

Introduction

1. The Author: Simon Peter

The history we have of the life of Peter is among the most extensive of any bible character in the New Testament, with the exception of Paul. As a matter of fact, these two men fit into the eternal purpose of God in two distinct ways. Jesus told Peter that he would be given the keys of the kingdom, giving him the opportunity to open the door for the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2) and the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10-11).

*And I also say to you that **you are Peter**, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And **I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Mt. 16:18-19*

Yet after the doors were opened, Jesus gave Paul the mission of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul noted in Galatians that Peter was the apostle to the circumcision, and Paul was the apostle to the uncircumcision).

*But on the contrary, when **they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter** 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Gal. 2:7-10*

These men are clearly worthy to be added to the great cloud of witnesses described in Hebrews who will help us “run with patience the race set before us.”

*Therefore we also, since we are **surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb. 12:1-2***

They are great examples, because God revealed the early lives of both of these men and their growth and development as Christians. While Paul came in much later and described himself as the chief of sinners, enough is written about him that he could say several times that he should be considered an example.

*Brethren, **join in following my example**, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. Phil. 3:17*

*The **things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do**, and the God of peace will be with you. Phil. 4:9*

*But **you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions**, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra — what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 2Tim. 3:10-11*

Peter’s life as an early disciple reflected great weakness and instability. After Jesus’ initial assessment of Peter, in which He changed his name from Simon to Peter or Cephas, throughout the remainder of Jesus’ ministry right up until His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, Simon continued to fall far short of the name Peter (rock) that Jesus had given to him.

*One of the **two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon**, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. 42 **Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas”** (which is translated, Peter). Jn. 1:42*

What is important is the truth that many who come to Jesus do not have great stability and strength in their early years. Few measure up to the expectations they hold based on what the Lord made them by grace. Just like Peter, we find that the grace that made us His children, though not bestowed in vain, takes many years to become the reality we envision. Conquering

lusts and gaining the faith to stand strong like a rock often take years to develop. The comfort here is that in watching Peter we see how gracious and merciful the Lord truly is toward His disciples.

When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus and He said *“You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas”* (which is translated, A Stone), (NKJV), what did Jesus see in Peter’s character to give him the nickname of *“rock solid”* or *“solid as a rock?”* Judging from the remainder of his life, Jesus saw in Peter, strength of character and stability. Peter would become a solid and immovable disciple. Yet Peter’s battles and burdens as a disciple of Christ while being taught and trained by Jesus were far more difficult than anything Simon had previously confronted.

While Peter first met Him at the Jordan River, Jesus later came to the Sea of Galilee and Simon was introduced as a fishermen along with his brother Andrew and his partners, James and John.

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 Then Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” 18 They immediately left their nets and followed Him. 19 When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. 20 And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. Mk. 1:16-20

Another account revealed Jesus asking Peter to row Him out a little way from shore so He can teach all the people. After finishing, Jesus performed a powerful miracle in allowing Peter and his partners to catch such a large number of fish that the boats nearly sank.

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. 4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him. Luke 5:1-12

At the end of this event, Simon Peter, recognizing his own unworthiness, falls down at Jesus’ feet and confessing he did not feel worthy to be allowed to become a disciple of such a great servant of God. Yet Jesus encouraged him, he would indeed become a *“fisher of men.”*

It is evident from this account that though Jesus had changed his name, Simon still recognized how unworthy he was in heart and life to be called Peter (a solid rock). The change from Simon to Peter would become a long and arduous journey of successes and failures.

Sinking in the Sea

The first account of his attempt to be that solid rock ended in failure. This occurred immediately after the feeding of the 5000. After sending the disciples ahead in the boat, Jesus remained behind to pray on the mountain. The fourth watch of the night would begin sometime around 3:00 am and end at sunrise. It was during this time that Jesus walked up to the boat in the midst of the sea, striking fear into the hearts of all. Peter, seeing the Lord on the water wanted to go out to him and walk on the water himself. Jesus bids him come, but in a moment of weakness,

Peter began to sink

Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" Mt. 14:25-30

Never had he faced such a challenge! His initial courage was admirable, but it was beyond his ability at that time in his growth. Jesus immediately saved him, but then gave him a stinging rebuke about his lack of faith.

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." Mt. 14:31-33

Did Jesus (and Peter), wish he had never tried as he felt the bitter sting of failure? He did not shine as a stable rock here. Yet, he still did more than all the others. He had enough faith to try. Often God would prefer that we push ourselves into the territory where failure may happen, but it is often the only way of growth for the Christian.

The Good Confession

Later, Peter boldly made the good confession. "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus reaffirmed his name as Peter and promised to give him the keys to open the door to the kingdom and inspiration to bind and loose God's will (Mt. 16:16-19). He must have felt great joy at this praise and affirmation.

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Mt. 16:15-19

Yet in the next moment, as Jesus revealed He would be the "Christ crucified," Peter "took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You" How did Peter feel when Jesus said, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men" (Mt. 16:22-23). A lesser more unstable man might have followed those disciples who "went back and walked with Him no more" (Jn. 6:66). But Peter didn't. He did not shrink back or allow any setback to deter him. Once again he had revealed instability, but even in his instability he was stable. He would not move from Jesus side!

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Mt. 16:21-23

Yet even in that act of instability, he manifested his faith, love and devotion to Jesus. Would it have been better not to rebuke Jesus, his Lord? Of course it would, but though he was terribly mistaken in the manner in which he showed his concern, at least he had the courage and devotion to express himself. Though it was in the wrong way, at least he was able to learn that the motives behind it were good, but the manner and direction in which they were expressed were wrong.

The Denial at the Trial

Peter's lowest point came during the trial of Jesus before the Jews. One stands in awe of the great compassion of Jesus when He warned them all: "*All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night.*" Peter thought he could live up to his name, but had no idea what he was committing to: "*Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.*" Jesus did not become angry or chide him. He simply stated the fact: "*before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.*" Peter still felt that with his character and inner strength this could never happen. "*Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You*" (Mt. 26:31-35). Lest we single Peter out here, all the other disciples said the same thing.

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." 33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." 34 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples. Mt. 26:31-35

Luke added one more detail to this account that rendered it even more powerful. Satan was seeking to sift Simon like wheat. Yet Jesus had prayed and then sought to comfort Peter with the words "*when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren.*" What terrible and solemn, yet comforting words. Yet even still, Peter's overconfidence was the foundation of his fall.

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." Lk. 22:31-34

Peter simply did not fully understand the darkness of the hour and the fear and trembling he would have to endure. First, he ran away with all the rest in the garden of Gethsemane. What anguish he must have felt. But it got worse as he evidently sought to redeem himself from this first lapse. In the midst of unbelievers, he denied his knowledge of Jesus first by affirmation and later with curses and oaths. What a jolt of shame and remorse when he saw his inner character so lacking.

Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." 71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" 73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." 74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly. Mt. 26:69-75

What agony as "*the rooster crowed and the Lord turned and looked.*" How little he deserved the name, Peter. It was after the rooster crowed and Jesus looked at him, realizing what he had done, "*Peter went out and wept bitterly*" (Lk. 22:60-62).

