position or role that will last for a long time (*Britannica*)

"Four different verbs are used to describe God's promise for believers. There is no need to distinguish carefully between the meanings of the verbs, for together they emphatically make the same point. The God who has called believers to eternal glory will strengthen and fortify them, so that they are able to endure until the end" (Thomas Schreiner, "*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*").

**HOW HAS GOD RESTORED YOU?**

**HOW AS GOD CONFIRMED YOU?**

**HOW HAS GOD STRENGTHENED YOU?**

**HOW HAS GOD ESTABLISHED YOU?**

**1 Peter 5:12-14-“By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. Greet one another with the kiss of love.”**

“*Silvanus* (“*Silas*”) is mentioned often in Acts as Paul’s partner in ministry (Acts 15:22,27; 32:40; 16:19,25,29; 17:4,10,14-15; 18:5). He most likely was the same person as the Silvanus mentioned in 2 Cor 1:19; 12 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:1; and here...

...The phrase “*write through someone*” (“*graphein dia tinon*”) during the time the New Testament was written does not identify the amanuensis (one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts), but informed the reader that Silvanus was the one designated to the carry the letter to them” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter; Jude*”).

In the Old Testament, “*Babylon*” often represented those who opposed God (Isaiah 13-14; 46-47; Jeremiah 50-51). As Rome opposed Christ, “*She who is at Babylon*” was a common phrase used for the church (“*She*”) in Rome (“*Babylon*”).

Peter knew John Mark from early church meetings in Mark’s mother’s home (Acts 12:12). This was the same Mark who once failed Paul (Acts 13:13; 15:38,39; Col 4:10), but who eventually became useful to him again (2 Tim 4:11). Peter considered Mark his spiritual son.

Peter exhorted his readers to “*stand firm*” in the “*true grace of God*.” Their suffering would pass. As the book of Revelation promises about the future *New Heaven/New Earth*:

Rev 21:4- “*He (Christ) will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*”

**WHO ARE YOUR FAITHFUL BROTHERS IN CHRIST?**

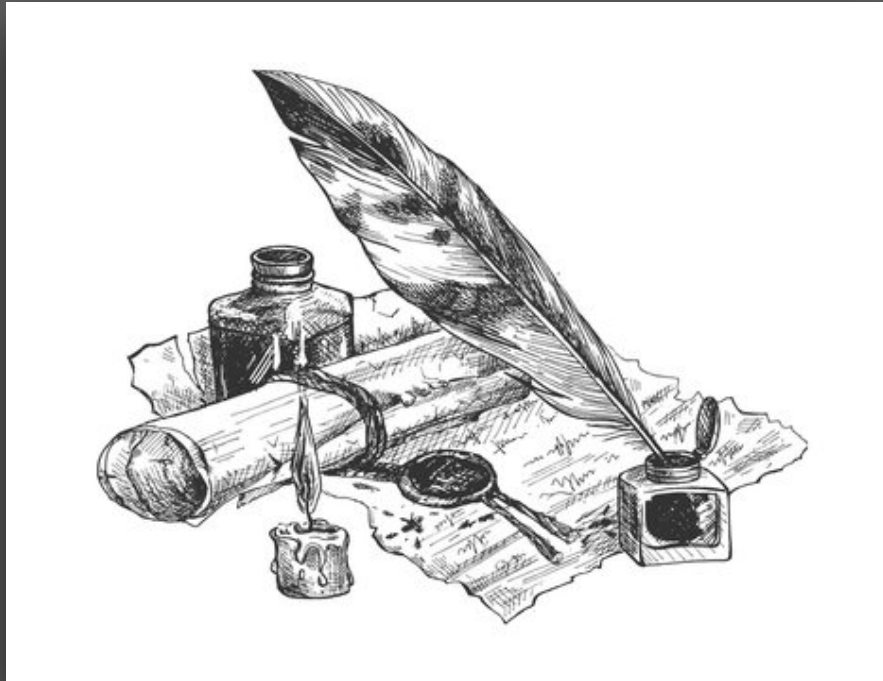
**HOW DOES “BABYLON” OPPOSE GOD TODAY?**

**DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE END OF SUFFERING?**





# PETER'S



# SECOND LETTER



# CHAPTER ONE

**2 Peter 1:1-2-“*Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,  
To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of  
our God and Savior Jesus Christ:  
May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our  
Lord.*”**

Unlike in his first letter, Simon Peter uses both his familial name (*Simeon*) and the name given to him by Jesus (*Peter*). “*Simeon*” (as opposed to “*Simon*” most often used) is the name that “would only be used in a Palestinian setting... and is an indication of an early date (of writing) since it was not used in the second century” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”). This is just one of many arguments against those who propose a post humorous date of authorship and claim Peter the apostle did not write this second letter because of its distinctly different literary style from the first.

Regarding the different styles of the letters, Donald Guthrie (British New Testament scholar) states:

“It is notoriously difficult to devise any certain criteria for the examination of style and this is particularly true where comparisons are made between two short epistles. The area of comparison is so restricted that the result may well be misleading. Moreover, subjective impressions are likely to receive greater stress than justified” (Donald Guthrie, “*New Testament Introduction*”).

As in his first letter, Peter again designated his apostolic authority when he declared that he was “*a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.*” The recipients of the letter were fellow servants (both Jew and Gentile) who put their faith in Jesus Christ. Every believer received “*equal standing*” with the apostles based on this faith and the righteousness of “*God and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

“The inclusion of the Gentiles on an equal basis with the Jews was stunning to the early Jewish Christians, a truth that sunk in slowly” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

In today’s world of texts and emails, the art of letter writing has fallen away into obscurity. But for those who still remember this archaic means of communication, the “salutation” is very important. A salutation is the opening greeting used to set the tone of the interaction in the letter because it’s the first thing seen. Peter set the tone of this letter with four central themes in his opening salutation:

- 1) Necessity of faith in the Christ
- 2) Deity of Jesus as God (“*our God and Savior Jesus Christ*”)
- 3) Righteousness of Jesus
- 4) Importance of knowing both the Father and the Son intimately (“*knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*”)

**HOW DO YOU START A LETTER OR EMAIL?**

**WHY IS THE BEGINNING OF A LETTER OR EMAIL SO IMPORTANT?**

**WHAT WAS PETER TRYING TO SAY WITH HIS SALUTATION TO HIS READERS?**

**2 Peter 1:3-*“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,”***

Jesus’ “*divine power*” transcends human capacities— it’s not something we mere mortals can ever attain. Using His divine power, Jesus graciously bestows to believers “*all things that pertain to life and godliness.*” Through “*knowledge of Him*” and acceptance of His great gift, Christians have everything needed to image His “*glory and excellence.*”

Calling believers to His “*glory*” is an attractive prospect because living under the umbrella of His divine majesty and splendor is reassuring. But we’re also called to image God’s “*excellence.*”

What is excellence to God? It’s certainly not the same as excellence in man’s eyes. God’s excellence isn’t something to be achieved because only He is excellent. He’s perfect and is the standard by which we’re measured. With that benchmark, we fail. Striving for excellence means to emulate God’s qualities by obeying His instructions and becoming the best we can be— aspiring to “*godliness.*”

“*Godliness*” is conforming to the character of God in our thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions. It’s the “*reverent awareness of God’s sovereignty over every aspect of life, and the attendant determination to honor him in all one’s conduct*” (“*Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*”).

Attempting to live a life of godliness doesn’t mean we will no longer sin, but only that we will not want to habitually sin. It’s a process of sanctification that starts when one accepts Christ in this life and will be mastered only in the eternal realm when we walk side by side with Jesus. Anticipating Christ’s future return is an incentive to godly living now.

## **WHAT IS DIVINE POWER?**

## **WHAT IS GODLINESS?**

## **WHAT IS EXCELLENCE IN GOD’S EYE?**

**2 Peter 1:4-*“by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”***

God’s “*glory and excellence*” (1:3) is the underlying catalyst for the “*precious and very great promises*” made to believers in Jesus. Our salvation is guaranteed. Additionally, His glory and excellence will enable Christians to “*become partakers of (His) divine nature.*”

“Peter was not saying that human beings will actually become divine or that they will share in the divine nature in every aspect. Believers will share in the divine nature in that they will be morally perfected; they will share the moral excellence that belongs to God. Believers will participate (“*become partakers*”) in the divine nature, but they will not become gods” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

“Being partakers of the divine nature involves escaping the world’s decay and rising above sinful desires. Simply put, when we are saved, we receive a new nature, by which we do not perish with the world... As partakers of the divine nature, believers do not have to follow the sin nature any more. At salvation, our old nature is defeated, and we receive a new, divine nature that desires the things of God (2 Cor 5:17). We love what He loves and hate what He hates” (Gal 5:22; 1 John 4:4). (“*In what ways are believers partakers of the divine nature?*” [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)).

## WHAT IS DIVINE NATURE?

### HOW ARE YOU LIKE GOD? HOW ARE YOU NOT LIKE GOD?

### HOW/ WHY DO PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE ESCAPE THE SINFUL CORRUPTION OF THE WORLD?

2 Peter 1:5a-*“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue,”*

God’s “divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (vs 1:3). Peter begins to list a step-by-step chain of eight qualities needed to live that life. He starts with “faith.”

No runner attains victory without “faith.” If he didn’t have faith that he would cross the finish line, he wouldn’t start the race. An athlete has faith because he has practiced endless hours on the track long before walking up to the starting blocks. He has faith because he has trained under the watchful eyes of skilled coaches. He has faith because he has fine-tuned every muscle for that very moment. He has faith because he has convinced his mind that failure is not an option. Barring unforeseen injury, he knows that he will cross the finish line. But that’s not to say that doubt cannot cross his mind as to the assuredness of victory.

We all doubt— it’s human nature. No matter how much faith we seem to have, there’s always a small seed of doubt that can linger in the deep recesses of our souls. Sometimes Christians may even doubt their faith causing unnecessary anxiety. God understands we may occasionally fall back on our own understanding and have a need for more practice. It’s okay— He already knows our hearts and has accepted us for who we are when we accepted Him.

We’re called to supplement our “faith” with “virtue.” “Virtue” is defined as acting in conformity to the moral law (*KJV Dictionary*). Supplementing faith with virtue requires going to the one source where God’s moral law is clearly outlined— the Bible. It’s the fountain of all ethical standards.

We can’t practice what we never learn. Repeating the same mistakes over and over just leads to more and more egregious mistakes. God gave us His Bible to study and memorize prior to ever attempting to step on the field of life. Studying God’s virtuous Word strengthens our faith.

## WHAT IS FAITH?

### DO YOU EVER DOUBT YOUR FAITH?

### HOW DO YOU SUPPLEMENT YOUR FAITH WITH VIRTUE?

2 Peter 1:5b-*“and (make every effort to supplement your) virtue with knowledge”*

“Knowledge” is defined as the understanding of information about a subject gained by experience or study (*Cambridge Dictionary*). “Biblical knowledge refers to examples, truths, and commands that God wants us to know, believe, and heed.” (*christianity.com*).

It’s one thing to know what to do; it’s quite another to actually do it. As the novelist Rodney Whitaker once wrote:

**“One must pass through knowledge to arrive at simplicity”**

Learning God's Word can seem like a daunting task when we first pick it up. It has many chapters with a plethora of verses to memorize and internalize. But once we take what we've learned to the practice field, it all begins to make sense.

The more reps we get in practice, the easier it becomes to change knowledge into action. We begin to comprehend all the plays start with only one formation— Jesus. He's the foundation upon which the entire game plan rests. He wants us to follow Him to victory.

## HOW CAN YOU PASS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE TO ARRIVE AT SIMPLICITY?

### WHAT IS SIMPLICITY?

### ARE YOU FOLLOWING THE GAME PLAN?

**2 Peter 1:6a—“and (make every effort to supplement your) *knowledge with self-control*”**

“Self-control” is “restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires” (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*). It doesn't come easily for most of us. Life is intense. Disagreements are inevitable in the heat of battle where frustrations can build and tempers may flare. It takes much practice to keep emotions under check when we're pushed to the edge. If we need someone to emulate, we need look no further than Jesus.

Isaiah 53:7—“*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb. That is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*”

### WHAT IS SELF CONTROL?

### HOW CAN YOU PRACTICE SELF CONTROL?

### HOW DID JESUS MODEL SELF CONTROL?

**2 Peter 1:6b—“and (make every effort to supplement your) *self-control with steadfastness*”**

“Steadfastness” is the “quality of staying the same for a long time; not changing quickly or unexpectedly” (*Cambridge Dictionary*).

“To be steadfast and unmovable is to be spiritually grounded. A steadfast person knows what he believes and cannot be tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching (Eph 4:14)... An unmovable person can hear false teaching, engage doubters, and defend truth without it shaking his own faith” (“*What Does It Mean To Be Steadfast And Unmovable,*” *gotquestions.org*).

Eph 4:11-14—“*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.*”

“Steadfast is the attitude you have when you say, ‘No matter what my feelings tell me, or how dark the circumstances, I will put myself in the Lord’s hands and trust Him.’ That’s when your heart is filled with peace” (Dr. Harold J. Sala, *“What Does It Mean To Be Steadfast,” Guidelines For Living Series*).

Every coach knows the players they can count on in the game. It’s not just innate talent that makes a player great— it is also his dedication, endurance, and steadfastness. If a player slacks off in practice, he will inevitably demonstrate the same on game day.

Steadfastness is needed to overcome the inevitable hardships of life. God’s Word is the best anchor to prevent being blown by life’s winds and waves.

### **ARE YOU SPIRITUALLY GROUNDED?**

### **HAVE YOU EVER BEEN BLOWN OFF COURSE BY THE WINDS AND WAVES OF LIFE?**

### **CAN YOU HEAR FALSE TEACHING, ENGAGE DOUBTERS, AND DEFEND TRUTH WITHOUT IT SHAKING YOUR FAITH?**

**2 Peter 1:6c- “*and (make every effort to supplement your) steadfastness with godliness*”**

“*Godliness*” is the code of conduct God expects us to practice in our everyday lives. It requires a great deal of faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, and steadfastness. Being made in God’s *image* (“*Imagio Dei*”), we have a responsibility to become good *imagers* of God.

Gen 1:26- “*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”*

2 Cor 3:18- “*And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*”

The Hebrew word for “*image*” (“*tselem*”) and the Hebrew word for “*likeness*” (“*demut*”) refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents. We won’t be perfect, but we’re called to imitate God’s qualities to the best of our abilities.

Eph 5:1-2- “*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*”

### **DO YOU FOLLOW A CODE OF CONDUCT?**

### **DO YOU FOLLOW GOD’S CODE OF CONDUCT?**

### **ARE YOU A GOOD IMAGER OF GOD?**

**2 Peter 1:7a—“and (make every effort to supplement your) *godliness with brotherly affection*”**

Tom Hanks produced a popular movie series entitled “*Band of Brothers*” that chronicled the lives of a group of soldiers in World War II. Based on a book by Stephen Ambrose, it told the story of men who started as strangers, trained as comrades, and eventually became brothers on the field of battle. They laughed together, cried together, fought together, and sometimes died together. They became a family—their “*brotherly affection*” (“*philadelphia*” - “*brotherly love*”) was a bond that could not be broken.

There’s an old saying, “Home is where the heart is.” It’s a place of love, tranquility, and safety. It’s where you can let your guard down and be with the family who unconditionally loves you. Though mistakes may be made and dissensions exposed, home is where there can always be a resolution to conflicts and a forgiveness of transgressions— “brotherly love.”

Believers in Christ are adopted members of God’s family. His unconditional love trumps all our transgressions. His forgiveness abounds. We’re to treat our fellow “siblings” with that same love and affection. It’s a bond of love (“*philadelphia*”) that should never be broken.

