

*A Study on
the Book
of I Peter*

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Table of Contents

Preface

<i>Bible Study Guides for the New Testament</i>	4
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Introduction

<i>A Study on the Book of I Peter</i>	11
--	-----------

Chapter 1

<i>Faith For Salvation and Holiness</i>	13
--	-----------

Chapter 2

<i>Life on the Foundation of Jesus Christ</i>	19
--	-----------

Chapter 3

<i>Duties of Husbands and Wives</i>	22
--	-----------

<i>Duties of Believers</i>	23
-----------------------------------	-----------

<i>Three Days in the Belly of the Earth</i>	23
--	-----------

Chapter 4

<i>Peter Exhorts Believers</i>	29
---------------------------------------	-----------

<i>The Suffering Church</i>	32
------------------------------------	-----------

Chapter 5

<i>Exhortation of Shepherds (Elders)</i>	34
---	-----------

<i>Exhortation of the Sheep</i>	36
--	-----------

Appendix

<i>Questions on 1 Peter</i>	39
<i>Links to Other Books Available</i>	43
<i>Bible Study Guides for the New Testament</i>	44

Bible Study Guides for the New Testament

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions

of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is presented herein is an analysis of important details in God’s creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely

adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our intuition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I

hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has

been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing

it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner

to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

JESSE JONES

A Study on the Book of I Peter

Those that spend any time reading and studying the Bible are all very familiar with the Apostle Peter. Of the twelve disciples, his aggressive and impulsive nature got him into trouble more than once, but on the other hand, they also made him one to be admired. He was the chief figure early in the Christian movement, when Jerusalem was the center of activity, and he was first to respond when Jesus asked the disciples, “But who say ye that I am?” Peter immediately answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” (Matthew 16:15-18). In verse 18 Jesus said, “. . .thou art Peter . . .”. I believe Jesus was prophesying here that the church (His body), would be comprised of those believers who recognized and confessed that He was the Son of God. But there was an additional meaning to the prophecy in that the Catholic church does in fact recognize Peter (the rock) as their first and founding leader (Pope). Thus, Peter was the unquestioned leader during early days in the establishment of the church. Later, Paul became the leading figure, when the focus of activity was moved to Antioch. Peter is not mentioned in

the book of Acts after the Council of Jerusalem in 50 AD. This change in leadership came after Peter's visit to Antioch, where Paul confronted him about his continued ambivalence about new converts compliance with OT Jewish laws, such as circumcision. This was finally resolved when the Jerusalem council issued their decision, described in Acts 15:28-29.

The date of this Epistle is uncertain, but it probably was written after 63 AD, near the start of persecution by Nero. It was written to strengthen and encourage Christians in Asia Minor during the fiery trials they faced.

Faith For Salvation and Holiness

Peter wrote this letter to the elect who were scattered in many places throughout Asia Minor, or modern Turkey. These were churches that had been primarily established through Paul's ministry, so Peter introduces himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. These were believers into Jesus Christ, who had been elected (chosen by God) to salvation through sanctification (2 Thessalonians 2:13). John MacArthur's Study Bible says that use of the word "foreknowledge" here, refers to a predetermined relationship in the knowledge of God: He brought the salvation relationship into existence by decreeing it ahead of time. Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon also defines this word as, "to determine beforehand, to fore-ordain." Charles Hodge, in his "Systematic Theology," states that the difference between foreknowledge and foreordination is that foreknowledge assumes only the certainty of future events, whereas foreordination (predestination) means that God commits Himself to insure that the event will come about. The result is the same in either case: the certainty of occurrence is assured. The new testament (NT) actually uses these two words to convey the same meaning. In Acts 2:23, the word

“foreknowledge,” is combined with the phrase “determinate counsel,” to describe the crucifixion of Christ; thus, conveying the meaning of “foreordination.” In 1 Peter 1:20, the identical Greek word is interpreted “foreknown” in the Greek New Testament (GNT), and “foreordained” in the King James Version (KJV). The context in this passage of scripture makes it clear that Christ was “foreordained” to this end, and that it was “foreknown” before the foundation of the world that He would come to earth to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sin. 1 Peter 1:6-7 describes how the testing of our faith, which is much more precious than gold, might be found unto praise, honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Verse 9 adds, “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