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly. Lk. 22:60-62

Jesus demanded a Public Confession

Although Peter did in fact come to himself and work to establish his brethren, Jesus was not through with his need to repent. He had publically denied Jesus in the presence of all His enemies. Now in the presence of Jesus and the other disciples, Jesus reminded Peter of his

words to Him before His crucifixion. First, using *agape*, Jesus asked if he loved Him more than these? Some have questioned whether “*these*” are the fish and returning to fishing, or the much more poignant and powerful reminder of his own words, “*even if everyone else falls, I will never deny you.*” Jesus brought these words back to Peter’s mind. Peter used the word *phileo*, instead of *agape*. Did this mean Peter no longer felt that he was worthy to use the word *agape*, or did he still cling to the foolish notion that *phileo* was the higher love? We will never know. But when on the third time Jesus also used the word *phileo*, Peter’s grief intensified and he expressed his faith in Jesus omniscience.

*This is now **the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples** after He was raised from the dead. 15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, **do you love (agape) Me more than these?**” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; **You know that I love (phileo) You.**” He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” 16 He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, **do you love (agape) Me?**” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; **You know that I love (phileo) You.**” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “**Simon, son of Jonah, do you love (phileo) Me?**” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “**Do you love (phileo) Me?**” And he said to Him, “**Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (phileo) You.**” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep. Jn. 21:14-17*

Peter’s Burden

Jesus then revealed to Peter, the violent nature of the death he would endure. This clearly would become a burden he would carry his entire life and every time there was a violent encounter with persecutors he would have to wonder if this was to be his final day. After his arrest along with John (Acts 3), the arrest and beating with the 12 (Acts 5), the arrest with James by Herod (Acts 12), each time, Peter would have borne this additional burden.

*Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but **when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.**” 19 **This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God.** And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.” Jn. 21:14-19*

A burden he was still carrying when he wrote his final letter.

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, **14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.** 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 2Pet. 1:12-15*

How does a man get past such memories?

Peter had tried to live up to the name Jesus had given him, but continually fell short, while Jesus walked the earth. A lesser man might have given up. But Peter held fast through it all and when the day of Pentecost came, Peter stood with the eleven and his rock like character truly shone. He would not bend or break even by failure. Though he did not live up to the pressure of following Jesus, he forced himself to do his best and never gave up. From that day forward, with one exception (Acts 15:14) everyone else called him Peter,

The path from the man he was (*Simon*) to the “*Peter*” (*Cephas*) Jesus said he would become was far more difficult than Peter imagined. Yet even in failure he justified his name. He did exactly as Paul who also had shameful memories: “*forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:13-14). Even before that denial, Jesus had already told Peter to forget what lay behind and reach forward to what was ahead: “*when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers*” (Lk. 22:32).

All of this was summed up in a prophesy that Isaiah made revealing the power and the mercy of the coming King of Israel. There are two terms I believe it is important for us to become familiar with: a bruised reed; a smoking flax.

A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. Isa. 42:3

A Bruised Reed

Jacob, Judah, Moses and David all carried a staff. Some were made of reed, chosen because it was strong and lightweight. In the same family as bamboo, it is hollow and if one side is splintered (bruised), it becomes unstable. Such a staff would be very dangerous to lean upon as Israel found leaning on Egypt. *“Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him”* (Isa. 36:6). *“They have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their backs quiver”* (Ezek. 29:6-7).

A bruised reed was an unreliable staff that could snap at a crucial moment causing the one leaning upon it to be badly hurt. Clearly the best thing to do with a bruised reed is break it in half and throw it away. Many who come to Jesus are *“bruised reeds.”* At an important moment any of us can snap as Peter did at the trial. Yet Jesus knew we would be *bruised reeds*. Bruised long before He called us (Eph 2:1-8) and liable to snap at a crucial moment. Next time we feel the stinging shame of failing Jesus, we can quote this verse: *“A bruised reed He will not break.”*

A Smoking Flax

In Israel, the source of light in the darkness was the lamp. It held oil and used a wick to burn brightly. The wick, made of flax, was placed in the lamp and raised or lowered for optimum light. In the parable of the ten virgins, the wise not only took extra oil, but when the bridegroom came *“all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps”* (Mt. 25:7). They brought trimmers because as the wick burned, its upper portion became charred and the light dimmed. Once charred, when raised to give more light, it would smolder and smoke. Even the golden lampstand had *“wick-trimmers”* (Num. 4:9). A *“smoking flax”* was an idiom for an untrimmed lamp casting a dim light and irritating the eyes and nose with smoke. The best thing to do with such a lamp is put it out (*quench* it).

Who are the *“smoking flaxes?”* Once again Isaiah speaks of those who serve the Messiah. Ideally, *“If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light”* and *“you shine as lights in the world”* (Lk. 11:36; Phil. 2:15-16). When we are zealous and holy the light does indeed shine brightly, but dims and smokes when discouraged.

What a Savior! He is meek and lowly in heart and in Him we find rest for our souls. Isaiah did not justify sloth or unfaithfulness. He gave hope to the weak, the immature, and even those who stumble in maturity. After a lifetime of hard work removing character flaws we are still *bruised* as a *reed* and as the *flax* in a lamp's wick we still *smoke*. But as a bruised reed He will not snap us and if our light should become as a smoking flax He will not quench us.

While many might have given up hope on Peter, as a smoking flax or bruised reed, the Lord knew better and when Pentecost came, Peter was the rock Jesus knew he could be. He was not perfect, all his flaws had not vanished, but he was able to stand firm and do what he knew was right. He trusted the Lord, was willing to do everything the Lord asked him to do, and submitted without question. Even after this, Peter's life was not problem free. Though he was the apostle to open the door to Jew and Gentile, and stood firm while doing so (Mt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:14-41; 10; 15:7;) he later acted the part of a hypocrite. (Gal. 2:11-15). Yet even after this, he went on to write the letters that bear his name in which it is revealed that he had then become an elder in the Lord's church (1Pet. 5:1-4). Those who willingly follow Peter in these things will find great things happening in their lives also.

Peter's subsequent history is recorded in Acts 1-12, before Luke shifted to Paul. In those chapters we read of his courage and hard work in the Lord's cause. His initial sermons were recorded by Luke (Acts 2-4, 10). His work in the early church is an example to all Christians. Yet

after the Fifteenth chapter we lose sight of him. We learn that he did leave Jerusalem and come to Antioch, where Paul had to rebuke him. This event had to occur either before the Jerusalem conference, (Acts 15), when Paul and Barnabas were working with the church for several years, or soon after, because Paul was only with Barnabas for those first few years.

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?" Gal 2:11-15

Yet when Paul came to Jerusalem to bring the money collected by the Gentile churches, Peter was not present, in fact, he is not mentioned again in the book of Acts.

These two letters that bear his name, are the only other things we know about Peter from the time of his leaving Jerusalem and the time of his death. Yet, even in these we only learn a few things about his life. First, he is now an elder. So he has all the qualifications of the elders in 1Tim. 3 and Titus 1. He has believing children, he has raised well, he is still married to his one wife as Paul attested during his third missionary journey.

Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 1Cor. 9:5-6

His final words in the last chapter of his second letter are poignant, powerful and important for us to remember.

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 2Pet. 3:1-3

His last words are also a word of warning. Although Paul's writings are Scripture, some of his words are hard to be understood. Sadly, yet alarmingly, there will be many who will twist these and other words to their own destruction, just as they do other Scriptures.

and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation — as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 2Pet. 3:15-16

But we, now that we have been warned will take heed and watch for them.