### **WHAT IS BROTHERLY AFFECTION?**

#### **WHO’S YOUR FAMILY?**

#### **WHERE ARE YOUR BAND OF BROTHERS?**

**2 Peter 1:7b—“and (make every effort to supplement your) *brotherly affection with love*.”**

No athlete achieves greatness without passion. The drive to succeed is squelched if done for any reason other than pure love of the game. Who hasn’t seen parents push their children into sports they had no real desire to pursue? The result is bitterness, rebellion, and failure. Without a love for the game, it’s a rare man who’ll put in the necessary effort and practice needed to reach the highest level of achievement.

Love God. Love others as God loves you— with passion. Love His creation and all those who share His world. Love the place He’s put you. Even love your enemies. True love is not an emotion— it’s a willful exercise requiring a great deal of practice.

Matt 22:34-40- “*But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

### **WHAT IS LOVE?**

#### **WHO / WHAT DO YOU LOVE?**

#### **HOW DO YOU LOVE GOD WITH PASSION?**



**2 Peter 1:8-9—*“For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins”***

A quarterback continually works on his footwork, a shooting guard practices his release with every basket attempted, and a gymnast works months to add a double twist to a vault. No athlete is content with yesterday’s accomplishments because tomorrow always requires new and greater skills. Resting on one’s laurels is a guarantee of defeat in the next event. It can blind us and make us “*ineffective*” in our pursuits.

God expects us to continually update our skills and then use those skills to be “*fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” He put us on this earth for a reason— to know Him, honor Him, and bring others to Him. We need to practice intently, increase our skill-set, and avoid becoming “*nearsighted*” as we look to God for guidance. We shouldn’t let mistakes paralyze us— we’ve been “*cleansed*” from “*former sins.*”

**ARE YOU RESTING ON YOUR LAURELS?**

**WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO IMPROVE?**

**HOW WILL YOU WORK ON NEW SKILLS?**

**2 Peter 10-11—*“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”***

Peter exhorts his readers to work diligently “*to confirm*” their “*calling and election.*” Those who put their faith in Christ have salvation guaranteed, but that doesn’t mean works are unimportant. As Christians, we don’t do good works to earn salvation, but instead in appreciation of what Christ has given us.

The practice field is a place to learn from our failures. Game day is for victory. We’re to work on the skills God teaches so that we can shine under the lights on game night. Practice makes perfect. Our championship is already a certainty. Jesus has done all the work and has scored all the touchdowns. The score is already written in the history books. God just wants us to enjoy running down the field so much that those watching from the bleachers will desire to get on the field with us for the celebration.

When you model

*faith,*

*virtue,*

*knowledge,*

*self-control,*

*steadfastness,*

*godliness,*

*brotherly affection,*

*and love,*

you can motivate others to do follow your lead.

Failure is not an option for those who believe in the saving grace that Christ offers. *“For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

## **WHY PRACTICE?**

### **WHY DO YOU SHOW UP ON GAME DAY?**

### **HOW DOES IT FEEL KNOWING THAT VICTORY IS ALREADY GUARANTEED?**

**2 Peter 1:12—*“Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have.”***

Because Christ had given these believers everything needed for godly living (“*therefore*”), Peter intended to continually remind them of the qualities needed to fulfill that aspiration—*faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love*. They knew the Truth of the Gospel, but they would still need to be continually reminded of the Truth lest false teachings tempted them away. Peter desired to equip them to recognize false teachers and their false teachings.

Swaying from the faith is particularly prevalent in the youth of today:

“Two studies conducted by both the Barna Group and *USA Today* found that nearly 75 percent of Christian young people fall away from the faith and leave the church after high school. One of the key reasons they do so is intellectual skepticism.

But how many of these youth were actually taught the Bible in their homes or in church? Statistics show that children today spend an average of 30 hours per week in school where they are often taught ideas that are diametrically opposed to biblical truths. They come home to another 30 hours per week spent in front of a television set bombarded by commercials and sitcoms, playing video games, or connecting on social media. This is in contrast to the time spent weekly in the church classroom: 45 minutes.

Given the amount of exposure to worldly influences versus Bible training, it’s understandable why young people leave the home without a Christian worldview and why many are falling away from the faith. Not only are most youth not being well-grounded in the faith, but they’re also not being taught to intelligently examine the views of skeptics who will inevitably challenge their faith.

Most of these students are not prepared to enter the college classroom where more than half of all college professors view Christians with hostility and take every opportunity to belittle them and their faith” (*“Why Are So Many Young People Falling Away From The Faith,” got questions.org*).

God wants us not just to “*know*” the Truth, but to be “*established*” in it. Being established in Christ means we can’t be shaken from His Truth. It’s a place where the testing of our faith only makes us stronger. It’s a place where our brain and heart are conjoined by the blood of Jesus Christ.

## **HOW OFTEN DO YOU NEED TO BE REMINDED OF THINGS FORGOTTEN?**

### **ARE YOU FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN THE TRUTH?**

### **HOW DOES TESTING OF YOUR FAITH MAKE YOU STRONGER?**

**2 Peter 1:13-15-** *“I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.”*

Many years before Peter penned his letters, Jesus told Peter of his future martyrdom at an old age.

John 21:18-19- *“Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” (This He said to show by what kind of death he [Peter] was to glorify God.) And after saying this He said to him, “Follow Me.”*

Early church fathers are unanimous in claiming Peter died in Rome by crucifixion during the persecution of Nero (who reigned from 54 - 68 A.D.). Only in his early twenties during Jesus’ public ministry, Peter was believed to be between 63 and 66 years old when he died. He very likely wrote this, his second letter, between A.D. 65 and 68 near the end of his life.

Peter knew his days were numbered and he wished to “*stir up*” his readers while he still had time. This was his farewell address. He wanted his readers to “*recall*” his teachings well after he was gone from this earth. With his letters, he succeeded in doing just that.

## **WOULD YOU WANT TO KNOW THE FUTURE DETAILS OF YOUR DEATH?**

### **HOW DO YOU STIR UP BELIEVERS TO FURTHER THE GOSPEL?**

### **WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SAY IN YOUR FAREWELL ADDRESS?**

**2 Peter 1:16-18-** *“For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain.”*

There were many false teachers who claimed the future coming of Christ was just one of many “*cleverly devised myths*.” They considered it no more than a fable or bedtime story. Peter refuted their claims with his (and other’s) eyewitness account of Christ’s transfiguration (see also Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36).

Matt 17:1-9- *“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.*

*And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.”*

*He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”*

*When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.*

*And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.”*

Peter used the transfiguration as a foreshadowing of the “*power*” that would be exhibited at the “*coming*” of Christ in the future. It will not be just a spiritual awakening— Jesus will physically manifest Himself again. The transfiguration was a manifestation of His powerful coming kingdom.

Should we refer to Bible events as “*stories*” when teaching God’s Truth to our children? The Bible is not sixty-six books of “*cleverly devised myths*”— it’s Truth. Christ died to bring us its Truth. Shouldn’t we teach it as Truth to our children? Quit calling Bible Truths “*stories*!”

## **WHY DO SOME BELIEVE CHRISTIANITY IS JUST A CLEVERLY DEvised MYTH?**

### **WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION?**

### **DO YOU TEACH YOUR CHILDREN BIBLE “STORIES” OR BIBLE “TRUTHS?”**

**2 Peter 1:19-“*And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,*”**

The apostles present at Jesus’ transfiguration (“*we*”) had the Old Testament writings regarding the future Messiah (“*prophet word*”) “*more fully confirmed*” by what they witnessed. “Peter saw the Lord’s glory when He was transfigured before him, and he heard God’s words that pronounced Jesus as the Son of His good pleasure... The prophetic word of Scripture is made more sure by the transfiguration, for the transfiguration confirms the proper interpretation of Old Testament Scripture, that is, that there is a future coming of Christ for judgement and salvation” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

“By virtue of their witness to the transfiguration, and specifically to the divine voice, the apostles had confirmation of the prophetic word in its affirmation of Jesus as the exalted Son of God who will return in judgement” (Caulley, “*Inspiration in 2 Peter*”).

But, as important as witnessing the transfiguration was, Peter stated that it only “*more fully confirmed*” for him (and us) what the Old Testament already proclaimed. “More specifically, the Word of God was more reliable verification of the teachings about the person, atonement, and Second Coming of Christ than even the genuine firsthand experiences of the apostles themselves” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”)

Because of the reliability of Scripture (“*a lamp shining in a dark place*”), Peter admonishes his readers to “*pay attention*” to what it says. There will most certainly come a day when the “*dark place*” in which we now live will be replaced by the “*dawn*” of a new day when the “*morning star*” (Jesus) returns. All prophesy will be fulfilled and our “*hearts*” will be purged of any doubts. “The perfect, but limited, revelation of the Scriptures will be replaced with the perfect and complete revelation of Jesus Christ” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”).

**HAVE YOU EVER DOUBTED THE ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE?**

**WHAT HAS “MORE FULLY CONFIRMED” THE BIBLE’S ACCURACY FOR YOU?**

**HAVE YOU EVER FALLEN INTO THE TRAP OF BELIEVING MAN’S WORD  
OVER THE BIBLE? HOW? WHY?**

**2 Peter 1:20-21-“*knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*”**

All Scriptural prophecy stems from God. “The prophets did not simply give their “*own interpretation*” of how things were or would be. They spoke as God’s mouthpieces, articulating His thoughts in words that accurately represented those thoughts. The Holy Spirit ‘*carried along*’ the prophets to do so” (Baily and Constable, “*Nelson’s New Testament Survey*”).

“Though the human writers of Scripture were active rather than passive in the process of writing Scriptures, God the Holy Spirit superintended them so that, using their own individual personalities, thought processes, and vocabulary, they composed and recorded without error the exact words God wanted written... The prophets, in fact, sometimes even wrote what they themselves could not fully understand (1 Peter 1:10)” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”).

2 Tim 3:16-“*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*”

**WHAT IS PROPHECY?**

**WHY/ HOW DO YOU EXAMINE PROPHECY?**

**WHAT ARE SOME PROPHECIES YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND?**



## CHAPTER TWO

**2 Peter 2:1-“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”**

The first chapter ended with Peter stating that all true prophesy originates and ends with God. In this beginning verse of chapter two, he warns that “*false teachers*” will arise within the church just as “*false prophets also arose among the people*” in Old Testament times. These false teachers/prophets would deny the future coming of Christ to gain power by “*secretly*” bringing in their “*destructive heresies*.”

“*Denying the Master who bought them*” (pridefully defying Christ’s power and promises) would eventually bring “*swift destruction upon*” these false teachers. But before this would come to pass, their “*destructive heresies*” would become a virus within the church.

R. Bauckham (“*Jude, 2 Peter*”) lists three characteristics of false teachers/prophets:

1. They lack divine authority
2. They promise peace when God threatens judgement
3. They will be judged by God

### **“How Does False Teaching Reveal Itself Today?”**

Clarence L Haynes Jr (*christianity.com*)

“The best way to spot something that is false is to become familiar with what is real. This is how they teach people to spot counterfeit bills. By learning everything about a real bill, they can tell when one is fake. This is also true of teaching. Here are some fundamental characteristics of true biblical teaching:

1. True biblical teaching points you to Christ
2. True biblical teaching puts your growth and benefit ahead of the benefit of the teacher
3. True biblical teaching moves you toward being Christ-dependent, not teacher dependent

Here are 3 ways false teaching reveals itself today:

#### **1. False teaching appeals to people’s emotions.**

By nature, we are all emotional beings, because that is how God created us. While our emotions often entice us and draw us away, sound biblical teaching should bring us back to a place of balance.

It should not try to just create positive emotions (make us feel good), nor should it stoke negative ones (playing off our fears). Good teaching may acknowledge the emotions, but teaches you to respond in a manner that aligns with godly principles...

## **2. False teaching appeals to greed**

One sneaky way false teaching reveals itself today is by appealing to people's greed. It's sneaky because they often wrap it in terms like "blessing." Too often, blessing is about the tangible things you can see, and some connect it to giving to a certain ministry. If you are led to believe your blessing is connected to a certain man or ministry, it is not true.

The primary motivation in giving or "sowing a seed," should not be because we are expecting a harvest. The primary motivation for giving is because God has blessed us and our giving represents our thanksgiving, worship, trust, and acknowledgment that everything we have comes from him. Anything else is a wrong motive. If the only reason you are giving is because you want something back, that is not giving, but investing. (ie "Prosperity Gospel")

## **3. False teaching positions God in the wrong light**

One last thing to think about when considering how false teaching reveals itself today is the way they often paint the wrong picture of who God is. Like God is some big marshmallow that just loves with no justice, or God is an angry judge ready to destroy you at a moment's notice.

Many times, the characterizations of who God is are incomplete. They take bits and pieces and craft God into the image that fits what they want him to be. Usually, this is a God who fits their lifestyle and the way they choose to live.

Yes, God is loving, compassionate, and filled with mercy. He wants everyone to come to repentance and sent Christ to make the way for this to be possible. However, God is holy, and He has standards.

We cannot live in a way that violates His standards and expect His favor on our lives at the same time. Whenever you hear a picture of God that contradicts His standards as revealed in his word, it is a false teaching."

1 John 4:1-4- "*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

*By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.*

*This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."*



## WHAT IS A FALSE PROPHET/TEACHER?

## WHO ARE FALSE PROPHETS/TEACHERS TODAY?

## HOW DO YOU TEST PROPHETS/TEACHERS?

**2 Peter 2:2—“And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.”**

The Greek word “*aselgeiasis*” is translated here as “*sensuality*.” In other places in Scripture, the same word is translated as “*debauchery*,” “*filthy*,” or “*lustful*.” It generally refers to debased sexually immoral practices.

False prophets/teachers would lead those seeking the Truth of the Gospel to be lured away. The true Gospel of Jesus Christ would be “*blasphemed*” as they followed “*their sensuality*.”

“If there is no future coming of the Lord, the foundation for ethics vanishes, and the way is open for a dissolute lifestyle” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

We are sexual beings and there’s nothing wrong with that. Sex was given to us by God to enjoy. There ‘s even a book about sex in our *Bible*— “*Song of Solomon*.” Sex is not the problem. It’s the exercise of our sexual freedom that’s the problem.

God gave us sex to enjoy within the confines of marriage. Too often that bond is broken and problems begin— promiscuity, infidelity, pornography, etc. They are all sins that separate us from our loved ones and from God.

## WHY DID GOD GIVE US SEX?

## WHAT SEXUAL FREEDOM DID HE GIVE US?

## HOW DO SEXUAL TRANSGRESSIONS AFFECT US?

**2 Peter 2:3—“And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”**

After claiming in the last verse that these false teachers were motivated by sexual immorality, Peter now also accuses them of “*greed*”— an uncontrolled desire for the comforts of this life. They would “*exploit*” their followers with their “*false words*.”

“These teachers are not selling a product to help their hearers. They were hawking defective goods (morally speaking) for their own financial advantage” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”). Their fate (“*condemnation*”) was prescribed by God from the moment they unrepentantly began to teach falsely (“*from long ago*”). “*Their destruction is not asleep*”— it will certainly come to fruition.

In verses 1-3 Peter claims false prophets/teachers seek three things— money (vs 3), sex (vs 2), and power (vs 1). “False teachers are not just false in their teaching, but also in their living” (David Mathis, “*The Surprising Truth About False Teachers*,” *DesiringGod.org*).