The many scriptures in the Bible concerning faith do not describe different types of faith, but instead describe different levels, or measures, of faith. Hebrews 4:2 speaks about the need to mix the Word of God with (saving) faith to receive salvation. This is the level of faith necessary to receive salvation. This is the level of faith God gives those that will become believers, to draw them into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. After a believer receives the Holy Spirit the process of increasing, or growing, this initial (saving) faith begins. This occurs as we hear God speak to us in many ways (including

intuition), act on His guidance, and see it bear fruit. As babes in Christ the flow of faith within us will probably not be strong, but it will increase as we respond positively to the tests and trials God uses to sanctify (make us holy), and conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. When we pass the first “faith” test we are then ready for the next, which may probably be more difficult. As babes in Christ there will be considerable resistance to these early tests from previously learned (worldly) responses; hard places within our hearts; and strongholds developed over years of bad habits and/or real and imagined wrongs, hurts, and mistreatment. Only weapons provided by God are able to pull down these strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). His weapons are made effectual through the power of faith that breaks down these impediments, and increases our trust and confidence (belief) in God. As our trust and confidence in God increases, our capacity to believe for even greater things grows: the impediments to the flow of faith diminish, and we become more like Christ. It is the magnitude of our faith (persuasion) that leads to belief.

When God uses us to manifest one (or more) of His spiritual gifts, He gives us the necessary level (measure) of faith to use the gift for the benefit of those in the body of Christ (the church). The level of faith operational in our lives

can be great, such as that in the lives of such men as Rees Howells and Smith Wigglesworth, who saw people raised from the dead, and healed from incurable diseases. But the level of commitment on their part sometimes required putting their own life in jeopardy. Oswald Chamber's daily meditation on Hebrews 11:6 says, "Faith must be tested and tried before it becomes real in your life . . . so that no matter what happens, the transforming power of God's providence transforms perfect faith into reality. Faith is the entire person in right relationship with God through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." We must grow the "saving faith" that God gives us by boldly acting on the guidance we receive from the Holy Spirit. *"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ."* (1 Peter 1:7).

Hebrews 1:9-13 refers to Jesus being the author and finisher of our faith. He starts this process when we are drawn to the Son by the Father bringing us to the place where we can receive the Word and mix it with saving faith (John 6:44). After we receive salvation, Jesus begins to guide us through the Holy Spirit and we begin to mature in the sanctification process. As we fail to follow God's will, Christ takes action from His position at the Father's right hand to

intervene, and provide tests that tend to put us back on the right path. He also insures that our misstep does not negate our reconciliation with the Father, and does everything needed to insure that we receive the end of our faith: the salvation of our souls, and eternal life. The prophets of the old testament (OT) wondered about this salvation as the Holy Spirit that was in them testified about the sufferings of Christ and His subsequent glory. For our benefit they testified through preaching and the written Word. Angels desired to understand and participate in these things, but they could only contemplate the work of salvation from the outside, as spectators and not as participants.

The remaining verses of this chapter encourage believers to be holy, because He that is in you, and He that you are within, is holy. The only way this can be achieved is for us to actively participate in the sanctification of our bodies, i.e. we let Christ through the Holy Spirit have total control and direction of our lives. He is the potter, we are the clay. As Oswald Chambers says, the only thing we can give Jesus Christ is our right to ourselves, and if we do this he will make a holy experiment of us - and his experiments always succeed. Hebrews 1:17 adds that we should pass the time of our sojourning here on earth with reverential fear of God the Father. We were not redeemed through anything

we did, but through the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish nor spot.

Peter closes Chapter 1 by reminding us that if we that if we are believers we will love the brethren with unfeigned (agape) love through the Spirit. This is love that suffereth long, envieth not, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, takes no account of evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, and endures all things. In short, this is love that only comes from the Holy Spirit within us.