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2Pet. 3:17-18

His Purpose in Writing

The key words that summarize Peter's first letter are hope and endurance. The epistle was written to exhort and motivate them in order to help endure the persecution that was coming. The book is a wonderful mixture of the privilege and honor of being a Christian, along with the duty and responsibilities these great blessings bring with them. He also spoke extensively about the hope that will keep us fixed and steadfast even under severe persecution, along with joys in the midst of sorrow, and the practical responsibilities all Christians must shoulder. The book centers on general exhortations. This passage seems to sum up the book best of all.

By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. 1Pet. 5:12

Date and Place:

With all the traditions and proclamations of Peter being the first pope and in seeking to put in him Rome has led to some disagreement as to where he was.

From the words in the letter, there is no question that a severe persecution was upon the church. Although Jews persecuted the churches to a limited degree, Rome did not begin to involve itself until about 63-64. Peter's epistle speaks of persecution as the normal lot of Christians which seems to place the date around 65-66 AD, which would coincide with Paul's writings to 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, along with Paul's subsequent death. Whether that death had already occurred, we have no means of knowing as nothing is mentioned in either letter.

Three clues are given as the possible place of writing. First, where the letter was sent. It certainly appears that Peter has some personal knowledge of their circumstances.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 1Pet. 1:1

These provinces take in some of the area of Paul's second and third missionary journeys. Peter had enough knowledge of these congregations to write them this letter. How much from personal knowledge and how much from other sources cannot now be determined.

Second are those who saluted or greeted at the end of the letter.

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. 1Pet. 5:13

Again, there is not enough to go on here to make a certain conclusion. It is evident that the church and one of Peter's sons sends salutations. Whether this was from personal knowledge or a general love is also can't be determined with certainty. The basic question about the term "Babylon" is whether it is figurative or literal. If figurative, the conclusion is drawn that Peter must have been in Rome. But if Peter was in Rome it seems unlikely he would not have stood with Paul. There was a literal Babylon during the days of Peter, there is no compelling reason that it could not have been from there. All in all, there is not enough information to know where Peter was when he wrote the letter. In this case, curiosity may never be satisfied.

1 Peter Chapter One

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

As in nearly all the NT epistles the author and his authority to write such a letter were established at the very beginning. This phrase demands attentive ears and respectful obedience from all disciples of Christ. The term *apostle* was only used of those selected by a superior to take their authority to others.

“apostolos, ... 1. a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders... 2. Specially applied to the twelve disciples whom Christ selected, out of the multitudes of his adherents to be his constant companions and the heralds to proclaim to men the kingdom of God... 3. In a broader sense the name is transferred to other eminent Christian teachers.” (Thayer, p. 68; 652).

An apostle was *“one sent forth with orders,”* commissioned and sent forth by Jesus to bind and loose upon His disciples what God desired. Many Scriptures clearly teach this inhered within the apostleship.

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.** 19 **Go therefore** and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Mt. 28:18-20*

*“**Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**” Mt. 18:18*

*But the Lord said to him, “Go, for **he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.** 16 “For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Acts 9:15-16*

Even on the limited commission this was so.

*“**He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.**” Mt. 10:40*

*“**He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.**” Lk. 10:16*

Because this epistle was written by an apostle, it demands careful consideration by all Jesus disciples. These are the words that He has spoken to them. The epistles are the fulfillment of Jesus promise to them.

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**” Jn. 14:26*

*“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth;** for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **He will tell you things to come.**” Jn. 16:12-13*

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 **for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,** 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;” Eph. 4:11-14*

The writings in this epistle are a combination of the things the Holy Spirit taught them and the things Jesus had taught them that were brought back to their remembrance, for the purpose of giving us access to all truth, and allowing us to observe all the things that Jesus commanded them. These are precious letters containing all that can now be learned about what the Lord expects of us.

As Paul told those in Corinth, when an apostle writes a letter, the words are the commands of the Lord.

*Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things which I write to you***

are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 1Cor. 14:36-38

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion

The scattering and dispersion Peter described initially occurred when Assyria and Babylon scattered Israel over all the earth as a result of their rebellion. The initial prophecy revealed that God would scatter them from one end of the earth to the other.

*“Then **the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known-- wood and stone.** Deut. 28:64*

An additional prophecy, also given in Deuteronomy, revealed God would bring back those who were scattered. But what is important for us to realize in this passage is that there were actually two gatherings. The first occurred when Cyrus brought Israel back to their land. It is probable that this passage described the first gathering, although God “*circumcising the heart*” was also used of the second gathering.

*“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, 2 “and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 **“that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.** 4 **“If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.** 5 **“Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.** 6 **“And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” Deut 30:1-6***

Isaiah later gave the prophesy about a second gathering. This was the primary role of the apostles, prophets and all Christians. This prophecy was being fulfilled and Peter appears to make reference to it here. This second gathering would occur in the day that the root of Jesse (Jesus) became the banner of all people, including the Gentiles.

“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.” 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. Isa. 11:10-12

Since these are Gentile churches, this is clearly not speaking of Israel alone, but all those who were “*not my people who now are my people.*”

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; **And all nations shall flow to it.** 3 Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isa 2:2-3*

All the nations had been “dispersed,” since the tower of Babel, and Israel and Judah since the time of their captivity in Assyria (722) and Babylon (596). Although they have now been gathered together in a spiritual sense, they were still dispersed physically.

“diaspora... a scattering, dispersion... in the Sept. used of the Israelites dispersed among foreign nations... esp of their Babylonian exile... Transferred to Christians [i.e. Jewish Christians(?)] scattered abroad among the Gentiles... James 1:1 sojourners far from home, in Pontus... I Pet 1:1...” (Thayer, p. 141; 1290)

When Peter also added “*pilgrim*,” the second aspect of this gathering is revealed. They were gathered to God in the church, but still lived in a foreign country (the world), forced to reside by the side of the worldly natives of this age, but never allowed to assimilate into their culture.

parepidemos... one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives; hence stranger; sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner,... in the N. T. Metaph in ref. to heaven as the native country, *one who sojourns on earth*: so of Christians, 1 Pet. 1:1;...” (Thayer p. 488; 3927)

parepidemos an adjective signifying “sojourning in a strange place, away from one’s own people” (*para*, “from,” expressing a contrary condition, and *epidemeo*, “to sojourn”; *demos*, “a people”), is used of OT saints, Heb 11:13, “pilgrims” (coupled with *xenos*, “a foreigner”); of Christians, 1 Peter 1:1, “sojourners (of the Dispersion),” RV; 2:11, “pilgrims” (coupled with *paroikos*, “an alien, sojourner”); the word is thus used metaphorically of those to whom Heaven is their own country, and who are sojourners on earth. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:3927),

They continue to be strangers and hold to their different ways. This is an excellent term to capture the true feelings of a Christian who must live in this world. We cannot fashion ourselves according to those in this world (Rom 12:2) and we cannot love the things of this world (1Jn. 2:15-17).

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And **do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:1-2*

Do not love the world or the things in the world. *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. 1Jn. 2:15-17*

*As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” 17 Therefore “**Come out from among them And be separate**, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” 18 ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.’ 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor 6:16-7:1*

The Holy Spirit obviously chose this word to describe these important things. It is only used three times in the NT. Twice in Peter and once in Hebrews.

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and **pilgrims** on the earth. Heb. 11:13*

*Beloved, I beg you as **sojourners** and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, 1Pet. 2:11-12*

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the **pilgrims** of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 1Pet. 1:1-2*

It refers to the common attitude on the part of Christians that they have been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of God’s word (1Pet. 2:9-10). As such we are no longer citizens in this world for our citizenship is now in heaven.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:20

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. 3:2

All of this is captured by Peter’s term *pilgrim*. All Christians much see themselves in this light for this is the type of people the letter is written

There are many important things we should learn from these terms. Here are a couple of articles written to expound on them: All of this is captured by Peter’s term pilgrim. All Christians much

see themselves in this light for these are the quality of people Peter is addressing.