## HOW CAN GREED AFFECT THOSE IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS?

### WHY ARE MONEY, SEX, AND POWER SO ALLURING?

### WHY MUST YOU JUDGE A TEACHER ON BOTH HIS TEACHING AND HIS LIVING?

**2 Peter 2:4-“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell (“Tartarus”) and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment;”**

“Lest anyone think God is too loving and merciful to judge the wicked false teachers and their deceived people, Peter (is about to give) three powerful illustrations of past divine judgement of the wicked” (John MacArthur, *“The MacArthur Bible Commentary”*). In these next few verses Peter alludes to past judgements upon (1) fallen angels, (2) fallen men, and (3) fallen cities.

This first verse references the fallen angels in Genesis 6 who promiscuously cohabited (had sexual intercourse) with human women and produced offspring (the “Nephilim”). As punishment for their sins, God “committed them to chains of gloomy darkness (in Tartarus) to be kept until the judgment. ”

This is the only place the word “Tartarus” is used in Scripture and is unfortunately often translated as “hell.” But this is not the same place as the “hell” we commonly think of. The New Testament Greek word for that “hell” is “gehenna.” Tartarus is only a gloomy, dark, temporary holding cell. “The word ‘hell’ is misleading if it suggests final punishment, since the verse makes clear that the climatic judgement still awaits the angels” (Moo, “2 Peter, Jude”).

### WHY MUST GOD PUNISH SIN?

### WHY/ HOW HAS GOD PUNISHED THESE PARTICULAR FALLEN ANGELS?

### WHY/ HOW WILL GOD PUNISH ALL FALLEN ANGELS AT THE FINAL JUDGEMENT?

**2 Peter 2:5-“if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;”**

Peter’s used the “Flood” as his second example regarding past punishments.

After Adam and Eve were cast out of *Eden*, human story took a downward spiral— Cain slew Abel and things didn’t get any better after that. Genesis 5 lists the genealogy of Adam — Adam, Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah. Though each of these men had other sons and daughters, their names are not recorded.

But what is noted is that it took only ten generations for God to have quite enough of mankind’s transgressions.

Gen 6:5-“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

When mankind finally degenerated to the point where they cohabited (had sexual intercourse) with fallen angels, it grieved God greatly.

Gen 6:6-7-*“And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”*

This led not just to the imprisonment of the fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6-7; 1 Enoch 6-11), but also to the destruction of most of mankind by the “Flood.”

Gen 7:11-12- *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights... And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.*

Gen 7:17-24- *“The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.*

*And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth.*

*Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.”*

Peter’s main point in referencing this “Flood” was quite simple. Since God was willing to destroy all of mankind for their wickedness (except for eight individuals), He would not hesitate to punish those who would pervert the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. False teachers beware!

### WHAT GRIEVED GOD?

### WHAT GRIEVES GOD TODAY?

### HAVE YOU EVER MADE GOD SORRY HE MADE YOU?

**2 Peter 2:6-“if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;”**

Peter’s third example of God’s past punishments was His destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 and 19). Most Biblical scholars place the historical location of these two sister cities on the east side of the Jordan River, in modern day Jordan. They were two of the five wicked “*cities of the plane*” referenced throughout the Old and New Testament (the others being Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar /Bela).

When two angels, disguised as men, visited Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot encountered them at the gate and strongly encouraged them to stay in his home for the night instead of in the public square, for he knew the evil ways of the men of the city.

Gen 19:1-11- *“The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed himself with his face to the earth and said, “My lords, please turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night and wash your feet. Then you may rise up early and go on your way.”*

*They said, “No; we will spend the night in the town square.” But he pressed them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house. And he made them a feast and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.*

*But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them”*  
(engage in homosexual sodomy and rape).

*Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, “I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. Behold, I have two daughters who have not known any man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please. Only do nothing to these men, for they have come under the shelter of my roof.”*

*But they said, “Stand back!” And they said, “This fellow came to sojourn, and he has become the judge! Now we will deal worse with you than with them.” Then they pressed hard against the man Lot, and drew near to break the door down. But the men (the angels) reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them and shut the door.*

*And they struck with blindness the men who were at the entrance of the house, both small and great, so that they wore themselves out groping for the door.”*

Because of this and many other past wicked deeds (Ezekiel 16:49–50), these cities were destroyed the very next day with “*sulfur and fire from the Lord of heaven.*”

Gen 19:24-25- *“Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.”*

Peter stated that turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ash was just another “*example of what is going to happen to the ungodly.*”

**WHAT WAS THE SIN OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH?**

**WHY WAS THIS SIN SO HEINOUS?**

**DO WE HAVE SODOM AND GOMORRAH SISTER CITIES TODAY?**

**2 Peter 2:7-8—*“and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard)...”***

Peter described Lot as a lone “righteous” man living among the “wicked.” Their “sensual conduct” (including homosexual sodomy and rape) distressed and tormented Lot’s “righteous soul.” “Day after day,” he “saw and heard” the “lawless deeds” of those around him until God eventually plucked him out of this evil city and “rescued” him.

Though Lot was surely troubled by what he witnessed around him, this was not the foundation of his “righteousness” — it was merely the result of it. Lot’s righteousness stemmed not from his deeds, but from his knowledge and acceptance of God Almighty.

“Much of Lot’s life is a picture of the consequences of greed and the negative influence of a sinful environment. Lot knew God, but he chose to live among people who would lead his family into sin and complacency. But Lot’s story is also an illustration of God’s great mercy—in spite of Lot’s poor choices, God saved him and his daughters from a violent end in Sodom and preserved his line throughout the ages” (“Who was Lot in the Bible,” [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)).

Like Lot, we live in a sinful society that can negatively influence our behavior. We’re complacent. We make poor choices. We sin. Yet despite this, God considers us “righteous” by way of our belief in the saving sacrifice of Jesus. He plucked us out of this evil world, rescued us, and is preserving us for a New Heaven and New Earth where our sins will be only a distant memory— turned to ash like Sodom and Gomorrah.

**HOW DOES YOUR ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCE YOU?**

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING RIGHTEOUS AND LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY?**

**ARE YOU RIGHTEOUS? DO YOU LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY?**

**2 Peter 2:9a—*“then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials,”***

God didn’t spare the angels when they sinned. He didn’t spare the ancient world when they sinned. And He didn’t spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah when they sinned. Yet, God spared Noah and Lot, two righteous men living amongst a gaggle of evil men— “the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials.”

God never abandons “the godly” who have obtained “righteousness” through the blood of Jesus. Just as He did with Noah and Lot, God may allow oppression and torment for a time. But He will always “rescue” the believer in the end. God is faithful— He will never forsake us.

1 Cor 10:13—*“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”*

## WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL TRIALS?

## WHAT SPIRITUAL TRIALS HAVE YOU ENDURED?

## HOW DID GOD “RESCUE” YOU FROM YOUR TRIALS?

**2 Peter 2:9b-“and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,”**

“Though God many times lets the wicked alone in this world, so that they escape present punishment... yet they shall not escape future torment... they are a while spared, but never pardoned (they are “under punishment”)... and when free from temporal evils, are reserved for eternal vengeance” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary, [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com)).

“The angels, the flood generation, and Sodom and Gomorrah were not judged immediately. They pursued their sin for some time before the fateful day of judgement. Hence, Peter’s readers were not to be discouraged or wonder if God is faithful simply because false teachers were prospering. God was giving them time to repent before the end arrives (vs 3:9). For those who do not repent, the eschatological judgement is certain” (Thomas Schreiner, “The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude”).

“Why are we upset when an evil person does well? Is it because that person has something we do not? The wicked may prosper in this world, but perhaps we’ve forgotten that their fortune will only endure for the short term. We’ve lost sight of our eternal reward and the ultimate fate of the wicked” (“*Why Do The Wicked Prosper*,” [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)).

Psalm 37:1-7- “*Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers! For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.*

*Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.*

*Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

*Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.*

*He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.*

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!*

## DO YOU WONDER WHY THE WICKED SOMETIMES PROSPER?

## DOES IT UPSET YOU WHEN THE WICKED PROSPER?

## DO YOU REALLY WANT THEIR ULTIMATE FATE?

**2 Peter 2:10a-“...and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.”**

Eternal judgement “*especially*” awaits those false teachers who sin in two specific ways— (1) indulging “*in the lust of defiling passions*” and (2) despising “*authority*.” The apostle Paul gave his definition of “*defiling passion*”:

Rom 1”26-27- “*For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*”

Peter equates indulging in these sexual practices with despising “*authority*.” The authority he references is not secular, but Christ Himself. “*Those who indulge in the lust of defiling practices*” (“*dishonorable passions*”) reject Christ’s “*authority*” in their lives. They teach and live in a manner contrary to His Word and attempt to “*secretly bring in destructive heresies*” (vs 1) into the Church.

How many “churches” today preach doctrine contrary to the Bible. They pick, choose, and bend verses to promote their perverted message and lead their followers down a path of destruction. An “*especial*” judgement awaits them.

James 3:1- “*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*”

**HOW DOES INDULGING IN THE LUST OF DEFILING PASSIONS  
EQUATE WITH REJECTING CHRIST’S AUTHORITY?**

**HOW/ WHY DO SOME CHURCHES PREACH DOCTRINE CONTRARY TO THE BIBLE?**

**HOW/ WHY WILL THEY BE “ESPECIALLY” JUDGED?**

**2 Peter 2:10b-11-“*Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord.*”**

These “*bold and willful*” false teachers were not frightened (“*they do not tremble*”) of the demonic power of fallen spiritual beings (“*the glorious ones*”). Fallen angels are here referred to as “*glorious ones*” only because God originally created them as shining lights. But because of the fallen angels’ sin, the remaining “good” angels now have greater “*might and power*” than fallen angels whose light has dimmed.

Yet, even ‘good’ angels do not “*pronounce a blasphemous judgement*” upon fallen angels. Just as the archangel Michael (a “good” angel) did not dare pronounce judgment on Satan (a ‘bad’ angel) on his own authority, ‘good’ angels do not judge ‘bad’ angels on their own authority (see Jude). These false teachers weren’t to judge fallen angels either. That judgement belongs to God—and God alone [though in the *New Heaven/ New Earth*, believers will “judge” (“rule over”) all angels (1 Cor 6:3). ]



True believers in Christ have no reason to fear demonic powers because we are protected by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, false teachers do not fear demonic powers because they may not even believe in their existence (*“they blaspheme the glorious ones”*)— just as they don’t believe in the future coming of Jesus and blaspheme His name. They ridicule the notion that their sins would make them prey of either evil angels or the future judgement of Christ.

### **WHY/ HOW ARE FALSE TEACHERS “BOLD AND WILLFUL?”**

### **WHY/ HOW DO FALSE TEACHERS FOOLISHLY NOT FEAR DEMONIC INFLUENCE?**

### **DO CHRISTIANS NEED TO FEAR DEMONIC INFLUENCES? WHY? WHY NOT?**

**2 Peter 2:12-*“But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction,”***

Peter next compares false teachers to *“irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed.”* “In those words there is obviously a direct, divine assault of invectives on false teachers that reaches a peak...

What Peter is saying is that false teachers are like animals who have no rational capability. They operate solely on self-indulgence. They operate on unthinking passion compelled only by instinct...

Animals cannot think. They cannot reason. They make no intellectual contribution to the life of man. They make no rational contribution to the life of man. The purpose of their existence is solely to be killed...

At whatever point they are in the food chain, they die to sustain the life of another creature. In the particular view of what Peter has in mind here, they are animals born to be captured and killed and consumed by men” (John MacArthur, *“Creatures Born to Be Killed, Part 1,” Grace To You Broadcast*).

These false teachers were *“ignorant”* of the matters they blasphemed. “They believed they were reasonable, but they displayed their foolishness in criticizing what they did not comprehend” (Thomas Schreiner, *“The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude”*). Just as *“destruction”* is the ultimate fate of irrational animals, these false teachers *“will also be destroyed.”*

### **HOW/ WHY ARE IRRATIONAL ANIMALS CONTROLLED BY INSTINCT?**

### **HOW/ WHY ARE FALSE TEACHERS IRRATIONAL ANIMALS CONTROLLED BY INSTINCT?**

### **WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE FATE OF FALSE, IRRATIONAL TEACHERS WHO BLASPHEME GOD?**



**2 Peter 2:13-“suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you.”**

The NIV translation captures the beginning of this verse the best—“*They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done.*” At the final judgement, false teachers will weep as they reap what they sow.

False teachers don’t just engage in their deceitful pleasures in the hours of darkness (when evil is usually practiced), they make evil an all-day affair. They ignore the apostle Paul’s sound advice:

Rom 13:12-13- “*The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.*”

Instead of being spotless and blameless before God, false teachers are merely “*blots and blemishes*” that stain His Word. They even blasphemously “*feast*” with their congregation when they share a meal together before celebrating the Lord’s Supper. They have no shame.

### **WHY/ HOW DOES EVIL TRY TO HIDE IN THE DARKNESS?**

### **WHY/ HOW HAS THE EVIL OF DARKNESS COME INTO THE DAYLIGHT TODAY?**

### **HOW DO FALSE TEACHERS BLOT AND BLEMISH GOD’S WORD?**

**2 Peter 2:14-“They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!”**

Plutarch, a Greek philosopher once quoted an oracle as saying, “A man with no shame looks upon maidens as harlots” (“*Plutarch’s Moralia*”). These false teachers had “*eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin.*”

“The false teachers had so totally lost moral control that they could not look at any woman without seeing her as a potential adulteress. They were uncontrollably driven by lust, never resting from their sins” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”).

1 John 2:16-17- “*For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*”

“*They entice unsteady souls.*” The word “*entice*” is defined as attracting someone by offering or showing something that is appealing or interesting (*The Britannica Dictionary*). The term “*unsteady*” implied that these seeking souls were not firmly grounded in the true doctrine of the Gospel.

False teachers dangled their shiny objects and seduced these already shaky souls to fall to their doom. They convinced them that they could live for the sexual pleasures and comforts of this life without any judgement.

These false teachers ‘practiced’ their “*greed*” so wholeheartedly that it turned into ‘habit.’ They were “*accursed children*” waiting for the Almighty Father’s judgement and punishment.

## **WHY/ HOW ARE THE DESIRES OF THE EYES NOT FROM THE FATHER BUT FROM THE WORLD?**

### **HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ENTICED BY THE SHINY OBJECTS OF FALSE TEACHERS?**

### **WHY/ HOW DOES THE “PRACTICE” OF EVIL BECOME “HABIT” OF EVIL?**

**2 Peter 2:15-16—*“Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.”***

In life, there are only two roads to travel— the way of righteousness or the way of wickedness. These false prophets had forsaken “*the right way*” and “*gone astray*” down the wrong path. They “*followed the way of Balaam*”— a reference to the book of Numbers.

## **Who Was Balaam In The Bible?**

(Got [questions.org](http://questions.org))

“Balaam was a wicked prophet in the Bible and is noteworthy because, although he was a wicked prophet, he was not a false prophet. That is, Balaam did hear from God, and God did give him some true prophecies to speak. However, Balaam’s heart was not right with God, and eventually he showed his true colors by betraying Israel and leading them astray.

In Numbers 22-24, we find the story about Balaam and the king of Moab, a man called Balak. King Balak wanted to weaken the children of Israel, who on their way to Canaan had moved in on his territory. Balak sent to Balaam, who lived in Mesopotamia along the Euphrates River (Num 22:5), and asked him to curse Israel in exchange for a reward.

Balaam was apparently willing to do this but said he needed God’s permission (verse 8). Balaam, of course, had no power, in himself, to curse Israel, but, if God were willing to curse Israel, Balaam would be rewarded through Balak.

God told Balaam, “You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed” (verse 12). King Balak then sent “other officials, more numerous and more distinguished than the first” (verse 16), promising a handsome reward. This time God said, “Go with them, but do only what I tell you” (verse 20).