Life on the Foundation of Jesus Christ

1 Peter 2:1-3 reminds us that we need to be as newborn babes, desiring spiritual milk of the Word, that we can grow into the image of Christ. The Revised Version (RV) gives this as, “Long for the spiritual milk which is without guile.” The reference to “babes” is somewhat confusing, for in other NT uses of this word it refers to those that are new in Christ. It may be that Peter was directing this letter to believers that had not yet matured, for in verse 3 he adds, “If indeed ye did taste that the Lord is good” (GNT), which implies that there were (possibly) some that had not (in reality) been born into Jesus Christ, and joined Him in His death and resurrection. However, note the use of the word “*as*” in verse 2.

1 Peter 2:4-8 refers to Christ as the living stone and chief corner stone, elect, and precious. Jesus is described in this way many times in the Word. Possibly the first time is in Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, where he describes Jesus as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands. Jesus Christ is a stone of stumbling to many in this world, but to believers He

is our foundation stone, the One upon whom we build that mortal abode in heaven, which we will reside in for eternity. 1 Peter 2:8 says, “*And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto they were appointed.*” This verse quotes Isaiah 8:14 which says: “*And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both houses of Israel, for a gin (net) and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*” In commenting on this verse John MacArthur says that the meaning is that they were appointed to doom because of their unbelief. 1 Peter 2:9 goes on to point out that they (the ones referred to in verse 7), are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people, for God’s own possession. Since this is in direct contrast to the ones that stumble in verse 8, it seems that Peter is comparing the two groups: the ones that stumble, to the ones that are a chosen generation (called out of darkness into his marvelous light), in verse 9.

1 Peter 2:11-25 discusses the manner in which this chosen generation should live. They should:

1. Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Give Satan an inch and he will take a mile.
2. Be honest and noble among unbelievers, even though they may speak evil of you that they may see your good works and glorify God.
3. Submit to the ordinances of man, for this is the will of God that you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.
4. Do not use your liberty as a cloak of wickedness, but as a servant of God.

5. Honor all men, love the brothers, fear God, and honor the leader of your country.
6. Be subject to your employers with all respect, and not to just the good and gentle, but to the perverse as well. If you are disciplined for your faults and you take it with patience, what glory is there in that; but if you are disciplined unfairly, and you take it patiently, this is acceptable to God. Jesus, who died for our sins but was without sin Himself, is our model. When He was reviled He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not, but He committed Himself to God who judges righteously.

Duties of Husbands and Wives

1 Peter 3:1-7 discuss the duties of believing husbands and wives. Wives are to be subject to their husbands. It may be that their chaste behavior, and meek and quiet spirit will win unbelieving husbands to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 7:14 says that the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Verses 3 and 4 add that it is not outer adorning that will win the unbelieving mate, but the “*hidden man of the heart, ...even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*” This refers to the fact that it is the human spirit that works in man to sanctify the heart. Thus, an incorruptible heart is the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit: one that has been “quickened” by the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 3:6 advises the Christian wife not to fear being submissive to her unsaved husband, but to trust God and resist any coercion to sin or be disobedient to God’s Word. Husbands should treat their wives with understanding by being sensitive to the wife’s needs, fears, and feelings. She is the weaker vessel, and she needs the protection and cover of the husband. If these duties seem onerous God has given husbands a reminder of their importance by adding

that the husband must not be negligent or his prayers will be hindered (cut off).

Duties of Believers

1 Peter 3:8-17 once again reminds believers to:

1. Be of one mind and have compassion toward each other. Love the brethren, and be tenderhearted and humble-minded.
2. Do not render evil for evil, railing for railing, but respond with praise and blessing.
3. Refrain from speaking evil and be without guile (cunning). Turn away from evil, do good and seek peace with all men, for the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.
4. Suffer for righteousness sake and you should be happy; for it is better if you suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.
5. Let God's wisdom and holiness sanctify your hearts, and be ready at all times to testify of the hope that is within you with meekness and fear.
6. Have a good conscience so that when others speak evil of you they may be ashamed to falsely accuse your honorable manner of life.