Strangers & Exiles

Introduction: Throughout all eternity, God has lived His life in heaven. Every decision and action He makes is based on righteousness, justice and love (Ps, 89:14; 1Jn. 4:8). All of His actions and thoughts in regard to others are based on His love which seeks to act in their best interests. There is no selfishness in Him and in all His plans or goals He is always seeking what is best for others. This is also how the Word, the Spirit, the angels and archangels are all living, and in every interaction we have had with them, this is how they have treated us. There is no injustice or unfairness in God.

When God created our parents, Adam and Eve, He created them and all future generations in His image and likeness. He planned for all mankind to live here on earth with the same type of loving and righteous life on earth as He and all others do in heaven. Alas, it only lasted a very short time. The purpose for the command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to give them the opportunity to prove their own righteousness, unselfishness and love. Yet Eve acted out of selfishness when she ate that fruit. She knew God had told her not to do it and had warned her of the danger, but her own selfish desires took precedence over God's needs and she acted in a way that harmed Him and all of us. Adam followed right after her.

Her first two sons were Cain and Abel. While Abel clearly wanted to worship God in righteousness and love as it is done in heaven, Cain did not care what God wanted in worship and was only acting for his own interests. God could not accept such worship since it was not sincere and not out of love for God. When God asked Cain to repent and do it better the second time, Cain grew angry. In great selfishness he took Abel's life from him and then "*went out from the presence of the Lord*" to live the gift of life God had given him according to his own selfish desires. God summed up how this worked out in Genesis 6. The world darkened and became progressively worse, under this cloud of evil and selfishness: "*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*" "*The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence,*" "*for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.*" (Gen. 6:5-11).

This was a pivotal moment in the history of the world. God's grief and sorrow led to regret. With God's omniscient foresight, it is difficult to understand this as God did not know it was coming, but to witness so many selfish people mistreating and abusing each other in such evil ways was a terrible contrast to the life God and those who were with Him were living in heaven.

Yet God had made a promise to Adam and Eve and He intended to keep it. So God manifested His true feelings toward such conduct in the flood. "*So the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'*" The flood is a giant indictment of this type of lifestyle: "*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*" Peter revealed that all who think God has not openly manifested His displeasure at the way they are living are "*wilfully forgetting*" the flood. (Rom. 1:18, 2Pet. 3:3-13). Peter then went on to reveal that God's displeasure is still waiting for a day to be revealed. On that day it will not be water, but fire dissolving the heavens, the earth and all its works.

While the vast majority of God's of Eve's descendants followed this path, there were a few, who considered themselves as "*strangers and exiles.*" These were men and women who longed to live the life God was living in heaven and repudiated the selfish and evil exploitation of others that they saw in the rest of men. God listed Abel, Enoch and Noah as individuals who felt this way prior to the flood. It is important to remember that both Abel and Enoch were prophets (Lk. 11:50; Jude 14;), and God used them to proclaim His will. After the flood, God also spoke of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob and said concerning all, both before and after the flood: "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*" (Heb. 11:13-14).

It is an amazing thing that God's children cannot feel at home here, but because of the direction of the vast majority of the children of Adam and Eve have chosen that is exactly how it is. Paul revealed the sad reality in the first three chapters of Romans. He charted the history of the world after the flood along with the rise of the nations. These people "*knew God,*" but "*refused to glorify Him as God*" or even "*give thanks*" to Him for all His gifts. Following Cain in "*leaving the presence of the Lord,*" they "*refused to retain have God in their knowledge*" and "*exchanged the truth of God for a lie*" of their own devising. They soon returned to a selfish and unrighteous lifestyle similar to those prior to the flood (Rom. 1:24-

32).

This continued until God called Abraham and gave him the promise that all future “strangers and exiles” would become his offspring. Yet after God gave the law on Sinai, it became evident that it was not these fleshly children of Abraham that God was speaking about. They were also so selfish and self-centered that God said of them: *“I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”* (Heb. 3:11). Of that entire generation, only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter that rest. The others all fell in the wilderness one by one. After the death of Joshua, *“another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.”* (Judg. 2:10) and once again even in the midst of Israel those who truly wanted to serve the Lord were *“strangers and exiles.”* This continued throughout the history of Israel. In the days of Isaiah, God said: *“Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved.”* (Rom. 9:27). Also, as Stephen said just before they killed him, *“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,”* (Acts 7:52-53).

Yet through the countless generations that have come and gone, men and women from all over the globe continue to come out of the midst of the selfish and cruel and live as “strangers and exiles.” They leave those who are unloving and unmerciful and seek to serve God and become His loving and just people. As all these people are added up through the centuries in the midst of the billions and billions who have lived and died, God summed it up: *“Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude — innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”*

God chose Abraham not only as the Father of the Jewish nation, but far more importantly the father of all the “strangers and exiles” who love the Lord and are seeking Him, not only his physical descendants from the law, but also including the Gentiles. *“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith,” “not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”* (Rom. 4:13-17). *“Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham,” “that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus.”* (Gal. 3:7-14).

Conclusion: As God told the angel before He destroyed Jerusalem *“Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.”* (Ezek. 9:4). True *“strangers and exiles”* are deeply troubled, sighing, crying and mourning over the evil actions of the selfish wicked. For this reason, Lot was a true *“stranger and exile”* and God delivered him out of Sodom for the same reason as that given in Ezekiel above: *“delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).”* (2Pet. 2:7-8). Thus the true *“strangers and exiles”* are revealed. But for the wicked it is different: *“who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”* (Rom. 1:32). Are we among the true children of Abraham, manifesting the love, righteousness and justice of God to all we meet?

The Price to Become a Stranger & Exile

Introduction: Jesus was very open with all who want to His disciples. The cost of full commitment is much higher than many imagine, potentially damaging all previous relationships. Jesus said *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, ... and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’”* (Mt. 10:34-37). As we carefully digest these words, coming from the *“Prince of peace,”* they are hard to understand. Yet as we witness it happen, it is evident Jesus was not speaking of His will or intent, but only of consequences. When forced to choose His will over the desires of friends and family, we will indeed make *“enemies.”*

This is as simple as our family planning a gathering on the first day of the week only to hear that we would rather worship with our brethren than be with them. This easily kindles jealousy, bitterness and resentment. It could also be a situation where the family continues to drink alcohol, engage in immodest behavior, watch a vile movie, or anything else we know our Lord condemns. When we choose to stand with Him against sin and ungodliness the price will often be rejection and even hatred: *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world,*

the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (Jn. 15:18-20).

As we grow in our walk with the Lord, it becomes more and more clear to us that we are becoming increasingly out of step with those around us. As we stop “*being conformed*” and begin to “*transform*,” the “*light*” we project becomes as distasteful to those in darkness as the light of Jesus we are reflecting: “*And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*” (Jn. 3:19-20).