The next morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and left for Moab (Num 22:21). God sent an angel to oppose Balaam on the way. The donkey Balaam was riding could see the angel, but Balaam could not, and when the donkey three times moved to avoid the angel, Balaam was angry and beat the animal.

“Then the Lord opened the donkey’s mouth” (verse 28), and it rebuked the prophet for the beatings. “Then the Lord opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn” (verse 31).

The angel told Balaam that he certainly would have killed Balaam had not the donkey spared his life. Ironically, a dumb beast had more wisdom than God’s prophet. The angel then repeated to Balaam the instruction that he was only to speak what God told him to speak concerning the Hebrews (verses 33–35).

In Moab, King Balak took the prophet Balaam up to a high place called Bamoth Baal and told him to curse the Israelites (Num 22:41). Balaam first offered fourteen sacrifices on seven altars and met with the Lord (Num 23:1–5). He then declared the message God gave him: a blessing on Israel: “How can I curse / those whom God has not cursed? / How can I denounce / those whom the Lord has not denounced?” (verse 8).

King Balak was upset that Balaam had pronounced a blessing on Israel rather than a curse, but he had him try again, this time from the top of Pisgah (Num 23:14). Balaam sacrificed another fourteen animals and met with the Lord. When he faced Israel, Balaam again spoke a blessing: “I have received a command to bless; / he has blessed, and I cannot change it” (verse 20).

King Balak told Balaam that, if he was going to keep blessing Israel, it was better for him to just shut up (Num 23:25). But the king decided to try one more time, taking Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the wasteland (verse 28). Again, Balaam offered fourteen animals on seven newly built altars (verse 29). Then “the Spirit of God came on him and he spoke his message” (Num 24:2–3). The third message was not what the Moabite king wanted to hear: “How beautiful are your tents, Jacob, / your dwelling places, Israel!” (verse 5).

Balaam’s three prophecies of blessing on Israel infuriated the king of Moab, who told the prophet to go back home with no reward: “Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the Lord has kept you from being rewarded” (Num 24:11). Before he left, Balaam reminded the king that he had said from the very beginning he could only say what God told him to say.

Then he gave the king four more prophecies, gratis. In the fourth prophecy, Balaam foretold of the Messiah: “A star will come out of Jacob; / a scepter will rise out of Israel. / He will crush the foreheads of Moab, / the skulls of all the people of Sheth” (verse 17). Balaam’s seven prophecies were seven blessings on God’s people; it was God’s enemies who were cursed.

However, later on Balaam figured out a way to get his reward from Balak. Balaam advised the Moabites on how to entice the people of Israel with prostitutes and idolatry. He could not curse Israel directly, so he came up with a plan for Israel to bring a curse upon themselves. Balak followed Balaam’s advice, and Israel fell into sin, worshipping Baal of Peor and committing fornication with Midianite women. For this God plagued them, and 24,000 men died (Num 25:1–9; Deut 23:3–6).

Balaam’s name and story became infamous, and he is referred to several times in the New Testament. Peter compares false teachers to Balaam, “who loved the wages of wickedness” (2 Peter 2:15). Jude echoes this sentiment, associating Balaam with the selling of one’s soul for financial gain (Jude 1:11).

Finally, Jesus speaks of Balaam when He warns the church in Pergamum of their sin: “There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality” (Rev 2:14).

Satan’s tactics haven’t changed all that much. If he cannot curse God’s people directly, he will try the back-door approach, and idolatry and sexual immorality are his go-to temptations.”

It took a donkey to talk some sense into Balaam and “*restrain his madness*.”

“Balaam, of course, was not literally insane. But anyone who pursues “wrongdoing” is really out of his mind, for unrighteousness always leads to judgement...

The only sane way to respond to (false) teachers is to reject their lawless course because every Bible reader knows what finally happened to Balaam. He was ignominiously slain while fighting against Israel (Nu 31:8)...

A similar destiny awaits (false) teachers and hence Peter’s readers should repudiate their teachings” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter; Jude*”).

**WHY/ HOW ARE THERE ONLY TWO ROADS TO TRAVEL IN LIFE?**

**WHY/ HOW DO SOME MEN TRY TO GAIN FROM WRONGDOING?**

**WHY/ HOW IS PURSUING “WRONGDOING” INSANE?**

**2 Peter 2:17-“*These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved.*”**

Peter compares false teachers to “*waterless springs and mists driven by a storm.*” These “*waterless springs*” promise what they cannot deliver. Their thirsty followers come, but are not quenched— they leave parched and forsaken.

False teachers entice their followers to become like the Israelites of old who followed false ‘gods’ instead of the one True God— “*the fountain of living waters.*” These seekers will be left “*shocked and utterly desolate*” by the advice they receive.

Jeremiah 2:12-13-“ *Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”*

As a general rule, a person can survive without water for only about 3 days. The feeling of thirst on the first day soon progresses to sluggishness on the second, and ends in organ failure and death by the third. Water is critical for life.

Jesus promises much more than physical H<sub>2</sub>O. He delivers “living water” — the Holy Spirit who sustains true believers, not just for three days, but for eternity.

John 4:7-14- *“A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)*

*Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him,*

*“Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”*

*Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

False teachers are nothing more than “*broken cisterns that can hold no water*.” Their messages are only “*mists driven by a storm*” that leave the land waterless. “*For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved*” because they distort and hide the true message of the Gospel that offers true “*living water*.”

**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN PHYSICALLY THIRSTY AND DEHYDRATED?**

**WHAT WERE THE SYMPTOMS? WHAT WAS THE CURE?**

**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SPIRITUALLY THIRSTY AND DEHYDRATED?**

**WHAT WERE THE SYMPTOMS? WHAT WAS THE CURE?**

**2 Peter:2:18-“For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error.”**

False teachers are sneaky. They target the unstable who are more likely to fall for their schemes— those who have one foot in their lives of “*error*” and one foot in the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. False teachers speak “*loud boasts of folly*” that sway the weak who are susceptible to their assertive confidence.

They entice with “*sensual passions of the flesh*.” “The teachers probably lured recent converts by teaching that no judgement was forthcoming (3:3-7). And if there was no judgement, it followed that morality was irrelevant. People could live however they wished since judgement is an illusion. The door was open, then, to sexual sin at every level” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

“False teachers are deceptive. They do not announce themselves as false teachers, but proclaim themselves angels of light, people who have access to wisdom others have missed or misplaced. As Denny Burk says, ‘False teachers typically won’t show up to your church wearing a sandwich board saying, ‘I am a false teacher’.’ Instead they begin within the bounds of orthodoxy and announce themselves only slowly and through their subtly-twisted doctrine. They turn away from orthodoxy one step at a time rather than all at once...

As Paul wrote in his final letter to Timothy, he warned that the time was coming when people would not endure sound teaching (and hence, sound teachers), but instead they would have itching ears and demand teachers who would satisfy this itch. False teachers do this very thing. Their concern is not for what people truly need, but for what people want. The concern of the Christian is the exact opposite—the gospel does not address what we want, but what we need!” (Tim Challies, “Lessons I’ve Learned From False Teachers,” *challis.com*).

## **WHAT “LOUD BOAST OF FOLLY” DID YOU HEAR WHEN YOU WERE FIRST SEEKING CHRIST?**

### **HOW DO FALSE TEACHERS TRY TO SCRATCH YOUR ITCH?**

### **WHAT ARE THE SNEEKY WAYS FALSE TEACHERS INFILTRATE A CHURCH?**

**2 Peter 2:19-“They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.”**

“The techniques of false teachers are only workable for the naive, for the heretics are like a 300 pound man selling diet books— they promise freedom but are themselves hopelessly enslaved by depravity” (Walvoord and Zuck, “*The Bible Knowledge Commentary- New Testament*”).

“The false teachers can’t deliver the freedom they promise because they themselves are enslaved to the very corruption which people are trying to escape... Bondage to corruption awaits all followers of false teachers” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”).

False teachers promise “*freedom*” by removing moral constraints, but instead condemn their followers to becoming “*enslaved*” to their sexual desires. “If people cannot overcome certain habits and sin, they are slaves to such things. How could the teachers proclaim a message of freedom when they were unable to extricate themselves from sin? Their lifestyle contradicted their message... The freedom they promised others was an illusion” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Peter began his first letter declaring that he was indeed a slave— not to “*corruption*,” but to Jesus Christ.

“The truth is, we are all slaves. Not one of us is free, because we are in bondage to whatever controls our lives. Some people are slaves to food, some to drink, some to exercise, some to entertainment...

The Christian who cannot put down the computer or turn off the television in order to read the Bible, pray to the Lord, or to spend time with his or her loved ones, is a slave to a screen of sorts. The person who

cannot break an addiction to pornography is a slave to immorality. The person who cannot say anything that builds others up, but only tears them down, is a slave to the wicked tongue that is set on fire by hell itself (James 3:5-8)...

The bad news is, we will become slaves to whatever controls or captivates our minds and hearts. But there is good news: As believers and followers of Christ, we get to choose our master!" (Pastor Mike Hale, "True Freedom As A Slave To Christ," Romans 6:15-23, Waldport First Baptist Church).

## **WHO/ WHAT ENSLAVED YOU IN THE PAST?**

## **WHO/ WHAT ENSLAVES YOU NOW?**

## **HAVE YOU CHOSEN THE RIGHT MASTER?**

**2 Peter 2:20-21** *"For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them."*

Unfortunately, some who get a taste of escaping the "*defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" fall away. They become "*entangled*" in their old ways and eventually become "*overcome*" by the pollutants of the world.

For these unfortunate individuals, Peter states that their current state is worse than their prior life because they are unlikely to return to the Christian faith. They got their feet wet in the true Gospel where they were taught the way to righteousness. Yet, when push came to shove, they chose to move on to where their ultimate eternal fate awaits them.

A true Christian cannot lose his or her salvation. But, walking an aisle, making a profession of faith, or being baptized is not a guarantee of eternal deliverance because not all "Christians" are Christians.

"A consistent pattern of disobedience to Christ coupled with a lack of the elements of the fruit of the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, peace, and so forth is a warning that the person is probably not a true Christian inwardly, that there probably has been no genuine heart-faith from the beginning and no regenerating of the Holy Spirit" (Wayne Grudem, "Systematic Theology")

Matt 7:23- "*And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*"

1 Jn 2:4- "*Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,"*

## **WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?**

## **WHAT IS A "CHRISTIAN IN NAME ONLY?"**

## **WHAT PRODUCES "CHRISTIANS IN NAME ONLY?"**



**2 Peter 2:22-“What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”**

Peter uses an old proverb to compare false teachers and those that follow them to two “unclean” animals — dogs and pigs. Like a dog returning to lick its “vomit” and a pig that wallows in its muddy “mire,” they choose what is disgusting and detestable because they find it more attractive than the way of righteousness. They return to their filth.

It once again needs to be emphasized that a true Christian cannot lose his or her salvation. But that doesn’t mean we might not stray from time to time. Only God knows our true heart. Only He knows if our profession of faith is real or not. Only He is God.

As Christians we have a duty to expel those individuals who interject false teachings into the Church. But we also have a responsibility to welcome back and restore anyone who has truly repented.

James 5:19-20-“My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins”

### **WHY DOES PETER COMPARE FALSE TEACHERS AND THEIR DISCIPLES TO DOGS AND PIGS?**

**HAVE YOU EVER STRAYED?**

**WHO BROUGHT YOU BACK?**

**DID YOU THANK THEM?**

## **“CAN A CHRISTIAN LOSE SALVATION”**

(Got questions.org)

“First, the term *Christian* must be defined. A “*Christian*” is not a person who has said a prayer or walked down an aisle or been raised in a Christian family. While each of these things can be a part of the Christian experience, they are not what makes a Christian. **A Christian is a person who has fully trusted in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and therefore possesses the Holy Spirit** (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8–9)

So, with this definition in mind, can a Christian lose salvation? It’s a crucially important question. Perhaps the best way to answer it is to examine what the Bible says occurs at salvation and to study what losing salvation would entail:



**A Christian is a new creation.** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor 5:17, NKJV). A Christian is not simply an “improved” version of a person; a Christian is an entirely new creature. He is “in Christ.” For a Christian to lose salvation, the new creation would have to be destroyed.

**A Christian is redeemed.** “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Peter 1:18–19). The word *redeemed* refers to a purchase being made, a price being paid. We were purchased at the cost of Christ’s death. For a Christian to lose salvation, God Himself would have to revoke His purchase of the individual for whom He paid with the precious blood of Christ.

**A Christian is justified.** “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). To justify is to declare righteous. All those who receive Jesus as Savior are “declared righteous” by God. For a Christian to lose salvation, God would have to go back on His Word and “un-declare” what He had previously declared. Those absolved of guilt would have to be tried again and found guilty. God would have to reverse the sentence handed down from the divine bench.

**A Christian is promised eternal life.** “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Eternal life is the promise of spending forever in heaven with God. God promises that if you believe, you will have eternal life. For a Christian to lose salvation, *eternal life* would have to be redefined. The Christian is promised to live forever. Does *eternal* not mean “eternal”?

**A Christian is marked by God and sealed by the Spirit.** “You also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13–14). At the moment of faith, the new Christian is marked and sealed with the Spirit, who was promised to act as a deposit to *guarantee* the heavenly inheritance. The end result is that God’s glory is praised. For a Christian to lose salvation, God would have to erase the mark, withdraw the Spirit, cancel the deposit, break His promise, revoke the guarantee, keep the inheritance, forego the praise, and lessen His glory.

**A Christian is guaranteed glorification.** “Those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). According to Romans 5:1, justification is ours at the moment of faith. According to Romans 8:30, glorification comes with justification. All those whom God justifies are promised to be glorified. This promise will be fulfilled when Christians receive their perfect resurrection bodies in heaven. If a Christian can lose salvation, then Romans 8:30 is in error, because God could not guarantee glorification for all those whom He predestines, calls, and justifies.

### **A Christian cannot lose salvation!**

Most, if not all, of what the Bible says happens to us when we receive Christ would be invalidated if salvation could be lost. Salvation is the gift of God, and God’s gifts are “irrevocable” (Romans 11:29). A Christian cannot be un-newly created. The redeemed cannot be un-purchased. Eternal life cannot be temporary. God cannot renege on His Word. Scripture says that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).

**Two common objections** to the belief that a Christian cannot lose salvation concern these experiential issues: **(1)** What about Christians who live in a sinful, unrepentant lifestyle? **(2)** What about Christians who reject the faith and deny Christ?

**The problem with these objections is the assumption that everyone who calls himself a “Christian” has actually been born again.**

**The Bible declares that a true Christian will *not* live a state of continual, unrepentant sin** (1 John 3:6). **The Bible also says that anyone who departs the faith is demonstrating that he was never truly a Christian** (1 John 2:19).

He may have been religious, he may have put on a good show, but he was never born again by the power of God. “By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:16). The redeemed of God belong “to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God” (Romans 7:4).

Nothing can separate a child of God from the Father’s love (Romans 8:38–39). Nothing can remove a Christian from God’s hand (John 10:28–29). God guarantees eternal life and maintains the salvation He has given us. The Good Shepherd searches for the lost sheep, and, “when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home” (Luke 15:5–6). The lamb is found, and the Shepherd gladly bears the burden; our Lord takes full responsibility for bringing the lost one safely home

Jude 24–25 further emphasizes the goodness and faithfulness of our Savior: To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.”

## CHAPTER THREE

**2 Peter 3:1-2-“*This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles*”**

Peter stated this was “*the second letter*” he wrote to the believers in Asia and he clearly established his reasons for writing it. He wanted to stir their minds to remember two things— (1) the prophecies (“*predictions*”) of the the Old Testament “*prophets*” and (2) “*the commandments* (moral requirements) *of the Lord and Savior*” as delivered through the apostles who first brought them the Gospel message (“*your apostles*”).