Three Days in the Belly of the Earth

1 Peter 3:18-22 introduces a subject that is often questioned and misunderstood by Christians: Peter's description of what Jesus was doing between the time of His death, until he arose to take His seat at the right hand of God. Even among leading expositors of God's Word I cannot find any clear

consensus as to exactly what happened during this period of time. Verse 18 says that Jesus was put to death in the flesh, but quickened (made alive) by the Holy Spirit. Several scriptures refer to the fact that God made man's spirit: Ecclesiastes 12:7 and Zechariah 12:1 indicate that God "gave" and "formed" man's spirit. Our spirit identifies who we really are, for God is a spirit (John 4:24), and we are made in the image of God. Psalm 139:13 in the New International Version (NIV) says, "*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.*" I believe the phrase "my inmost being" refers to our human spirit, for we know that our being is really our spirit that resides in the abode (body) that God forms in the womb, and returns to God at the death of the body (Job 34:14; Ecclesiastes 3:21, 12:7; Acts 7:59). We know that Jesus' human spirit departed from his body at His death on the cross for Matthew 27:50 GNT says, "*Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.*" But Matthew 27:46 says that Jesus cried out, "*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" which seems to imply departure of the Holy Spirit. I believe that any confusion about this can be explained by the fact that Jesus' human spirit and the Holy Spirit were one, as described in 1 Corinthians 6:17: His human spirit was "one" with the Holy Spirit.

Shortly thereafter He was empowered (quickened) spiritually by the Holy Spirit to go and preach to the “spirits in prison.” Ephesians 4:8-9 GNT helps in understanding where these spirits are located, for it says, “. . . *Having ascended up on high he led captivity captive . . . But that he ascended, what is it but that also he descended first into the lower parts of the earth?*” Jesus also said in Matthew 12:40 that just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights He would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Acts 2:27 also says, “*Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Hades], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*” There seems to be little doubt that Jesus (in spirit), was in the abyss, the pit, Hades, or hell from soon after He died on the cross until very early on Easter morning. We also know that He encountered Satan’s principalities and powers while He was there, for He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His victory over sin and death on the cross (Colossians 2:15). Speaking of Jesus, Hebrews 2:14 says, “. . . *through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*” Thus, we know that Satan had the power over death until Jesus took it away from him when He descended into hell. Also, when God allowed Satan to come against Job, He told Satan that he could not kill him. Later, when John saw Christ in Revelation 1:18, He had the keys of hell and death, thus, we conclude that Jesus

took these keys (and the authority they represented) from Satan at their encounter in hell, following Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus had to suffer death in order to take this authority from Satan, and He had to take this authority from Satan to deliver them who through fear of death were subject to bondage all their lifetime. Before this time Satan had dominion in the realm of death through the existence and power of the fear of death as the penalty for sin. By joining Jesus' in His death and resurrection believers are freed from the power of sin, and thus from the power (or fear) of death.

I believe Jesus had another purpose in this encounter with Satan in hell. We know that all sin ultimately ends up with Satan in hell, and later in the lake of fire and brimstone. No sin can come into the presence of God: one of the definitions of sin is separation from God so this would be somewhat of an oxymoron. In the OT the scapegoat carried the sins of the Israelites into the wilderness (a place often likened to hell). Jesus was the believer's "scapegoat", and I believe He carried that vile load of carrion and dumped it at Satan's doorstep. What more appropriate place for such a filthy load of trash?