After entering the narrow gate leading to life, the farther down the difficult path we travel the fewer fellow travelers we will find. Lot found himself alone in Sodom, Jeremiah found himself alone in Jerusalem, and Jesus, even in the fullness of time, found only a small handful. Many are truly “*strangers and exiles*” even in the midst of their own friends and family. As “*they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you,*” we become more and more isolated. (1Pet. 4:4). Yet as we grow in the faith our choices become clearer and easier to make. As we learn that “*friendship with the world is enmity with God, Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*” (Jas. 4:4), and “*all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.*” (1Jn. 2:16), we will find ourselves needing to avoid the terrible choice our loved ones force is to make. So many who have lived before us made the wrong choice: “*they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*” (Jn. 12:43). Jesus expects much more of us than to make such a choice: “*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*” (Mt. 10:37). Yet when our loved ones put us in this position, when we love Him more, the results Jesus described above will surely come.

As we put off the old man and put on the new man, we become more and more in step with the Lord and His people, but also have less and less in common with those, no matter how much we loved and respected, who remained in the world. As “*old things pass away and they become new*” our consecrated walk with God leads us to become more and more out of step and strange to those who once knew us when we lived as “*the old man.*” After we “*were raised with Christ,*” in baptism and began to “*seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God,*” how could we fit in anymore? When we “*set our mind on things above, not on things on the earth,*” and “*put to death our members which are on the earth,*” our influence becomes less and less palatable with those who have no intention of making such changes.

Paul made it clear that not only do we reflect Christ’s light as we walk in the midst of those in darkness, but we also have a distinctive smell, that being in fellowship with Christ imparts. “*We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.*” (2Cor. 2:15-16). Yet it is made clear that the odor differs among those who smell it. For those who stand with God, it is a fragrance of life. But for those in the world, the fragrance of the Christian is a fragrance of death. Both our “*light*” and “*fragrance*” are pleasant and joyous to our fellow sojourners. But for those who are still in and of the world, the light is odious and the fragrance foul and bitter indeed. This is why they said of Lot: “*This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.*” It was Lot’s responses to their sinful actions and his refusal to participate and even to try and stop their sinful behavior that had not gone unnoticed. They could sense he “*was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).*” (Gen. 19:9; 2Pet. 2:7-8).

The dilemma we face is not new! It has been the lot of all who came out, since the very beginning. After they freely “*confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,*” this price had to be paid. This was the price Moses was more than willing to pay when he “*refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.*” (Heb. 11:13-27). We must pay the same price today. God has demanded that we “*come out from among them and be separate.*” There can be “*no fellowship between light and darkness*” when the darkness either hates or seeks to overwhelm the light. Truly, “*evil companions do corrupt good morals,*” even if they are old friends or family members. (2Cor. 6:14-18; 1Cor. 15:33).

We made a choice when we became a Christian. When we learned that we were “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world,*” we obeyed the gospel to change our citizenship and allegiance. At that time, God

“delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” Now, we are just like those who lived before us. We too are *“no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”* (Eph. 2:12-20; Col. 1:13).

This was the choice Jesus described in the treasure hidden in the field. We had to sell all that we had to buy that field. We sold our citizenship and allegiance in this world to become citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Now, *“our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,”* (Phil. 3:20-21). But we must live as “strangers and pilgrims here in this world. Never forgetting that just as those before us we too face the same danger: *“if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.”* We can’t fit in here. If we try, we just buy up our opportunity to return.

Conclusion: *“God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them,”* is the promise for all who are truly *“strangers and pilgrims”* to the degree described in this lesson. (Heb. 11:16). Jesus was very comforting when He said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”* (Lk. 18:29-30). The loss of friends and family, the terrible price of persecution and tribulation are the lonely and bitter lot of strangers and pilgrims, but what a small price to pay to have God proud to be our God and a wonderful city waiting just beyond the horizon of this life.

Strangers and Exiles- 3: Children of Abraham

Introduction: Because *“the whole world lies under the power of the evil one,”* the children of God have been forced to *“come out from among them and be separate.”* (1Jn. 5:19, 2Cor. 6:17). Jesus revealed to Paul that the entire purpose for his preaching the gospel was *“to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”* (Acts 26:18). While Satan continues to have influence and power over those who remain in the world, those who serve God do not feel at home here. *“Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Phil. 3:20). Truly, we will *“spend the rest of our time in the flesh”* as *“strangers and exiles”* in this world of darkness and sin.

The moment we obeyed the gospel, we changed our family, our citizenship, and our allegiance: *“But you are a elect race, (family) a royal priesthood, a holy nation, (citizenship) a people for (God’s) own possession (allegiance).”* (1Pet. 2:9). *“He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”* This is the true meaning of being *“born of water and the Spirit,”* and being *“born again”* to become a *“new creation.”* As soon as we received *“the adoption as sons,”* *“we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.”* (Jn. 1:12; 3:3-5; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 4:5, 28-29). Have we truly understood the honor and privilege that was bestowed upon us when we became children and heirs of Abraham by promise just like Isaac was?

When God called Abraham out of Ur, he began a sojourn so similar to our own, that God purposed to make him the father of the “elect race.” While we can easily see how he became the father of all true and faithful servants of God in Israel. What is equally important is that after Jesus died on the cross, God made provisions so that Abraham would also become the father of all the Gentiles who obeyed the gospel.

The true kingdom of God was always a remnant even when it was in Israel. Even in the days of Isaiah, God proclaimed that the physical seed of Abraham was never a part of the promise He made to Abraham regarding this seed. *“Isaiah cries concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved”* Even before Paul quoted this verse, he had stated: *“For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham’s seed, are they all children,”* (Rom. 9:6-7; 27). This is why both John and Jesus called the leaders in Israel *“offspring of vipers,”* and led Jesus to tell them: *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.”* (Mt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Jn. 8:44). The truth is simple, yet profound. *“If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.”* It was never the blood in their veins, but the devotion and faith to God in their hearts that made them true sons of Abraham.

Jesus warned Israel that after *“the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,”* *“the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.”*

(Mt. 21:42). As Peter preached the gospel for the first time, he used “*the keys of the kingdom*” to open the door to the true children of Abraham who were at that time dwelling in the midst of those who had rejected Jesus. He clearly revealed: “*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*” (Acts 2:36-39). When they cried out “*what shall we do*” Peter “*said to them, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.*” He then revealed: “*the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*” What Peter did not yet know was that those “*who are afar off,*” were the Gentiles. (Acts 10; Eph. 2:11-18).

God made it very clear that “*it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.*” (Rom. 9:6-8). Since “*we, like Isaac are children of promise,*” God wanted us to know “*that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, (saying,) In you shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham.*” (Gal. 3:7-9). This amazing promise in the Scriptures ought to fill us with awe and amazement. Everyone in the church has been adopted into God’s spiritual family and has become a child of Abraham, just like Isaac.

Paul tied this directly to the same baptism Peter commanded above. “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 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 neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.* (Gal. 3:26-29)

There can be no doubt that those who are baptized into Christ are the true seed of Abraham. God has added us to His people just as He promised He would do in Isaiah 54 (if you take the time to read this verse now, it will have great meaning to you). All the promises and covenants that God gave to Abraham and his descendants are now our promises and covenants! While we were “*separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world, now in Christ Jesus you that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.*” “*So then ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*” (Eph. 2:12-13; 19)

“As heirs according to the promise,” we are destined to inherit all that God has promised to His people. Because Abraham is our father, everything written in the Old Testament is the history of our people. Not physical Israel with all its blights and stumbles into sin. They were not His people unless they did the works for Abraham. We are not related to those sinners whose lives were recorded so we would not “*fall after the same example of disobedience.*”

Our people are those who served God faithfully as true children of Abraham. Their lives are recorded in Hebrews 11! Everyone who was faithful to God was under consideration: “*what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets.*” These are our “*great a cloud of witnesses,*” that “*surround*” us. (Heb. 4:11; 11:32; 12:1). We were strangers and exiles from His people, but after God “*delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son,*” we are now “*strangers and exiles*” from those in the darkness and *fellow citizens* with all the saints from the beginning until the end. (Col. 1:13).