The phrase “memory like an elephant” has crept into everyday vernacular. Elephants have long memories. They have uncanny recall and remember important locations of food and water even if they’ve not returned to those places for decades. Elephants who’ve not been together for many years recognize and greet each other when reintroduced.

Do you have the memory of an elephant? Probably not. Neither did Peter’s readers. They needed to be reminded of things they’d previously learned and forgotten. Peter was about to give them a not so gentle reminder about what the prophets of old foretold of the future and implore them to keep that knowledge at the forefront of their everyday lives. Additionally, he needed to remind them of their need to obey the Word of God as Peter and his fellow apostles relayed Jesus’ teachings.

**DO YOU HAVE THE MEMORY OF AN ELEPHANT?**

**HOW MUCH HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT WHAT THE BIBLE TAUGHT YOU?**

**WHY/ HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMINDED?**

**2 Peter 3:3-“*knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.*”**

Peter warned that in the “*last days*” “*scoffers*” would follow “*their own sinful desires*” and deny both the return of Christ and the final judgement of unrepentant sinners. Indeed, their mere presence at this time was evidence that the end was already near. The “*last days*” (“*eschaton ton hemeron*”) began with the work of Jesus in His death, resurrection and ascension.

“The word translated ‘*scoffer*’ in English can mean one who mocks, ridicules, or scorns the belief of another. In Hebrew, the word translated ‘*scoffer*’ or ‘*mock*’ can also mean ‘*ambassador*.’ So a scoffer is one who not only disagrees with an idea, but he also considers himself an ambassador for the opposing idea. He cannot rest until he has demonstrated the foolishness of any idea not his own...”

A scoffer voices his disagreement, ridicules all who stand against him, and actively recruits others to join his side. In the Bible, ‘scoffers’ are those who choose to disbelieve God and His Word. They say in their hearts, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1), and make it their ambition to ridicule those who follow God.” (*“What Does The Bible Say About Scoffers,” Gotquestions. org*)

“We already see an increase of ‘scoffers’ in our world today, and several factors may be contributing to that rise. Constant access to media, the internet, and other forms of technology provide an open platform for anyone with an opinion, and scoffing at everything once thought honorable is a favorite pastime. ‘Scoffers’ are emboldened on social media by others who can instantly approve of their mockery...

Many people are educated beyond their intelligence, and this new world without moral boundaries is producing ‘scoffers’ instead of thinkers. Many try to use scientific training to say that, since the reality of the Creator God cannot be proved by man’s understanding, God must not exist. In rejecting Scripture, mankind has lost its moral compass, leaving us with no way to determine right or wrong, good or bad, truth or lie. In this climate, anyone who claims to know the truth is a prime target for ‘scoffers.’” (*“What Does It Mean There Will Be Scoffers In The Last Days,” Gotquestions. org*).

## **HOW MANY SCOFFERS HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED?**

## **WHY/ HOW HAS SOCIAL MEDIA PROLIFERATED SCOFFERS?**

## **WHY/ HOW ARE SO MANY PEOPLE EDUCATED BEYOND THEIR INTELLIGENCE?**

**2 Peter 3:4- “They will say, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’”**

The word “coming” (“*parousia*”) referred to the future coming of Jesus Christ. These scoffers mockingly ask the question, “*Where is the promise of His coming?*” In other words, “Where is He? We don’t see Him! It looks like “*all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.*”

“They (mistakenly) argued that since the death of the patriarchs, God has not intervened in the world. Indeed, from the beginning of creation the world has progressed with an order and regularity that forbids us to look for something dramatic like a future coming of Christ...

They argue against any divine intervention in the world, that the regularity of the world’s order is such that postulating sudden interruptions is fanciful” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Today, a “cosmic worldview” is in vogue. “Derived from the German term ‘*Weltanschauung*,’ the word “worldview” refers to the cluster of beliefs a person holds about the most significant concepts of life—such as God, the cosmos, knowledge, values, humanity, and history” (Kenneth Samples, “*What in the World Is a Worldview,*” *Reasons To Believe*).

A person’s worldview is “an interpretive framework through which or by which one makes sense out of the data of life and the world” (Geisler and Watkins, “*Worlds Apart*”)

Unlike the Christian worldview, this ‘cosmic worldview’ proclaims a universe “completely de-humanized, ethically indifferent, and universally valid” (“*Did I Say Cosmology,*” *Cosmology Across Cultures Symposium, ASP Conference Series*).

Like the “scoffers” Peter warned against, advocates of this view argue not just against the existence of God, but any outside influence upon the universe. They believe in an orderly universe of chance, with no Creator behind it, and no purpose or end point in view.

Christians, on the other hand, give three arguments for the existence and necessity of God in the universe:

(1) **The “Cosmological” Argument** (Causality)

- a. Everything that had a beginning had a cause
- b. The universe had a beginning
- c. Therefore the universe had a cause (creator)

(2) **The “Teleological” Argument** (Design)

- a. Every Design has a Designer
- b. The Universe has a Highly Complex Design
- c. Therefore, the Universe had a Designer

(3) **The “Moral” Argument** (Natural Law)

- a. Every Law has a Law- Giver
- b. There is a Moral Law
- c. Therefore, there is a Moral Law- Giver

The only logical conclusion from these arguments is that there must be a God who created the universe, designed the universe, and gave moral laws.

**WHAT IS THE COSMIC WORLDVIEW OF GOD AND THE UNIVERSE?**

**CAN YOU DEFEND THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD?**

**WHAT IS GOD’S ROLE IN MAINTAINING THE UNIVERSE?**

**2 Peter 3:5-“For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,”**

In this verse, Peter gives the first of his **three rebuttals** to the scoffers’ claims that God doesn’t intervene in the world. First, “*they deliberately overlook*” the fact of Creation. “His **first argument** shows an internal flaw in the scoffers’ worldview. They claimed continuity since creation, but the creation of the world itself represents divine intervention” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Peter describes the creation of the heavens and earth as being formed “out of water and through water by the word of God.” In Genesis 1:1, we find the profound statement,

*“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*

Martin Luther (“*Luther’s Works- Letters on Genesis*”) explained that the *Hebrew* noun for “heaven” (“*shamah-yim*”) was derived from the word “water” (“*mayim*”) and, in the description of the formation of our physical world, the terms...

*“...water...and heaven are used... for the same thing.”*

On the first day of creation, *heaven* and *earth* were constituted as unformed masses. Genesis 1:6-7 tells us that on the second day, the midst of deep water above the earth was parted to create the “expanse” (“*firament*”) which God called the “heavens.”

*“And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.”*

Luther stated this “expanse” (“heaven”) encompasses the entire area above the surface of the earth. It includes the air we breathe, the open spaces where birds fly, the atmosphere where clouds hover, and outer space where the moon, sun, planets, and stars orbit. He referred to this entire area of “heaven” as the “upper structure.” The “*earth*” below was called the “lower structure.”

Thus, both the *heavens* and the *earth* were created “out of water and through water by the word of God.” Creation didn’t just happen without God’s intervention— He divinely willed it!

## HOW/ WHY DOES THE ACT OF CREATION REFUTE THE SCOFFERS’ WORLD VIEW?

### HOW WAS THE EARTH FORMED?

### CAN MAN CREATE SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING?

**2 Peter 3:6—“and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.”**

Peter’s second argument pointed the scoffers to a well documented event— the Flood which drowned the whole earth and altered world order. “God, by creating water above and below, built into His creation the tool of its destruction” (John MacArthur, “*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*”).

“If, at creation God introduced stability into the world by separating the waters, then, during the flood, the chaos returned. For the waters were unleashed and the world was destroyed. The false teachers could hardly maintain that the world is marked by regularity when a flood destroyed human beings” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Gen 7:19-23—“*And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind.*”

*Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark.”*

“The scoffers deliberately put aside God’s Word and then complained that God was not doing anything” (Walvoord and Zuck, *“The Bible Knowledge Commentary- New Testament”*). I don’t know about you, but it sure seems to me that God did something when He destroyed most of mankind by the Flood!

## **WHY/ HOW DID THE FLOOD REFUTE THE SCOFFERS’ WORLD VIEW?**

### **HOW DID THE FLOOD ALTER THE WORLD’S REGULARITY?**

### **WAS THE FLOOD WORLDWIDE?**

### **HOW CAN YOU PROVE IT?**

**2 Peter 3:7** *“But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”*

Peter’s **third argument** was a logic statement— **if** God intervened at the Creation and **if** He intervened at the Flood, **then** why would anyone doubt that He will intervene in the future. *“The heavens and earth that now exist are being stored up for... judgment and destruction of the ungodly.”*

But, unlike the Creation and the Flood, God will next employ “**fire**” because He pledged to not destroy the world by means of “**water**” ever again (Gen 9:11-17).

Verses 7, 10, and 12 are the only places where the New Testament depicts the future destruction of the world by “**fire**.” The Old Testament equates “**fire**” with “**judgment**.” In Peter’s mind, the two were inseparable. “The false teachers, unless they repented, would realize too late that the judgement was no myth and that God does intervene in the world” (Thomas Schreiner, *“The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude”*).

## **WHY/ HOW IS JUDGEMENT NOT A MYTH?**

### **WHY/ HOW DOES GOD INTERVENE IN THE WORLD?**

### **WHY/ HOW WILL GOD DESTROY THE WORLD BY FIRE?**

**2 Peter 3:8—“*But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*”**

The gist of Peter’s arguments was simple. God’s time is not our time. The scoffers (who claimed that because Jesus had not yet returned then He probably never would) were given a dose of reality about God’s timing.—“*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*” Peter was alluding to the Psalms—

Psalm 90:4—“*For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.*”

“The desire of the Psalmist is to contrast the eternity of God with the short span of human life. What Peter wishes is to contrast the eternity of God with the impatience of human expectations” (Biggs, “*Peter and Jude*”).

“Peter, like all New Testament writers, did not prescribe when Christ returns or set a certain date. He preserved the tension between the imminence (coming soon) of Christ’s return and the uncertainty about when He will come...

Even though the Lord has not returned yet, one should not conclude from this that He never will. What seems agonizingly long to us is a whisker of time to Him” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary-1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Einstein determined that time is relative—in other words, the rate at which time passes depends on our frame of reference. Real time is not absolute—the time we’re experiencing is only social construct.

Scientists have proven that time can stretch and slow — and sometimes even break down completely. Is it really any wonder that to the Creator of the universe “*one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day?*”

**WHAT IS TIME?**

**WHAT IS TIME TO GOD?**

**ARE YOU GETTING IMPATIENT FOR CHRIST’S RETURN? WHY?**

## **“Does Time Go Faster at the Top of a Building Compared to the Bottom?”**

(Published: June 24, 2013 By: Christopher S. Baird, author of *The Top 50 Science Questions with Surprising Answers* and Associate Professor of Physics at West Texas A&M University)

“Yes, time goes faster the farther away you are from the earth’s surface compared to the time on the surface of the earth. This effect is known as “gravitational time dilation.” It is predicted by Einstein’s theory of General Relativity and has been verified multiple times by experiments.



**Gravitational time dilation** occurs because objects with a lot of mass create a strong gravitational field. The gravitational field is really a curving of space and time. The stronger the gravity, the more spacetime curves, and the slower time itself proceeds.

We should note here, however, that an observer in the strong gravity experiences his time as running normal. It is only **relative** to a reference frame with weaker gravity that his time runs slow. A person in strong gravity therefore sees his clock run normal and sees the clock in weak gravity run fast, while the person in weak gravity sees his clock run normal and the other clock run slow. There is nothing wrong with the clocks. Time itself is slowing down and speeding up because of the relativistic way in which mass warps space and time.

**Gravitational time dilation** occurs whenever there is difference in the strength of gravity, no matter how small that difference is. The earth has lots of mass, and therefore lots of gravity, so it bends space and time enough to be measured.

As a person gets farther away from the surface of the earth – even just a few meters – the gravitational force on that person gets weaker. We don't notice it much as humans, but even going from the first floor of a building to the second floor of a building moves you away from the earth and therefore slightly weakens the gravitational force that you feel.

The difference in gravity between that felt at three meters above the surface of the earth and that felt at four meters is too small to notice with our human senses, but the difference is large enough for sensitive machines to pick up.

Because the strength of gravity is weakening with every step you take up a flight of stairs, the rate at which time proceeds is also speeding up with every step. **People who work on the bottom floor of a skyscraper are literally time traveling into the future compared to the people who work on the top floor.**

But the effect is very small. So small, in fact, that you will never notice the time difference in everyday life. People who live and work farther away from the surface of the earth are only fractions of a nanosecond ahead per year compared to those close to the surface.

Though small, the time rate difference between different altitudes is real and has been measured experimentally using very accurate **atomic clocks**.

The U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has measured such small time rate differences and published its findings. NIST was able to measure the small time rate difference between a point on the earth and a point half a meter higher, by simply raising their experimental table a half of a meter. **Their findings matched well the time dilation predicted by Einstein's relativity.**

The time dilation due to earth's gravity is significant enough that the GPS satellites, which orbit high above the earth, **must adjust their internal clocks** in order to take into account their faster time and therefore accurately determine the location of GPS receivers on the ground.”

**2 Peter 3:9-“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”**

Peter now explains the reason for God’s perceived slowness “as some count slowness”— God is patient. He doesn’t wish “that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” God desires all to be saved.

The apostle Paul gave some personal perspective about God’s patience when he said.

1 Tim 1:16-“But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life.”

Unfortunately, our Bible teaches that God doesn’t decree all to be saved. This represents the **duality** of His ‘desired will’ and His ‘decretive will.’ He could have, but chose not to, make us merely puppets. Instead, He decreed man to have a free will to make the choice to believe in Christ or not, to repent of one’s sins or not.

The word “repent” simply means to “turn around.” It’s a military term describing a soldier marching in one direction and then doing an ‘about-face.’ Spiritually, it means to change one’s heart, mind, and habits. Motivated by love for God, it means turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It’s manifested by a sincere desire to obey His commands.

Peter was saying that God sincerely wants scoffers to repent and be saved. He’s apparently willing to wait a little while longer. Are you?

**DOES GOD DESIRE ALL TO BE SAVED?**

**WHY DOESN’T GOD DECREE ALL TO BE SAVED?**

**ARE YOU WILLING TO WAIT A WHILE TO LET SOME SCOFFERS REPENT AND BE SAVED? WHY?**

**2 Peter 3:10-“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.”**

In this verse Peter echos Paul’s warning to the Thessalonians:

1 Thes 5:2-“For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.”

Like an intruder in the night, the end of history will come suddenly and unexpectedly. As the physical heavens and earth “pass away with a roar” and are “burned up and dissolved,” the works performed on the earth “will be exposed.” The day of the Lord will be the fulfillment of prophesy regarding the coming of Jesus Christ and the judgement of mankind.

Rev 27:11-15-*“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. From His presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.*

*And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.*

<sup>1</sup> *And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.*

*Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

*And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

## **HOW/ WHY WILL THE END OF HISTORY BE SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED?**

### **WHAT IS THE FINAL JUDGEMENT?**

### **IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE? HOW? WHY?**

**2 Peter 3:11-“Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,”**

Peter next asked his readers a simple but profound question. Knowing the future, “*what sort of people ought you to be?*” Should they try to live “*lives of holiness and godliness*” or live as those who’s names will not be found in the Book of Life? Do they want to be judged by the deeds they’ve done on earth or judged through the lens of Jesus Christ? Peter didn’t say the end of this world might come, he said this current world will definitely “*be dissolved*” and judgement will emphatically come with that end.