We need to address another related controversial issue from Ephesians 4:8, who is Paul referring to when he uses the phrase, "*He led captivity captive*"? Although most expositors seem to hold the belief that the captives referred to

here are Christ's enemies, including Satan, demons, unbelievers in hell, etc., I believe the captives are more likely the saints from the OT, who were in Abraham's Bosom, a part of hell that was separated from hell proper by a great gulf (Luke 16:26). Comments on this verse from the Recovery Version of the NT say "This refers to the redeemed saints, who were taken captive by Satan before being saved by Christ's death and resurrection. In His ascension Christ led them captive, that is, He rescued them from Satan's captivity and took them to Himself." This interpretation gives a plausible explanation for Matthew 27:52-53, which records the fact that after Jesus' death graves were opened and many bodies of the saints that slept arose, came out of the graves, went into Jerusalem and were seen by many. The spirit/souls of OT saints were captives of Satan in Abraham's Bosom as opposed to being in heaven with saints of the new covenant since they had not yet "*received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" (Hebrews 11:13). Jesus released these OT saint spirit/souls from their captivity, and resurrected their immortal bodies in the same manner that He will rapture/resurrect the new covenant believers when He comes in the clouds. This body of OT saints represent the firstfruits that Paul calls holy in Romans 11:16: they are the first of many that

Jesus will present to the Father as fruits of His labor. As an added argument for this interpretation, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon gives the definition of the Greek word interpreted "captive" in Ephesians 4:8, as "to captivate, metaphorically." I cannot think of a better way to describe the exchange between Jesus and those held captive in Abraham's Bosom: they were undoubtedly "captivated" by the appearance of the redeemer they had so long looked forward to seeing.

In 1 Peter 3:20-21 Peter draws an analogy between those that were saved in the ark and our salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ, washing away the guilt of our evil conscience, and washing our bodies with the pure water of the Word (Hebrews 10:22).

Peter Exhorts Believers

Peter begins this chapter by reminding believers of Christ's suffering for us. He tells us that if we have the mind of Christ we will reckon our sin nature dead with Him on the cross. Believers should be like Jesus, who suffered in the flesh, that He might become the sinless sacrificial Lamb of God. Believers should "arm" themselves with the same mind that Jesus had. The mind of Jesus was perfectly sanctified (renewed), He withstood every temptation (test) that God allowed Satan to bring, and in every case He acted in accordance with God's will. You may argue that Jesus' mind was perfect from birth, but several scriptures allude to the fact that He was perfected by suffering (Hebrews 2:10, 5:9, Luke 24:46). It would be hard to argue that it is not the trials that we endure that cause us to grow in Christ: when we are in difficulties and suffering we tend to turn to someone that can help us, and for severe difficulties the One that can alleviate suffering is God. We should no longer be slaves to the lusts of men, but instead should listen to the Holy Spirit within, and do the will of God.

Our sin nature caused us to live in the flesh through lasciviousness, lusts of the eyes and flesh, excessive drinking, wild partying, and abominable attractions and lifestyle. If we have the mind of Christ our old worldly “friends” may wonder why we no longer join them in their reveling; they may even speak evil of us as a result. They will be judged, just as those that have turned away from the world and have become citizens of the kingdom of God; but they will be judged for sin, whereas believers will be judged for the works of God done in their bodies (1 Corinthians 3:13).

Peter, like most of the NT writers, thought that the end of time was at hand. This is understandable, since they were not aware that God pushed the pause button and inserted the “church age” after Jesus was crucified: they assumed that Daniel’s seventy weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27), would be completed in 490 years, and by their reckoning that was imminent. Thus, Peter advised his readers to be of sound mind, and diligent in prayer, and above all things to nurture fervent (agape) love among themselves, for such love covers a multitude of sins. Gifts, ministries, and operations of the Holy Spirit should be manifested within the body: prophets should speak as the oracles of God, and ministers should minister in such a way as to glorify God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:6 brings up an interesting point: it is important that our shortcomings be judged and corrected while we are still in the flesh, for when we die that will be the end of our opportunity for correction. This reminds us of 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, which says that every man's work will be revealed by God's refining fire: if it survives we will receive a reward, if it is burned we will suffer loss. This refers to the work Christ does via the Holy Spirit in our vessel (body), and our vessel is of limited usefulness as long as it is constantly needing correction for fleshly cracks, chips, and leaks. 1 Peter 4:12-19 continues this theme of the fiery trial that believers must endure. We should look on these trials as making us partakers of Jesus' sufferings. And if we are reproached for our witness for Christ, we should be happy, for the glory of God rests on us when we are wrongfully criticized, and we do not respond in kind. We should commit the keeping of our souls in well doing to our faithful Creator.