As we read passages in the Scriptures that apply to Abraham and his children, we need to pay special attention to them for they are now ours just as much as they were those who lived before us. As God told Israel He would now have us understand: “*Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.*” (Isa 51:1-2).

Conclusion: If we look to the rock from which we were hewn we find that in the eyes of God, Abraham was made of gold, silver and precious stones. If we follow him we too will come from the same quarry and have the same quality. Only when we “*walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had*” can Abraham be our true father. If we will look to him, follow him and walk in his steps we will have the same quality to God that he did. God has so planned the gospel that we have to walk in the same steps he did. “*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of*

promise as in a foreign country. (Heb. 11:8-10). Since God now calls us through the gospel and when we obey the gospel we come out from among them and live as strangers and exiles in the midst of those citizens of this world. We are walking in the steps of his faith. So it will continue until the end.

“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. 9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, ‘You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: 10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.’ (Isa. 41:8-10)

in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

Each of these is a province with many churches. John wrote to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4), and Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (Gal. 1:2). We do not know how many were in Pontus, Cappadocia or Bithynia. These are found just above the cities Paul preached to on his first missionary journey. Paul attempted to go into Asia and Bithynia on the second journey and was forbidden (Acts 16:5-7). Some of these provinces were represented when the first sermon was preached by Peter (Acts 2:9). Therefore Peter had become familiar with some who would ultimately have returned to where they were living and perhaps those relationships led to this letter.



*And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ... 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and **Cappadocia**, **Pontus** and **Asia**, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Acts 2:5,9-10*

Aquila had also been born in Pontus.

*And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in **Pontus**, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla Acts 18:2*

We learn that Paul went to **Galatia**, on the second missionary journey, but we learn more about this visit in the letter he wrote to them than we do from Luke's account:

*Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of **Galatia**, they **were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia**. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they **tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them**. Acts 16:6-8*

Paul had been forbidden to enter Bithynia and Asia at that time, but at some time later, he or someone else had gone there. Yet there is also a possibility for Pontus and Cappadocia that churches had been started by those who heard Peter's sermon in Acts 2, remained in Jerusalem until Saul laid waste the church, then "went everywhere preaching to word." Peter may have had a strong tie with these churches for that reason.

Among the most important things we must remember about this letter is that it reaches out to multiple congregations in diverse areas of the Roman empire. This will be important when we assess Peter's words to the elders.

2 elect

These pilgrims of the dispersion are *elect*. Most of translations (except KJV/NKJV) keep this term in the original Greek word order. But since it is an adjective, it can be placed here as a further description of those who strangers and pilgrims. Like most adjectives, we can say the house that is green or the green house. So also here, the elect exiles (ESV) or the aliens who are chosen (NASB).

to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion... (ASV)

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion... elect according to... (NKJ)

To those who reside as aliens... who are chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God (NASB)

those who are elect exiles of the dispersion according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (ESV)

Both capture the intent. The elect are the picked out, chosen, select, and choice ones. The vast majority of those who were in the dispersion had not yet been chosen, because they refused to come. God has called to all to return, but most refused. Peter was not writing this letter to those who have not yet been called out, because all the blessings he wants to discuss as motivation are only for those who are already “*elect*.”

“eklektos... picked out, chosen... 1. chosen by God... hence Christians are called... the chosen or elect of God... 2. Univ. choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellent, choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellent, preeminent...” (Thayer, p 197; 1588)

What Peter introduced here, he will come back and elaborate on it in the next chapter (1Pet. 2:4-10). While God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, each man or woman, by their own free will, will make the final determination (the deciding vote) that will complete the election, selection, or rejection. Paul also spoke about this (1Cor. 1). God chose things that man deems foolish, base, weak and despised and used them in the gospel to test all men to determine if we have a love for the truth and an absolute faith and trust in God. Only those who are willing to trust God and not lean on our own understanding will choose to be called and become elect. While God wants all men to be saved, only those who obey the gospel are His elect and those who reject the gospel have at the same time rejected the honor of being chosen and picked out by God.

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

God’s “*foreknowledge*” is both comforting and perplexing. It gives us the comfort that because God knows everything beforehand He can never be surprised or placed in a position where we often are when something arises we were not prepared for. Yet, because it is not something we can do, it is a mystery.

proginosko, prognosis ... to know about something prior to some temporal reference point, for example, to know about an event before it happens - ‘to know beforehand, to know already, to have foreknowledge.’ (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT: 4268)

Since we know that God promised before time began that He would give us eternal life, He factored in every obstacle and problem we might face in reaching it and has already given us the solution. It is this foreknowledge that makes it possible for Him to reveal Scripture once for all time, giving us all things that pertain to life and godliness, knowing that nothing new will arise that He was unprepared for.

Peter revealed that our election was based on and “according to” God’s foreknowledge.

“kata,... a preposition denoting motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower... II with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;...c. according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...(bb) in proportion to, according to the measure of...” (Thayer, p. 328; 2596)

The relationship between our election and God’s foreknowledge are like two sides of an equation. His foreknowledge = our election. This election of God is in harmony and according to God’s foreknowledge. Paul elaborated more fully in His letters.

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, Eph. 1:4-5

This passage reveals that God was well aware of all the obstacles and problems that would

have to be overcome, but loved us so much that He was willing to do it all to make us holy and without blemish. He knew there would be a group of men and women who were ashamed of their lives and thoughts. Who wanted to do better and wanted to be right with Him, and would be willing to do whatever He asked and believe whatever He revealed.

These people are the ones Peter was writing to at this time. We must search the Scriptures to find all that God has revealed about these things to be certain that we have done all within our power to be all that God foreknew that we could become.

While God wants all men to be saved, it is evident that not all are saved. While some would blame Him, stating that He is the one who chose this, that is a terrible and vile false doctrine. To make God responsible for the terrible things man does and refuses to repent over is both folly and error. God's foreknowledge of man's wicked use of his freewill does not make God responsible for it.

Therefore election was foreknown by God, but still rests with each individual who must, as it were, cast the deciding vote in their own election. God is voting for all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. God is voting for all men to come to repentance. God is not willing that any should perish. Who then is responsible for our election? If God is voting for all, but not all are saved, then who made the final choice? Each person casts that vote for his or her election when they first hear the gospel and they decide whether to accept or reject it. Thus the free will of man is left intact by God. Each person must decide to obey God and submit to His commands before they can become elect. Each person has the right to become a child of God.

God's Foreknowledge

The teachings of the Scriptures about God's ability to "have knowledge of beforehand" is an attribute which is beyond man's ability to comprehend. We do not have such an ability so we cannot understand how it works. God has the ability to know how things are going to unfold and what the end result will be before they even occur. This is obviously one of the things God was speaking of in Isaiah.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isa. 55:8-9

It seems to this author that some of the greatest doctrinal errors and controversies facing Jesus' disciples centers on things like this. When God reveals something that is far beyond man's own ability, our speculations on how God is able to do it or how he chooses to exercise such ability are worthless. Since his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts and the difference is so high that even that cannot be measured (we don't even know how high the heavens actually ascend), how baseless our own ideas are seen to be! What ought to be obvious is that since we cannot understand them, speculation is useless.