What does living a life of “*holiness and godliness*” look like? Quite simply, it looks like the life Jesus lived. He and God the Father are mirror images— perfect and blameless.

John 14:9- “*Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father: How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Living “*lives of holiness and godliness*” means we are to devote ourselves to Jesus in love and obedience. It begins with an inner change and spreads outward to our entire being. It doesn’t mean we’ll be perfect. It simply means we’ll do the best we can and depend on Him when we struggle. After all, “*if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).

## **KNOWING THE FUTURE, WHAT SORT OF PERSON “OUGHT YOU TO BE?”**

### **WHAT DOES LIVING A LIFE OF “HOLINESS AND GODLINESS” LOOK LIKE?**

### **HOW ARE YOU LIVING YOUR LIFE?**

**2 Peter 3:12-“*waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!*”**

Peter stated those who strive for lives of “holiness and godliness” are “*waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God.*” “The Greek word rendered “*hastening*” means to urge on— to await with eager desire. The true Christian does not dread the coming of that day. He looks forward to it as the period of his redemption” (*Barnes Notes on the Bible, "biblehub.com"*).

Peter described the end of this current world in terms of a “fire” that will “burn” and “melt” the “heavens” and “heavenly bodies.” Scholars have debated Peter’s use of these words “fire,” “burn” and “melt” for centuries. Was it a literal description of the end times or a metaphorical account of judgement leading to God’s next design. Since no where else in the Bible is the world’s end pictured in these term, it’s impossible to be definitive. What is certain is that after the day of judgement, the heavens and earth, as we know it, will never be the same again.

“The word rendered “burned up” means that they will undergo such a change as fire will produce; not, necessarily, that the matter composing them will be annihilated...

If the matter composing the earth is ever to be destroyed entirely, it must be by the immediate power of God, because only He who created can destroy. There is not the least evidence that a particle of matter originally made has been annihilated since the world began; and there are no fires so intense, no chemical powers so mighty, as to cause a particle of matter to cease wholly to exist...

So far as the power of man is concerned, and so far as one portion of matter can prey on another, matter is as imperishable as mind, and neither can be destroyed unless God destroys it. Whether it is His purpose to annihilate any portion of the matter which He has made, does not appear from His Word; but it is clear that He intends that the universe shall undergo important changes” (*Barnes Notes on the Bible, "biblehub.com"*).

**ARE YOU URGING ON THE END OF THIS CURRENT WORLD?**

**WHY? HOW?**

**WHAT ARE YOU REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO?**

**2 Peter 3:13-“*But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*”**

In Genesis 1, God is shown creating the world out of nothing. His declaration, “*it was good,*” is repeated four times in the first five days of His creation (Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 25). The entirety of the sixth day was given to His creation of humanity.

From the dust of the ground God shaped the first man, breathed life into his nostrils, and gave him dominion over everything He had designed. God then formed a mate from the man’s side, and together they began to rule over God’s creation.

At the end of the sixth day, God finished His work of *Creation* and looked back at everything He’d made. Thus, on this day we read,

*“God saw, and it was very good.”*

So if God thought His *Creation* was “**very good**,” should we really believe He’d allow man to eternally screw it up? Probably not. Paul Marshal (“*Heaven Is Not My Home*”) makes this clear:

*“This world is our home: we are meant to live here. **It has been devastated by sin, but God plans to put it right.** Hence, we look forward with joy to **newly restored bodies** and to living in a **newly restored heaven and earth**. We can love this world because it is God’s, and it will be healed, becoming at last what God intended from the beginning.”*

God is so much more than a “*man with a plan*”— He’s “*God with a rod*.” He’s our King. He’s omnipotent! He’s omniscient! He’s omnipresent! Nothing surprises Him. He’s powerful enough to handle anything thrown at Him and He will not allow Man, Satan, or anyone get in the way of His perfect *Creation*.

God is also the ultimate conservationist. Throughout the Bible we find the words redeem, restore, return, renew, regenerate, and resurrect. He has never intended to destroy what He created— He wants to reinstitute the order of His original design for both mankind and Earth.

If God wants to totally get rid of everything and start over He certainly could. But He hasn’t (not even in the Flood) and He won’t. He even sacrificed His own Son to reclaim His *Creation*. As soon as Satan convinced Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit in the *Garden of Eden*, God promised Satan:

Gen 3:14- “*So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.*

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; **he will crush your head**, and you will strike his heel.”*

When Jesus rose from the dead, Satan was mortally wounded. Today, Satan is nothing more than a “***dead man walking***”— and he knows it.

Rev 20:10- “***And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.***”

Our entire Bible is God’s roadmap leading to our redemption. It’s the blueprint to the reclamation of His perfected, sinless world. Christ will make ***Earth*** into ***Heaven*** and ***Heaven*** into ***Earth***— they will be one in the same. There will finally be “***Heaven on Earth***” — literally.

God’s plan has always been to remove the gulf between the spiritual and physical worlds. We’ll someday be residents of the reclaimed new Earth— a ***new Heaven***. And we’ll eternally enjoy this new home in our renewed, refurbished, resurrected bodies.

Rev 21:1- “*Then I saw a ***new heaven and a new earth***, for the ***first heaven*** and the ***first earth*** had passed away...*”

**WHAT DID GOD CREATE?**

**WHY DID GOD CONSIDER IT VERY GOOD?**

**WHY / WHAT/ HOW WILL GOD REDEEM, RESTORE, RETURN, RENEW, REGENERATE, AND RESURRECT?**

**2 Peter 3:14-“Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace.”**

The word “*diligent*” is defined as “steady, earnest, and energetic effort—devoted and painstaking work and application to accomplish an undertaking” (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*). Peter urged his readers to “*be diligent*” in living “*without spot or blemish, and at peace.*” They were to earnestly, energetically, and painstakingly live godly holy lives, ignoring the corrupt scoffers around them. They were to find ‘*peace.*’

Peace is a word with many meanings and is sometimes described simply as freedom from the disturbances of this world. It implies a lack of fear from both outside sources and from the inner recesses of our own minds. Some characterize it as a feeling of quietness or tranquility. Whatever worldly peace looks like, it’s often just out of our grasp. Worldly peace, even if attained, is always fleeting.

The word for peace is used over four hundred times in the Bible. God’s peace certainly includes the secular meanings of quietness, tranquility and freedom from disturbances— but the peace of God which surpasses all understanding is much more than just an absence from turmoil. God’s peace is a completeness of body, mind, and spirit. It is an imperishable and unfading gift of love, joy, and hope received by faith in the eternal salvation of Jesus Christ. Only by accepting this free gift can we ever achieve true eternal peace.

## **HOW ARE YOU EARNESTLY, ENERGETICALLY, AND PAINSTAKINGLY WAITING FOR JESUS’ RETURN?**

### **WHAT IS PEACE?**

### **HAVE YOU FOUND PEACE YET? HOW?**

**2 Peter 3:15-“And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,”**

Scholars debate exactly which of Paul’s letters Peter referenced in this verse. Whether it was one of Paul’s recorded thirteen epistles or one of his lost letters, Barnes (*Barnes Notes on the Bible*, “[biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com)”) states five things are clear:

- (1) Peter was acquainted with Paul’s writings
- (2) Peter presumed that those to whom he wrote were also acquainted with Paul’s writings
- (3) Peter regarded Paul as a “*beloved brother*,” notwithstanding the solemn rebuke which Paul had had occasion to administer to him (Gal 2:2 ff)
- (4) Peter regarded Paul as an authority in imparting the doctrines and duties of Christianity
- (5) Peter regarded Paul as an inspired man, and his writings as a part of divine truth.

Peter wanted to emphasize Paul’s teaching that the Lord delays His coming in order that more will be saved. Whereas scoffers teach this delay is the result of slackness on the Lord’s part, those who await His return should “*count the patience of our Lord as salvation*” for those who will eventually accept Him.

## DO YOU WANT MORE PEOPLE TO BE SAVED?

### WHY?

### WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?

**2 Peter 3:16—“as he (Paul) does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.”**

“Paul was born in Tarsus, a city in Asia Minor, sometime around A.D. 5 and he held Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28). He was given an outstanding education; it has been said that by the time he was 21 that he had earned the equivalent of two advanced academic degrees. ..

He was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin and was raised a Pharisee. He studied in the Jerusalem school of Rabbi Gamaliel, one of the leading Jewish thinkers of his time” (“*Paul the Pharisee*,” *Ligonier Ministries, Tabletalk Magazine*).

The apostle Paul wrote 13 letters in the canon of New Testament Scripture— Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.

“The Pauline Epistles contain much of the doctrine the Christian faith is built upon, especially in relationship to salvation. The Pauline Epistles expound on the doctrines of sanctification, justification, redemption, and reconciliation. The Pauline Epistles contain significant teachings on difficult theological issues such as election, predestination, foreknowledge, the deity/humanity of Christ, God’s ongoing relationship with Israel, and the Judgment Seat of Christ...

The Pauline Epistles also get very practical in how the church should function, containing teaching on spiritual gifts, qualifications of church leaders, the role of women in ministry, and the relationship between law and grace in the life of a Christ-follower.” (“*What Are The Pauline Epistles*,” [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)).

But, even Peter had to admit, “*There are some things in them that are hard to understand.*”

Unfortunately, just like they’d done with “*other Scriptures*,” many “*ignorant and unstable*” scoffers twisted Paul’s words to suit their own purposes. Instead of seeking the Truth within his words, they instead chose a path to “*their own destruction*” (eschatological judgement) by espousing falsehoods.

Bible studies abound today—the Truth of the Gospel is easily discovered with just a little effort. Unfortunately, too many people don’t take advantage and have only a limited knowledge of even the most basics of Christian tenets. This makes them perfect targets for the twisted, destructive ideas of opportunistic scoffers.

That Bible in front of you is meant to be read. It’s actually pretty interesting— it has history, mystery, crime, drama, adventure, humor, poetry, biography, romance, and yes, even sex! But most importantly, it’s the greatest self-help book ever written. It’s truly a life-saver. Study it!

# **WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?**

Robert Velarde

*Focus on the Family*

While not an exhaustive list, below are **eight reasons** for studying the Bible:

## **(1) Cultural Literacy**

One reason to study the Bible is for cultural literacy purposes. E.D. Hirsch writes, “To be culturally literate is to possess the basic information needed to thrive in the modern world.” (E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987*). Simply put, the Bible contains a wealth of cultural literacy. References to the Bible are found not only found in religion, but also art, music, philosophy, literature, law and more. Knowing what the Bible says is an important part of everyone’s k-base.

Many popular phrases and figures of speech also find their origin in the Bible including being a Good Samaritan, the folly of letting the blind lead the blind, going the extra mile, ethical maxims such as “do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” manna from heaven, etc. Hirsch considers the Bible so important to cultural literacy that it appears first in his *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*.

## **(2) What Does It Say?**

Another reason to study the Bible is to learn what it has to say firsthand. Whether one is a supporter or critic of the Bible, or perhaps just neutral or uninterested in the topic, history has demonstrated that the Bible cannot be ignored. Considering that the Bible is important to three major world religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – it is worthy of study.

In addition, the recent rise of hostile criticism towards the Bible itself and religion in general also makes it worthy of study. Sometimes the critics do not always quote the Bible correctly or in context. Knowing what it says firsthand and having some knowledge of the context is helpful in understanding not only current events, but key ideas the Bible addresses such as the nature and existence of God, the human condition, the biblical pattern of redemption and salvation and ethics.

## **(3) Personal Edification**

For thousands of years the Bible has been read not only as history and God’s Word, but also for personal edification. This, of course, is a more meaningful reason for studying the Bible for those who believe in God, but the Bible is also surprisingly edifying for those who do not believe. It is full of individuals facing moral choices, life challenges, and, frankly, situations that are applicable to us even today.

As Paul wrote,

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”*  
(2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV).

The Bible is available for us to learn from not only on an intellectual level, but on a personal and emotional level.



#### **(4) To Help Others**

But the Bible is not just for us to keep to ourselves as individuals. It is also useful in helping others. We gain centuries of wisdom and are thus able to help others by studying the Bible. Proverbs, for instance, contain general principles and ideas to assist anyone in living their lives in a way that is helpful and pleasing to God.

Studying the Bible in order to help others is not just for ministers, priests or pastors, but is something everyone can do. By knowing what the Bible says on different subjects, we can help others through difficult circumstances, encourage them and so forth.

#### **(5) Jesus**

For Christians the Bible culminates in the New Testament account of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some 2,000 years after the time of Christ, His life and ministry remain relevant even in our contemporary world. Regardless of how one views Christ, like the Bible, He cannot be ignored. Far from being a distant prophet or irrelevant figure in history, Jesus Christ is at the Christianity's foundation. Particularly studying the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John will help anyone gain a better understanding of Jesus and His mission.

#### **(6) God's Word to Us**

For people the world over, the Bible is God's Word to us. People inspired by God recorded the words that make up the Bible, thus communicating what theologians call special revelation. In other words, God has chosen to reveal Himself not only through creation and conscience, but also specially through Jesus and through His Word. Studying the Bible, then, is a matter of course for those who love God and desire to follow Him.

#### **(7) To Know God Better**

Since the Bible is God's Word, studying it is a way to know God better. Through His words we come to know not only the nature and attributes of God, but we also come to understand His plan for each of us. In a larger sense, we also come to know God's plan in history, His sovereignty, His providence, His love and more. There is only so much we can learn about God apart from the Bible. But with it we can know God better.

#### **(8) Avoiding Error**

Studying the Bible also helps us avoid theological error. The Bible tells us, "Watch your life and doctrine closely" (1 Tim 4:16 NIV), adding that we "must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1 NIV).

If the Bible is our authority for faith and life, then the inspired words it contains will help us to avoid error. In a pluralistic world with many religious and non-religious ideas competing for attention, studying the Bible provides us with a firm foundation in God's truth rather than the errors of the world.

**Knowing the Bible also helps us respond to error  
and answer questions that skeptics and others may have about it.**

**HAVE YOU EVER BEEN LED ASTRAY BY SCOFFERS? HOW? WHY?**

**ARE THERE SOME THINGS IN THE BIBLE THAT ARE HARD TO UNDERSTAND?**

**WHERE DO YOU GO TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING?**

**2 Peter 3:17-18-“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”**

**“The two imperatives in (these verses) summarize the entire letter well.** On the one hand, the readers must be on their guard (“*phylassesthe*”), so that they do not fall prey to the false teachers and lose their eschatological reward. On the other hand, they will only remain vigilant if they “grow” (“*auxanete*”) in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter; Jude*”).

The analogy of how one recognizes a counterfeit dollar bill was used earlier, but is worth mentioning again. It’s only by studying a genuine dollar bill that one can recognize a false one. Likewise, it’s only by growing “*in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* “ that one is able to recognize “*the error of lawless people*”— counterfeit doctrine.