The Suffering Church

Peter concludes Chapter 4 by discussing the suffering that is sure to come to those that live like Christ. We should not be surprised by the fiery trials that come to prove us, but instead we should rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's suffering, for when His glory is revealed we will be glad with exceeding joy. In commenting on verse 19 in his book "My Utmost of His Highest," Oswald Chambers says, "To choose to suffer means there is something wrong; to choose God's will even if it means suffering is a very different thing. Notice God's unutterable waste of saints, according to the judgment of the world. God plants His saints in the most useless places. We say - God intends me to be here because I am so useful. God never estimated His life along the line of greatest use. God plants His saints where they will glorify Him, and we are no judges, at all, of where that is."

Another scripture that Oswald Chambers refers to in regard to suffering is Colossians 1:24, "*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.*" In commenting on this verse he says, "We make calls out of our own spiritual consecration, but when we get right with God He brushes all these aside, and

rivets us with a pain that is terrific to one thing we never dreamed of, and for one radiant flashing moment we see what He is after, and we say - 'Here am I, send me.' This call has nothing to do with personal sanctification, but with being made broken bread and poured-out wine. God can never make us wine if we object to the fingers He uses to crush us with. If God would only use His own fingers, and make me broken bread and poured-out wine in a special way! But when He uses someone we dislike, or some set of circumstances to which we would never submit, and makes those the crushers, we object. . . I wonder what kind of finger and thumb God has been using to squeeze you, and you have been like a marble and escaped? You are not ripe yet, and if God had squeezed you, the wine would have been remarkably bitter." For God to use us in this way we must place ourselves totally in His hands: we are the clay, He is the potter, and the potter has the right to "squeeze" the clay into whatever form He needs to "fill up" some affliction that only He understands.

Exhortation of Shepherds (Elders)

1 Peter 5:1-4 is Peter's exhortation to the elders of the body of Christ, those that provide leadership for the flock. He urges them to take on leadership positions willingly, not out of compulsion or constraint, but with anticipation and zeal. They are not to take on a leadership position out of personal greed, or lust for power, but with a ready mind, anxious to serve in the capacity required. We see in Peter's words here how the church was intended to function: voluntary unpaid service from mature Christians in the body responding to the needs of the body by manifestation of the various gifts, ministries, and operations of the Holy Spirit. Leaders operating with this kind of motivation are free from worldly pressures and lusts in their responsibilities to the body, and are thus able to concern themselves totally with listening for God's guidance and putting it into effect in the various member's lives. In our world we see very few churches that operate in this manner: church leadership is considered to be a full-time occupation with salaries commensurate with the size of the church, the particular leadership position, and the ability of the person filling the position. As a result of this the leaders we have are

necessarily concerned with growing the church in number of members, advancing to higher positions, and ingratiating themselves with those who control their salaries and assignments. None of these goals have anything to do with what Peter is discussing here, nor does it seem to have anything to do with the mission of Jesus Christ in this world: preaching the gospel to the poor; healing the broken-hearted; proclaiming deliverance to the captives; recovering of sight to the blind; setting at liberty those that are bruised; and preaching the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19).

In spite of what has been said above, we are where we are, and I believe God expects us to continue to lift up Jesus Christ to those in our own particular world. In the book of Revelation God describes the condition of churches that existed in Asia Minor (present Turkey), late in the 1st century. I have long felt that the problems outlined in these letters were included for our edification, and that they represent the problems of the latter-day church in our own time. I would be of the opinion that the two churches that best represent the problems of the present church in America are those at Sardis, and Laodicea: they were accused of being dead, and being neither hot nor cold. But even in these two churches there were those who had not “defiled their

garments” (Sardis), and who God promised to “rebuke and chasten” because He loved them (Laodicea).