The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut. 29:29

Yet many are undeterred by such Scriptures. Through the lense of human eyes and with no guidance from the Holy Spirit some have sought to explain these secret things. Yet God's foreknowledge can only be what he reveals it to be. Nothing more and nothing less. Since we do not have this skill, we cannot determine exactly how it is used. The Spirit outlined the depths of God's knowledge in one of the Psalms of David. After reading it we can at least speak more intelligently about the subject.

O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts

of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You. For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. Ps 139:1-16

God "searches" and "knows" us. He knows our "downsitting" and "uprising." He understands our "thoughts afar off." He is "acquainted with all our ways." Every "word in our tongue" he "knows it altogether." Even this knowledge is "too wonderful" for our writer, so "high" that he "cannot attain unto it." This even includes knowing where he is at all times and being fully able to do the above under any and all circumstances. For our purposes though, it is 16 where "foreknowledge" is discussed. "Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance; and in thy book they were all written, (even) the days that were ordained (for me), when as yet there was none of them." This is God's foreknowledge! Before David was born, "the days that were ordained" for him were already "all written" in God's book."

This foreknowledge forms the heart of God's ability to plan and then flawlessly carry out those plans. Immediately after Adam & Eve's sin in the garden, God promised to send a savior. Later, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah, he successively promised that their descendants would become a great nation and that the savior would be born through their children. Later prophets continued to give more and more details of God's foreknowledge. He knew where Jesus would be born, and where he would be raised. He knew how Jesus live, how he would die, etc. After the crucifixion, on the day of Pentecost, Peter informed the Jews (Acts 2:23) that all they had done was "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." God had known and planned for these people to crucify Jesus. Does such foreknowledge take away freedom of choice and guilt for actions? Absolutely not! This will become the theme of the next chapter, so we will leave that to be explained at that time. Suffice it now only to quote the main concept of that chapter. God is the potter and we are the clay. The choices we make in how we live our lives determines the quality and type of clay that we become. By our own choices we make ourselves into vessels of honor or vessels of dishonor. After we make our choices, God then determines how we will be used.

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2Tim. 2:19-21

It is here that we must part company with those who wish to create elaborate ideas of exactly how all of this works. Only God knows exactly how all of this works because only God has this ability. The Scriptures do not tell us exactly how God uses this ability. Through all the multitudes of questions that will arise, Deut. 29:29 warns us not to go beyond what is written. God knows our days, he knows our frame, he knows our strengths and our weaknesses. He wants all to be saved and come to repentance (2Tim. 2:3-5; 2Pet. 3:9). He blesses the poor in spirit and those who mourn (Mt. 5:3-4). While at the same time using men like Pharaoh, Judas and the Jewish rulers in the time of Jesus Christ to fulfill his purposes in a very negative way.

As is so often the case while walking the path that leads to life, we find doctrines in the Scriptures that are straitened and narrow. We must not stray to the right or to the left, but be content with what is written. The path to fully understanding God's foreknowledge is clouded by other Scriptures that warn us not to carry things too far.

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have

created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” Gen. 6:5-7

And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through (the fire) unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. Jer 32:35

How shall we understand these things? Can God repent and be grieved about what he already knew? Can he say it never came into his mind if he already knew? Does he know everything or voluntarily limit himself? Since we do not know the answer to these things, we must not go beyond what is written.

in sanctification of the Spirit,

The preposition “in” is always used when someone is in the midst or center of something.

“en... in, on, at, with, by among. I locally; 1. of Place proper; a. in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space... 5. used of that with which a person is surrounded, equipped, furnished, assisted, or acts... c. of that which one either leads or brings with him, or with which he is furnished or equipped; esp after verbs of coming, (en of accompaniment), where we often say with ... d. of the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished, owing to the influence of the Hebr. prep... much more common in the sacred writ. than in the prof... where we say with, by means of, by(through)...” (Thayer, p. 209-212; 1722)

Thus the elect are in the midst of and in the interior of the “*sanctification of the Spirit.*” In this case, it is this sanctification that makes us elect. We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God “*by means of*” and “*through the instrumentality of*” the sanctification of the Spirit.

“*hagiasmos... 1. consecration, purification... 2. the effect of consecration: sanctification of heart and life, ...*” (Thayer, p. 6; 38)

Most of the words in the NT that begin with “*hag*” refer to something that has been sanctified, set apart and made holy to God. Everything that is connected to God is by definition holy and set apart for Him to use. Unfortunately, sin defiles and removes that holiness. No one could be elect until they were consecrated and sanctified, in order to become holy and consecrated for God. The means by which the Holy Spirit accomplished this is the essence of the gospel. Paul spoke of it in Romans.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, Rom. 3:23-26

When we are born of water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5), we gain the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:3-5), and are thereafter sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Since only the Holy Spirit can give us the means by which that blood can be made accessible to us. No one can be made elect without first being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Peter, speaking to mature Christians does not see the need to elaborate. Paul also spoke of this in a similar manner.

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, 16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Rom. 15:16

Being sanctified by the Holy Spirit is accomplished through the ministering of the gospel of God. The Holy Spirit used men to preach the gospel which He revealed. When anyone obeys the gospel, the Spirit sanctifies them. Think of the sanctification of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) the washing away of Paul’s sins (Acts 22) and Cornelius (Acts 10). This was something God had chosen from the beginning, and by first sending Jesus to die and shed His blood, and then to send the Holy Spirit to explain it all and bring the sanctification that comes through faith, trust, and obedience.

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th. 2:13-14

There is nothing mysterious or difficult about it. The Holy Spirit revealed the gospel, it is His

sword (Eph 6:17), only by its use can anyone be sanctified by Him.

for obedience

The preposition “for” is another term used many times in the New Testament. It is defined: “eis,... a Prep. governing the Accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: *into, to, towards, for, among*. ... 3. it denotes the end; and a. the end to which a thing reaches or extends, i.e. measure or degree... b. the end which a thing is adapted to attain... c. the end which one has in view, i.e. object, purpose;... d. the end by which a thing is completed, i.e. the result or effect... (Thayer, p. 183-186; 1519).

This is a preposition that is used when one is outside and wants to enter. Whatever follows this preposition is the means by which the “motion,” “direction,” or “end” can be accomplished. God wanted obedience. This is why the Holy Spirit sanctified. This is why God chose the elect in His foreknowledge. This is what makes us His elect, day by day. All followers of the Lord who have become sanctified through their hearkening to the call, do so to comply and be in submission to God. This is the purpose of their election. Those in Christ are the elect and the sanctified and have been given all this grace in order that they might be led to obedience to God. Thus “obedience” is of the greatest importance to the Christian.

“*hupakouo... to listen, hearken*; 1. prop: of one who on a knock at the door comes to listen who it is, (the duty of the porter)... 2. *to hearken to a command, i.e. to obey, be obedient unto, submit to...*” (Thayer, p. 638; 5219)

Two things are therefore required for true obedience. First, there must be a careful listening to the command, it just won’t do for one not to hear exactly what God expects. Second, there must be a submission and obedience to those things that were carefully heard. Several passages come to mind. James warns us to be doers and not hearers only (Jas. 1:22-25), while Paul stated that this had been God’s intent for ages.

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, **for (eis) obedience (hupakouo) to the faith** – Rom. 16:25-26*

and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

In one short verse, Peter has described the role of the Father, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ in our salvation. The Father made the plans in His foreknowledge, Jesus came to earth and created the means by which those plans could be accomplished and the Holy Spirit then revealed exactly what must be done to received the sanctification God had foreknown and Jesus had made possible.