Peter used this letter as a warning to his readers to beware of scoffers. They do their best to hide, disguise, and distort the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

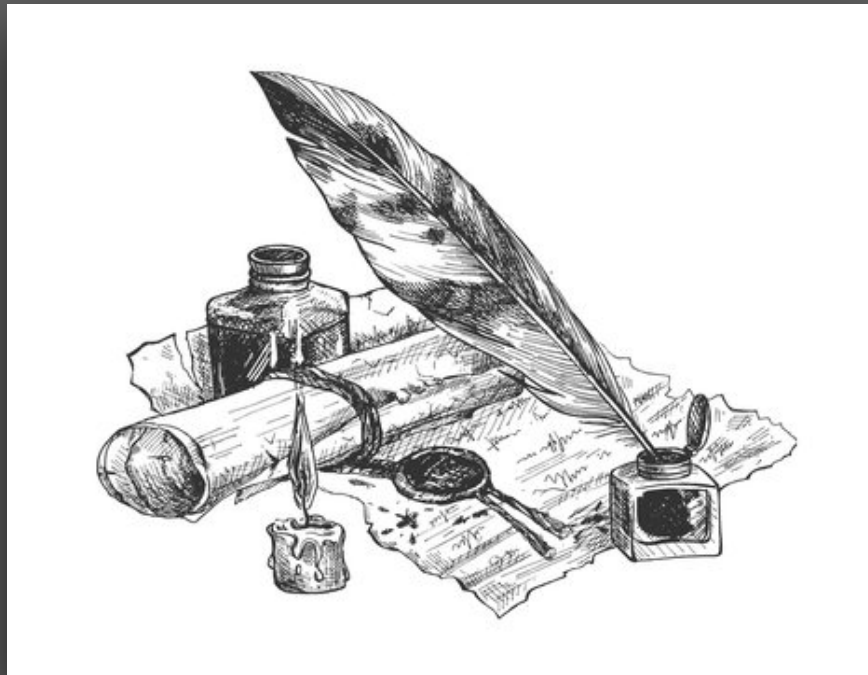
**Peter’s words are as applicable today as they were 2000 years ago.**

**Beware!**

***To Christ Be The Glory Both Now  
And  
To The Day Of Eternity.***

***AMEN.***

# JUDE'S



# LETTER

"WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND"



**Jude 1-“*Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,  
To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:*”**

This opening verse identified the author as “*Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James.*” Though some have attempted to claim otherwise, most scholars agree this Jude (Judas) and his sibling, James, were two of Jesus’ four half- brothers (Mark 6:3).

Matt 13:55- “*...And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?*”

Jude referred to himself as the brother of James, a known leader in the church at the time. But, instead of also identifying as a half- brother of Jesus, he called himself only “*a servant of Jesus Christ.*”

“The term Jude used is not “*diakonos*,” which can also mean servant, but “*duolos*” (“*bond-servant*” or “*slave*”). He did not commence the letter by emphasizing the privilege of his brotherly relationship to Jesus Christ, but to his submission to Christ’s lordship” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

This was a remarkable transformation for Jude. Like his brothers (and sisters), he had not initially believed in Jesus during His earthly life— “*For not even his brothers believed in him*” (John 7:5). Indeed, at one point in Jesus’ ministry “*they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind*” (Mark 3:21). His conversion likely occurred after Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances to his brother James and the apostles— “*Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles*” (1 Cor 15:7).

Jude’s letter is addressed to “(1) *those who are called*, (2) *beloved in God the Father*, (3) *and kept for Jesus Christ.*” In other words, the chosen people of God are those who trust in Jesus Christ. Though the letter was probably sent to a specific church, the region is not identified. Because of this, it’s often referred to as one of the “catholic” epistles meaning it appeals to a “universal” (“catholic”) audience.

## **WHO WAS JUDE?**

### **WHY DID HE REFER TO HIMSELF AS A SERVANT (SLAVE) TO JESUS?**

### **HOW DO YOU REFER TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS? WHY?**

**Jude 2-“*May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.*”**

“*Mercy*” is defined as compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm. “*Peace*” is freedom from disturbance. And “*love*” is an intense feeling of deep affection. The recipients of Jude’s letter would need all of these virtues to overcome the stressful time in the life of their church.

“Jude prayed for mercy because his readers would resist the opponents only by God’s mercy and because they needed to experience God’s mercy so that they could extend the same to those captivated by false teachers (vs 22-23). They needed peace because the interlopers caused division and introduced strife and grumbling wherever they went (vs 10,16). They needed love because the intruders cared only for themselves and abused the very purpose of the love feasts (vs 12)” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

**IS YOUR CHURCH UNDERGOING A STRESSFUL TIME?**

**ARE YOU UNDERGOING A STRESSFUL TIME IN YOUR LIFE?**

**WHAT VIRTUES DO YOU NEED TO OVERCOME THE STRESS IN YOUR LIFE?**

**Jude 3-“Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.”**

“Jude, being informed of the assiduity, and perhaps the success, with which the false teachers were spreading their pernicious errors, found it necessary to write this letter to the faithful without delay” (Benson Commentary, *Bible hub.com*).

Though he originally wanted to address a subject of common interest to all Christians (ie. “salvation”), Jude instead found it “*necessary to write appealing (to them) to contend for the faith.*” The word “*contend*” (“*epagonizomai*”) was a military term implying fighting in one’s own defense with intense effort. The recipients of Jude’s letter needed to gird themselves for battle against false teachers who would pervert the gospel “*that was once for all delivered to the saints.*”

“Far too many of us are woefully biblically illiterate. We don’t know what the text says, what it means, or how it makes a difference in our lives. Because of this, we’re easily swayed by teaching that sounds wise, helpful and spiritual, but might be complete nonsense. We are easy prey because we don’t know that what we’re hearing is wrong...

So how do we protect ourselves? I’ve really come to appreciate the simple truth that the best way to protect ourselves against false teaching (and protect others from it as well) is not always with lofty arguments. It is with the consistent study of Scripture” (Arron Armstrong, “*How Do We Protect Ourselves Against False Teaching*”- 3 minutes of reading • *Christian Living*).

**HOW ARE YOU PREPARING TO CONTEND FOR THE FAITH?**

**WHAT SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?**

**HOW IS YOUR BIBLE YOUR STRONGEST WEAPON?**

**Jude 4-“For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”**

False teachers had “*crept in unnoticed.*” Jude notes four observations about these intruders:

- (1) Their “*condemnation*” was long ago predicted. These false teachers had not taken God by surprise—they would ultimately fail, be defeated, and be judged for their wickedness.

Prov 16:4- “*The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.*”

- (2) They were “ungodly.” They lived as though God did not exist, neither fearing Him or serving Him. These intruders thought God could be ignored.
- (3) They “perverted” God’s forgiving “grace” by using it to justify their lascivious actions. If there is no God then there is no objective purpose to life other than the fulfillment of sensual desires.
- (4) They “denied” Jesus as “Master and Lord.” Everyone worships someone or something—either God or the idols of false gods. What we occupy our minds with the most is what we value and eventually worship. These intruders worshiped themselves.

Today, living in a world becoming more and more godless, we must constantly be on guard. "When we conform to this world, we begin accepting the belief that whatever the majority is doing or saying or thinking must be right. And as secularism creeps into our thinking, we become more self-focused and self-centered. We become overly concerned with personal happiness. Our prayers no longer seek God's will, but our own desires" (Michael Youssef, Ph.D., "*Pursuing Godliness In A Godless World*," [ldw.org](http://ldw.org)).

### WHAT IS GODLINESS?

### WHAT IS GODLESSNESS?

### DO YOU SEEK GOD’S WILL OR YOUR OWN DESIRES? HOW? WHY?

**Jude 5—“Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.”**

In this and the following two verses, Jude gives three worldly examples of how God previously “designated” the “ungodly” for “condemnation.” His first example was of the Israelites who rebelled during their exodus from Egypt— particularly when they refused to enter the Promised Land from the south early in their journey (Numbers 14). As punishment, an entire generation had to perish before the Israelites were again given the opportunity to access the land promised to their forefathers.

“Two words in particular link this verse to Numbers 14. Jude said that Israel “*did not believe*” (“*pisteuo*”), and the same verb is used to depict Israel’s *disbelief* in Numbers 14:11 (“*ou pisteousin*”). Jude also said that the Lord “*destroyed*” (“*apolesen*”) those who disbelieved, and the Lord threatens “*destruction*” (“*apolo*”) in Numbers 14:12” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Of note is Jude’s statement that it was Jesus who saved the Israelites “*out of the land of Egypt and afterwards destroyed those who did not believe*.” However, Leviticus 11:45 (and other passages in the Old Testament) say YHWH saved Israel out of Egypt, while Judges 2:1 says the Angel of YHWH was the one who saved Israel out of Egypt. How can these three seemingly contradictory statements all be correct?

The answer lies in the multiple visual encounters the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) had with YHWH. Since Scripture clearly states no-one can look upon God’s face and live (Ex 33:20), who did they actually see? As usual, the answer is found in Scripture.

Gen 15:1-6—“*After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of*

*Damascus?” And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”*

*And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”*

*And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”*

*And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.”*

This **Word** was the visual manifestation of **YWHY**. So who is this **Word**? The answer becomes clear in the opening verses of the gospel of John—the **Word** is none other than **Jesus**.

John 1:1, 14—*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...*

*...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth”*

In the gospels, we’re told **Jesus** made a startling proclamation to His Jewish antagonists about His identity:

John 8:56-58—*“Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”*

Since the “**Word**” was clearly equated with and identified as **YWHY** in Genesis, when Jesus said “*before Abraham was, I am...*”

**Jesus** claimed to be the “**Word**” of the *Old Testament*— the visible “**YHWHY**”

Throughout the *Old Testament* we see two **YWHY**’s — one invisible in the spiritual realm (“*the heavens*”) and another brought forth to visibly interact with humanity on earth— **Jesus**.

Additionally, sometimes the visual manifestation of YWHY was also referred to as...

**“The Angel of the Lord.”**

Gen 31:11-13—*“Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am!’ And he said, ‘Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.’”*

When Jacob wrestled with God (Gen 32:24-30) and was re-named Israel (“*Fighter of God*”), his opponent stated to him, “*You have wrestled with God.*” This *elohim* was tangible and corporeal. Hosea 12 confirms the divinity of Jacob’s opponent and equates this angel with God.



Hosea 12:3-4 *“In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God.  
He strove with the angel and prevailed”*

Later, when Jacob (Israel) was on his death bed blessing his son Joseph, this parallel position of **God** (elohim) and the **angel** (mal’ak) is made clear...

Gen 48:15-16- *“And he blessed Joseph and said,*

*“The **God** (“elohim”) before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,  
the **God** (“elohim”) who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day,  
  
the **angel** (“mal’ak”) who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys;  
and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and  
Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”*

The names “**God**,” “**Jesus**,” (“*the Word*”) and the “**Angel of the Lord**” are often used interchangeably. That’s why Jude can say Jesus was the one who saved Israel out of Egypt.

**WHY DO WE NEED TO BE REMINDED OF THE CONDEMNATION OF THE UNGOODY?**

**WHAT DO YOU DESERVE FOR YOUR SINS?**

**WHY DID JESUS PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR SINS?**

**Jude 6-***“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day”*

This verse and the next are parallel verses seen in Peter’s second letter (see previous commentary on 2 Peter 2:4,6). After describing the condemnation of the disobedient Israelites, Jude next described God’s punishment of disobedient angels “*who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling*” in the spirit world to come to earth and have sexual relations with human women (Genesis 6). They are now “*kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness*” until the day of judgement.

God’s judgement for transgression is not always immediate, but it is assured. God would not be just if He ignored sin. “Punishment respects our free choices and respects us as persons capable of making moral decisions. If God holds us responsible for our moral actions, then he treats us like rational people who are responsible for our choices...”

In punishing those who do wrong God is not being unfair or mean, but is treating us with respect. This is the same way the criminal justice system, when properly applied, respects offenders as persons by punishing them rather than treating their offenses as something they had no control over...

The good news is that God extends mercy—even though we deserve divine punishment due to our free choices to do moral wrongs. This is not to say that God takes our moral wrongs lightly and dismisses them easily. Rather, Jesus took the punishment that we deserved by suffering and dying in our place. His righteousness (moral goodness) is imputed to us if we choose to follow and obey Him” (Stephen McAndrew, “*Why Would a Loving God Punish Us*,”— *Reasons To Believe*).

## WHY MUST GOD PUNISH?

## HOW DOES GOD PUNISH?

## WHY IS GOD'S PUNISHMENT A SIGN OF RESPECT?

**Jude 7—*“just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire”***

Jude next referenced the downfall of “*Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities*” (*Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar*) caused by their “*sexual immorality*” and pursuit of “*unnatural desires*” (see previous commentary on 2 Peter 2:6). This verse established a parallel between the sexual immorality of angels and that of Sodom and Gomorrah—the sexual sins of both had consequences. While the angels are now kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the day of judgement, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah lie dormant under ash, sulfa, and dusky flames.

Josephus stated about the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah:

“Vestiges of the divine fire and faint traces of five cities are still visible today. Still too, may one see ashes reproduced in the fruits, which from their outward appearance would be thought edible, but on being plucked with the hand dissolve into smoke and ash. So are the legends about the land of Sodom borne out by ocular evidence” (Josephus, *T.Ab. 141*).

Plato also commented on the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah:

“Even to this day there are seen in Syria monuments of the unprecedented destruction that fell upon them, in the ruins, and ashes, and sulfa, and the dusky flame which still is sent up from the ground as of a fire smoldering beneath” (Plato, “*Moses 2.56*”).

Like these aberrant cities, the results of our sins are sometimes felt well into our futures. Though we’re forgiven of the eternal consequences of our sins when we accept the sacrifice of Jesus, it doesn’t negate the temporal ramifications of those transgressions. Some consequences are simply the natural result of “cause and effect.” As Einstein stated—every action produces a re-action. In other words, we sow what we reap in this world.

Sometimes God uses the temporal consequence of sin to teach us of the necessity of His grace and remind us of our need for Him. Other times He allows us to suffer the consequence of sin for discipline. Would God be a loving father if He didn’t discipline His straying children? He often allows us to experience the worldly consequences of our sins for our own good.

## WHAT ARE THE TEMPORAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN?

## HAVE YOU REAPED WHAT YOU’VE SOWN?

## HOW HAS GOD DISCIPLINED YOU?

**Jude 8-“Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.”**

Jude claimed the godless interlopers who had infiltrated the church were like the disobedient Israelites, the fallen angels who left their proper dwelling, and the perverted men of Sodom and Gomorrah. They:

- (1) Relied on their dreams— falsely claimed their messages came from God
- (2) Defiled their flesh— engaged in aberrant sensual behaviors
- (3) Rejected authority— rejected God rule
- (4) Blasphemed the glorious ones— claimed authority they did not possess

False prophets abound today:

1. They “Prophecy” From Their Own Delusions

Jeremiah 14:14- *“And the Lord said to me: “The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds.”*

2. What They Say Does Not Come True

Deut 18:21-22- *“And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.”*

3. They Lead People Away from Christ

Deut 13:1-4- *“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”*

**HOW DO YOU TEST THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR GOD?**

**DO YOU EVER SPEAK FOR GOD?**

**HOW DO YOU TEST YOURSELF WHEN YOU SPEAK FOR GOD?**

**Jude 9—*“But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, “The Lord rebuke you.”*”**

In this verse, Jude expands on his previous statement that these interlopers claimed authority they did not possess (they “*blaspheme the glorious ones*”). Specifically, they attempted to “*pronounce a blasphemous judgement*” on fallen “*angels*” (“*glorious ones*”)— a judgement reserved only for God.

Even the powerful archangel Michael, who knew the rebelliousness of these fallen angels well, did not presume to usurp God’s authority by pronouncing a “*blasphemous judgement*” on their leader— the devil. Instead, he deferred to God saying to Satan, “*The Lord rebuke you.*”

This verse has perplexed scholars for centuries because of the lack of any other Biblical reference for this encounter of Michael and the devil over the body of Moses. The exact reason for the dispute over Moses’ body is unknown and is subject to various speculation. God himself buried Moses in an undisclosed location.