Exhortation of the Sheep

The sheep must be subject to the shepherd and submit to his guidance, but the shepherd’s teachings must always be judged against the Word of God (1 Corinthians 14:29). The members of the body should also be subject to one another, that the body can grow and be tempered. The body members should be clothed with humility, willing to serve one another, for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Rid yourself of pride and God will be able to exalt you in due time. And we should cast all our cares (anxiety) on God, for He exercises jealous guardianship over those who belong to Him. Satan and his minions are waiting for an opening (lowering of the hedge) that may give them an opportunity to draw us into sin. We must watch and be sober, aware that those that are in the world are vulnerable to Satan’s enticements and, but for the grace of God, we could be likewise. It is through trials and sufferings that God will perfect us, and bring us to eternal glory.

The younger members of the body are advised to submit themselves to the elder members, and then Peter adds that all the members should be subject to one another. We know that God speaks and works through all members of His body, so we are cautioned here to listen and heed words and guidance offered by young and old alike, always judging such by the Word of God. However, as indicated by Peter, the older members of the body are more experienced, and normally have greater knowledge and wisdom; thus their guidance should always be given special deference.

Members of the body of Christ should be clothed with humility, for God “resisteth the proud.” Humility is not a trait that comes easy for men; we live in a world that admires pride, where individual “rights” are constantly being emphasized, and litigated in the courtroom. God is against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble (Isaiah 57:15; Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6). God always looks on the heart when He “measures” a man, so we know that the humility here is produced by a broken and contrite heart, and not some desire on our part to be considered humble by others. The humility that God honors in a man comes when he recognizes his fallen condition, compared to God’s absolute holiness and majesty. Humility leads to a lowered estimation of

oneself, and the desire to consider the needs of others before self. This is the kind of humility God honors in His kingdom.

Questions on 1 Peter

Chapter 1

1. Explain the meaning of 1 Peter 1:2.
2. Why does Peter use the phrase “begotten us again” in verse 3?
3. To what is Peter referring in verse 5?
4. Why does our faith need to be tried by fire?
5. Explain the statement that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith.
6. State why you are dragging your feet on becoming more holy.
7. Explain your relationship with the Father while you are here on earth.
8. Give the level of your faith and justify.

Chapter 2

1. Why do you think Peter refers to the recipients of his letter as “babes”?
2. Explain the meaning of the word “tasted” in verse 3.
3. Consider the scriptures in the Bible that refer to Jesus Christ as a stone, and discuss why you think God chose this metaphor.
4. Discuss the meaning of verse 10 (refer to Romans 9:25, Hosea 2:23).
5. Have you conducted yourself in the past in accordance with 1 Peter 2:18-20?
If not, what can you do to change?

6. Who caused the sheep of 1 Peter 2:25 to return to the fold, and what does this mean in regard to our salvation and continued guardianship by Christ?

Chapter 3

1. Explain 1 Peter 3:4.
2. What is your understanding of the word “knowledge” in verse 7?
3. List the duties of the husband and wife in marriage.
4. List Peter’s guidelines for believers (1 Peter 3:8-17).
5. Explain 1 Peter 3:19.
6. Give your understanding of 1 Peter 3:20-21

Chapter 4

1. Explain the difference between the judgment of unbelievers and believers.
2. How does suffering rid us of iniquity?
3. Explain the meaning of 1 Peter 4:6.
4. Why did Peter think that the end of time was nearly upon them?
5. Explain Col. 1:24.
6. Explain 1 Peter 4:17.
7. In your own words explain Oswald Chamber’s analysis of 1 Peter 4:19.

Chapter 5

- 1.** Give your impression of the present-day church compared to the church Peter was describing in this chapter.
- 2.** How can we restore the purity and simplicity of the 1st century church to our churches of today?
- 3.** Describe your understanding of the phrase “submit yourselves to the elders”.
- 4.** In comparing churches of today with those described in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3, can you identify similar problems?
- 5.** How can we learn to cast all our cares on Jesus? Refer to Ps. 55:22, Matt. 6:25, Phs. 4:6).
- 6.** Explain 1 Peter 5:8.
- 7.** How can a man achieve humility?

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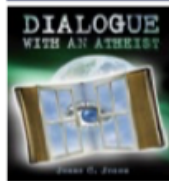


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