Deut 34:6- “*and He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial to this day.*”

"The story is reputed to come from a book titled ‘*Assumption of Moses*’... Jude’s reference to a non-canonical book is puzzling for many Christians today... It seems likely that Jude believed the story was rooted in history... but we should not draw the conclusion that the citation from a book means the entire book is inspired... Paul cited Greek poets and sayings without suggesting the entire work was authoritative Scripture... Jude did not intend to put a canonical stamp on ‘*Assumption of Moses*’ simply because he cited it” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

**HOW DID THESE INTERLOPERS TRY TO CLAIM AUTHORITY THEY DID NOT POSSESS?**

**HAVE YOU EVER ATTEMPTED TO CLAIM AUTHORITY YOU DID NOT POSSESS?**

**HOW DID THAT WORK OUT FOR YOU?**

**Jude 10—*“But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.”*”**

The godless people who had entered their church did not understand how little they actually comprehended about heavenly matters— they knew less than “*unreasoning animals.*” They blasphemed (spoke abusively) against all they did not understand. The intruders were driven, not by rational thought, but by irrational instinct. Following their wayward path, they would eventually be eternally judged and destroyed.

How many people today blasphemy God without a rational reason for doing so? Just the mention of the term “Christianity” sends some into an apoplectic tirade. Why? Jesus gave the answer long ago:

John 15:18-25- *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

*Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*

*But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.*

*Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.*

*But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: ‘They hated me without a cause.’”*

### **WHY DO PEOPLE HATE GOD?**

### **WHY DO PEOPLE HATE CHRISTIANS?**

### **WHY DO PEOPLE HATE YOU?**

**Jude 11-“Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.”**

The phrase “woe to them” indicated righteous anger. Jude used three rebellious men (*Cain*, *Balaam*, and *Korah*) as examples of the sins that had crept into the church. Though Cain murdered his brother, Jude was not accusing the interlopers of this particular egregious sin, but rather what led to it— his jealousy. Cain was jealous that his brother’s sacrifice was deemed more worthy than his. Like Cain, the intruders chose wickedness over goodness because their false offering were rejected by God.

“*Balaam’s error*” was his unadulterated greed. He sought “*gain*” (financial reward) for his blessings and bad advice (see Numbers 31). The false teachers “gave themselves completely to the kind of deception that Balaam practiced for the sake of money” (Louw and Nida, “*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*”).

“*Korah’s rebellion*” was his rejection of Moses’ authority (Numbers 16). He and his followers were swallowed by the earth for their rebellion. Likewise, due to their rejection of God’s authority, these false teachers would perish.

Jealousy, greed, and rejection of authority are hallmarks of unrighteous individuals who often creep into our churches. “*Woe to them!*”

## HOW DOES JEALOUSY AFFECT A CHURCH?

## HOW DOES GREED AFFECT A CHURCH?

## HOW DOES REJECTION OF AUTHORITY AFFECT A CHURCH?

**Jude 12-“These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted”**

In this verse Jude used four more analogies to describe the intruders within the church. First, they were like “*hidden reefs*” (“*spilas*” - rocks) concealed from ships as they tried to make harbor. They hid among the congregation during “*love feasts*”— communal meals where the Last Supper was usually celebrated.

“Jude warned his readers that all was not what it seemed. Some of those at the love feasts were dangerous hypocrites pretending to be full of love, but hiding their dangerous teaching and lifestyle that threatened the church... They felt no pangs of conscience in participating in such meals, even though their lives were not characterized by love” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Secondly, they were “*shepherds feeding only themselves*” — they were concerned only for themselves. Some of these godless individuals had even become leaders in the church (“*shepherds*”).

Ezek 34:2- “*Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep?*”

Next, Jude compared them to “*waterless clouds, swept along by winds.*” They promised much but delivered little.

Prov 25:14- “*Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of a gift he does not give.*”

And finally, Jude called them “*fruitless trees in late autumn*”— their time had passed to bear fruit. These false teachers were “*twice dead*”— their late picked fruit was just as rotten as if plucked from a dead “*uprooted*” tree. They were incapable of bearing spiritual fruit.

## HOW DO YOU WATCH FOR “HIDDEN REEFS” IN THE CHURCH?

## HAVE YOU HAD CHURCH LEADERS PROMISE MUCH BUT DELIVER LITTLE?

## HOW DO YOU DISCERN BETWEEN FRUIT BEARING AND FRUITLESS TREES IN THE CHURCH?

**Jude 13-“wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.”**

Turbulent and unstable in their doctrine, these intruders were like “*wild waves of the sea.*” These godless leaders produced nothing more than filthy “*foam of their own shame*”— frothy, contaminated, wrathful teachings.

“They wander about from house to house, as well as from one nation to another, being never settled in their principles... and wander also after their own carnal lusts and cause others to wander likewise”(Gill’s *Exposition Of the Entire Bible.*).

“They glare like meteors, or falling stars, and then sink into the blackness of darkness forever” (*Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary*).

How often do we hear of preachers whose torch once burned brightly only to flame out due to personal indiscretion and hypocritical teaching? They fade away in shame leaving their congregations wounded, bewildered, and angry— an ailment called “*Church Hurt.*”

The term refers to the emotional or psychological pain individuals experience as a result of negative or hurtful experiences within a church community. When men and women in church do things contrary to God’s perfect character, it influences how we see God Himself— it distorts our image of Him. And, when “*Church Hurt*” is caused by abuse of power by leadership, the ramifications can be devastating. Those we look up to the most are able to hurt us most.

When we experience “*Church Hurt*” it’s tempting to give up on church altogether. But we wouldn’t throw out the baby with the bath water or junk a car just because it get’s a flat tire.

The first step to returning to God’s house after “*Church Hurt*” is to name the pain. Pain is a symptom, not a diagnosis. Identify the specific cause of the hurt— false accusations, using the Bible as justification for wrongs, or even psychological, emotional, or physical abuse. We can’t fix what we can’t identify.

Second, separate “*Church Hurt*” from being hurt by God. “*Church Hurt*” is caused by sinful people— what happened was not God’s will. Since the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden, God has been leading us down a path of redemption. His entire Bible is a roadmap back to the eternal, perfect, tearless home that awaits us. God is a loving God who wants only the best for us.

Next, reclaim control— others (including Satan) have only the power we give them. Protect yourself. Just make sure you know what’s worth protecting— your relationship with God. Don’t let others stand between you and Him. Use the skills God’s given you to adapt, discern, and differentiate between matters of convention and conviction. Have a plan and implement it.

Finally, lean on others. Everyone in church has suffered from “*Church Hurt*” at one time or another— join the club. Commiserate with fellow members and come up with solutions to help others. But most importantly, learn to forgive others as God forgives you. We’re never alone— God can and will help us recover from “*Church Hurt.*” Just ask Him!

**WHY DO SOME PASTORS FAIL?**

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED CHURCH HURT?**

**HOW DID YOU GET OVER IT?**



**Jude 14-15—*“It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*”**

The judgement of these false prophets was prescribed by God long ago. Jude once again quotes a non-canonized book (1 Enoch 1:9) — “*1st Enoch*” is not considered to be canonized Scripture by Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Greek or Russian Orthodoxy, or Protestantism. Though the book was obviously pseudo-epigraphical (a book that imitates Scripture but is written under a false name and is not part of the Bible's canon), Jude believed this particular portion represented God's truth.

“Indeed, the content of the prophesy is not remarkable, assuring the readers that the Lord will truly judge the ungodly. Citing a quotation from another source does not indicate that the entire work is inspired, even if the saying drawn upon is true” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude*”).

Jude was speaking of the second coming of Christ where Jesus returns to earth with a myriad of angels (“*holy ones*”) to judge those who oppose Him. No unbeliever will escape His wrath— He will “*convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.*”

### **Who Was Enoch?**

The historical Enoch was “*the seventh generation from Adam*” from the familial line of Seth (*Adam—Seth—Enosh—Cainan—Mahalaleel—Jared—Enoch*). Enoch (along with Elijah) was one of the two individuals who did not meet death, but instead was taken directly into heaven by God.

Gen 5:23-24- “*Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.*”

2 Kings 2:11- “*And as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*”

Some scholars speculate Enoch and Elijah were taken into heaven alive in preparation for a role in the end times as the “two witnesses” in the book of Revelation.

Rev 11:3-12- “*And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.*

*These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.*

*They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.*

*And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie*



*in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.*

*For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.*

*But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.*

*Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.”*

**WHY IS GOD'S JUDGEMENT CERTAIN?**

**HOW WILL UNBELIEVERS BE JUDGED?**

**HOW WILL YOU BE JUDGED?**

**Jude 16-“These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”**

Jude claimed these “grumblers” (“complainers”) were:

- (1) “Malcontents”— They bore a grudge against God from a sense of grievance or frustrated ambition
- (2) Followers of their own “sinful desires”— They pursued their own desires instead of tending to the needs of others
- (3) “Loud- mouth boasters”— They were arrogant in their words and actions
- (4) Ones who showed “favoritism to gain advantage”— They sought financial gain by teaching only what some wanted to hear

**ARE YOU SOMETIMES A GRUMBLING MALCONTENT? WHY? HOW?**

**DO YOU SOMETIMES FOLLOW YOUR OWN DESIRES INSTEAD OF GOD'S? WHY? HOW?**

**ARE YOU SOMETIMES ARROGANT? WHY? HOW?**

**DO YOU SOMETIMES SHOW FAVORITISM? WHY? HOW?**

**Jude 17-18-“But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.””**

Jesus’ apostles frequently predicted the entrance of heretical and ungodly men into the church.

Acts 20:29-“ *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock*”

1 Tim 4:1-“*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons*”

2 Tim 3:2-“*For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,*”

2 Peter 3:3-“*knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.*”

Unfortunately, Paul’s and Peter’s prophecies about these scoffers had come to fruition. Jude wanted his “*beloved*” readers to remember the apostles’ words regarding these godless teachers who only followed their “*ungodly passions*.”

**WHAT WARNINGS DID YOU RECEIVE ABOUT FALSE TEACHERS? WHEN?**

**WHO FIRST WARNED YOU?**

**DID YOU HEED THE WARNINGS? WHY? WHY NOT?**

**Jude 19- “It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”**

The apostle Paul defined the hallmark of Christians—the “*Spirit of God*” dwells in them. Those individuals without the “*Spirit of Christ*” are not Christians.

Rom 8:9-“*You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*”

Jude stated these interlopers were not really Christians— they were “*devoid of the Spirit*.” They were merely “*worldly people*” who caused “*divisions*” within the church causing people to take their eyes off the ball— Jesus.

Today, many churches have become followers instead of leaders and let the tail wag the dog. Far too many have fallen into the trap of woke consumer Christianity putting people and programs before God.

But churches stay relevant by speaking and living God’s truth while offering grace, forgiveness, love, and hope. They stay relevant, not by conforming, but by reforming. They stay relevant by being ‘in’ the world, but not ‘of’ the world— engaging the culture, not being shaped by it. They stay relevant not by ignoring sin, but offering a way out through the unselfish sacrifice of Jesus.

## WHO/WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

## WHAT CAUSES DIVISION WITHIN A CHURCH?

## HOW SHOULD CHURCHES REMAIN RELEVANT IN TODAY'S WORLD?

**Jude 20-21-*“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”***

Jude exhorted his readers to “keep” themselves “in the love of God” by (1) “building” their faith, (2) “praying” in the Holy Spirit, and (3) “waiting” for the mercy of Jesus Christ when He returns. Whereas the teachings of the apostles and prophets are the foundation upon which faith is built, Jesus is the cornerstone. Without Him, the building collapses.

Eph 2:20- *“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,”*

The “most holy faith” is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jude calls on believers to grow in the understanding of God by studying His Word and living out His instructions. An intellectual understanding of the Bible is needed, but it must be accompanied by an awareness that our self-imposed separation from God requires forgiveness. Growing in faith is about developing a personal, real, relevant relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Love for God cannot be sustained without a relationship with Him, and such a relationship is nurtured by prayer... Jude represented well the biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. On the one hand, believers only avoid apostasy because of the grace of God. On the other hand, the grace of God does not cancel out the need for believers to exert all their energy to remain in God’s love” (Thomas Schreiner, *“The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter, Jude”*).

Jude reminded his followers to keep their eye on their final reward— the eternal mercy of Jesus. It’s only His grace that grants believers eternal life. The wait is worth it.

## HOW DO YOU “KEEP” YOURSELF IN THE LOVE OF GOD?

## HOW ARE YOU BUILDING YOUR FAITH?

## WHAT DO YOU PRAY FOR?

**Jude 22-*“And have mercy on those who doubt”***

Jude had a special place in his heart for “those who doubt”— seekers who heard the Gospel message but were not yet convinced. He wanted the church to treat them with “mercy.” Whether they were influenced by scoffers hiding within the church or the world outside, they were to be treated with loving kindness.

Jude understood doubt could stimulate them spiritually more than anything else— it indicated they were intellectually processing what they heard to perhaps come to a personal acceptance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today, suppression of thoughtful doubt is listed as one of the top five reasons people reject stepping into a church. But shouldn't we encourage doubt? "Trust but verify" is an old Russian proverb often quoted by Ronald Reagan during the "cold war." It means no-one should take everything on face value. It's each individual's responsibility to question whether all those things preached on Sunday mornings are true or not.

Christianity has nothing to fear from those who doubt because the Truth of the Gospel has nothing to fear. Truth can change a belief, but a belief cannot change a truth. Christian apologetics is about showing good reason and evidence to support the Christian faith by pointing to truth in philosophy, science, evolution, logic, and the Bible itself.

The apostle Peter gave this advice about how we should treat *"those who doubt."*

1 Peter 14-17-*"Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame"*

### **WHAT IS DOUBT?**

### **WHAT DOUBTS DO YOU HAVE?**

### **HOW ARE YOU PREPARING TO HELP DOUBTERS WITH GENTLENESS AND KINDNESS?**

**Jude 23-*"save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh."***

Some in the church had been so seduced by the scoffers that they were in great danger of rejecting the Gospel message. Jude exhorted his readers to *"snatch them out of the fire"* of eternal judgement before it was too late. They were not to despise them, but instead show mercy. However his readers were also warned to do so *"with fear"* — being careful to not be contaminated by their sin. They were to hate the sin (*"the garment stained by the flesh"* ), but not the sinner himself.

"We hate sin by recognizing it for what it is, refusing to take part in it, and condemning it as contrary to God's nature. Sin is to be hated, not excused or taken lightly. We love sinners by showing them respect (1 Peter 2:17), praying for them (1 Tim 2:1), and witnessing to them of Christ. It is a true act of love to treat someone with respect and kindness even though you do not approve of his or her lifestyle or sinful choices...

It is not loving to allow a person to remain stuck in sin. It is not hateful to tell a person he or she is in sin. In fact, the exact opposites are true. Sin leads to death (James 1:15), and we love the sinner by speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15). We hate the sin by refusing to condone, ignore, or excuse it" (*"Is Hate The Sin, Love The Sinner Biblical"* [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org)).

**DO YOU HATE SIN? WHY?**

**DO YOU HATE SINNERS? WHY? WHY NOT?**

**SHOULD YOU TREAT SINNERS WITH RESPECT AND KINDNESS? WHY? WHY NOT?**

**HOW CAN YOU SNATCH A SINNER “OUT OF THE FIRE?”**

**Jude 24-25-“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”**

Jude ends his letter with a doxology. “Glory, majesty, dominion, and authority” belong to God— past, present, and future. Only God can keep us from stumbling in this world and only Jesus Christ can present us “blameless” before Him.

“God does not promise that true believers will never sin. He promises that He will preserve us from committing apostasy, from abandoning the faith once and for all” (Thomas Schreiner, “*The New American Commentary- 1,2 Peter; Jude*”).

We should be on guard against scoffers who will inevitably enter the walls of our church, but we should not fear them —

**“Be strong and courageous.**

**Do not fear or be in dread of them,**

**for it is the Lord your God who goes with you.**

**He will not leave you or forsake you.”**

(Deuteronomy 31:6)

***AMEN!***