What Jesus did is summed up with the term “*sprinkling of the blood.*” This is an Old Testament concept that was elaborated on in Hebrews.

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry... 23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; Heb 9:11-12; 19-21; 23-24

What the Old Testament typified and shadowed with the sprinkling of the blood of the animal on all parts of the tabernacle and the people, along with the Passover itself, is exactly what Jesus did after His blood was shed and He returned to heaven.

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. Heb. 11:28

This is exactly what Jesus did for us. Now the destruction that will occur to those who have not obeyed the gospel will not touch those who obey the gospel and receive a similar sprinkling. Without the shedding of blood no remission can occur. Jesus brought His blood right into

heaven where He can now sprinkle it upon the souls of those who are in need of it. This He does as each is baptized (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12-13; 1Pet. 3:21-23). We are buried in the water of baptism after our faith and repentance have reached a level strong enough to force us into that burial. When this occurs God applies the blood. God also explains how this blood is continued to be sprinkled throughout the life of a Christian. (1 Jn 1:6-8; 2:1). **Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**

These are the standard Greek and Hebrew terms of greeting for that day. We find them in many of the letters of the day. They are used in the majority of the NT epistles.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 1:7

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1Cor. 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Cor. 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Gal. 1:3

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Col. 1:2

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th. 1:1

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th. 1:2

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. 1Tim. 1:2

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 2Tim. 1:2

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. Titus 1:4

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Philem. 3

Grace to you and peace be multiplied. 1 Peter 1:2

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 2Pet. 1:2-3

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. 2Jn. 3

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. Rev. 1:4-5 Each of these passages elevates the greeting from a common wish from our fellow man into a greeting from God and Jesus. Although this passage in Peter is the only one where the Father and Jesus are not mentioned after the greeting, he has already made them along with the Holy Spirit the reason why the letter is being written. Peter greets them with the hope (from God who can bring it to pass) that they will have a life filled with wonderful peace and grace.

These two verses should greatly elevate the self-image of all God's people. Though the world may not view or treat them well, God holds such in the highest regard. They are His elect, choice and precious ones. They are elect because God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus have put forth great effort and energy to bring them into that condition. As far as God is concerned (and what else matters), these sojourners are the greatest people on the earth. God did all this so they would be obedient. That very obedience to God is also the reason for the persecution they were enduring.

3 Blessed be

The term "*blessed*" comes from a Greek term that has found its way directly into our language. When we give a eulogy for someone who has died or who is being honored, we are speaking well of them.

"*eulogeo* lit., to speak well of (*eu*, well, *logos*, a word), signifies, (a) to praise, to celebrate with praises, of that which is addressed to God, acknowledging His goodness, with desire for His glory, ... (b) to invoke blessings upon a person... © to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God's blessing on a thing... (d) to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on, ..."

(Vine, W. E., Expository Dictionary of NT Words, Vol. I, P. 132-133)

This is how exactly how Paul began his letter to the Ephesians. God is worthy of all the praise, adoration and consecration that we can bestow upon Him. He is wonderful and gracious! He is great and awesome! He is Worthy! God's people should always praise honor and adore Him for the works of grace and kindness He has placed in their lives.

the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

This is a rich and beautiful expression encompassing the union and closeness of the Father to our Lord. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, though speaking of the need

to praise and glorify the Father, it is the relationship He has with His Son that is emphasized by this phrase. It was God who sent Jesus into the world to become His Son and to save all of us from our sins. It was His plan, His desire, and His will that Jesus came to fulfill. As He prayed in the garden "*not My will but Yours be done.*" Hence all the praise and adoration we feel toward Jesus should also be directed to the Father because everything Jesus did for our salvation is exactly what God wanted Him to do.

who according to His abundant mercy

Peter now uses "*kata*" to make "*God's mercy*" = "*our being begotten again.*" Our being born again, is "*in proportion to*" and "*in regard to*" His mercy. God was merciful and compassionate toward us and this prompted Him to do something for us. It was because of this mercy that He begat us again unto living hope. It is also this mercy that should bring about our "*eulogy*" to God. "Mercy" is:

"eleos... mercy; kindness or good will toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them; 1. of men towards men... 2. of God towards men... 3. the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life... (Thayer, p. 203-204; 1656)

"In Greek, eleos (mercy) is a pathos (strong emotion), ...the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else. ... in the face of the unfortunate this emotion is an eleein which includes the elements of both awe and mercy... in this sense of mercy, sympathy is very common. (Kittel Vol 2 p. 477-487)

It is amazing and wonderful to think that our God with foreknowledge of our terrible wickedness and evil would still feel mercy toward us. He feels sympathy, pity, compassion, and good will, but that alone is not mercy. It was also joined with a powerful desire to relieve and help man in his sinful state. This mercy was so vast that the Spirit put a superlative in front of it to describe its quantity and quality.

"polus,... much used a. Of multitude, number, many numerous, great... b. with nouns denoting an action an emotion, a state, which can be said to have as it were measure, weight, force, intensity, size, continuance, or repetition, much l. q. great, strong, intense, large... c. Of time much long ... d. Neut. Adverbially, of the mode and degree of an action..." (Thayer, p. 529; 4183)

God had an emotion of mercy that was "*great, strong, intense, and large.*" So much so that it is as high as the heavens are above the earth.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Ps. 103:11-14

It was with these feelings in His heart that with His foreknowledge, He devised, sent His Son to execute and the Holy Spirit to reveal exactly how it would be done.

has begotten us again

"*Begotten again*" is a single term in the original language:

"ana-gennao... to produce again, beget again, beget anew;..." (Thayer, p. 36; 313)

God produced us again. He created us in the garden and set up the ability of each couple to bring offspring into the world. Yet all of this offspring sinned and died. In mercy, God created the means by which we could be born alive a second time.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 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?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Jn 3:3-5

This is the spiritual reality of our salvation. We were dead in our trespasses. But in the midst of obedience to the gospel, at the point of baptism, God made us alive again.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), Eph 2:1, 4-5

buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Col. 2:12-13

Since we were dead, only a resurrection, or new birth could restore life to us. Since our passing

from the old to the new is more like a birth than a resurrection, God chose the first figure. No one can enter God's kingdom without this new birth.

Everything God did to make this new birth possible are attributed to His great mercy. Back in eternity expending great effort to devise a plan whereby sinful creatures might be brought back to him. Whenever we contemplate the awesome price that God knew would have to be paid and then willingly paying that price by sending His only begotten Son, truly God is worthy to be praised.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Jn. 3:16-17

to a living hope

Peter uses the preposition "eis" to stress the entrance into along with the purpose and result. God's purpose for our being born again was that we might receive a living hope. Thus the result of being born again is that we are now in possession of a living "hope."

"elpis... expectation, hope; i.e expectation whether good or ill; 1. rarely in a bad sense, expectation of evil, fear; ... 2. much more fre. in the classics, and always in the N. T. , in a good sense: expectation of good, hope; and in the Christian sense, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation..." (Thayer, p. 205-206; 1680)

People's expectations for future benefits give them a reason to keep doing what they are presently doing, even when they must make great sacrifices. People find it much easier to make these sacrifices and suffer deprivation when they know it is temporary and it is for a very good reason.

Hope is always made up of two essential components. First there must be a strong desire for what has been promised, and then there must be a confident expectation that we will receive it. If either of these is absent then there is no hope. Yet, once we have both of these, then we will eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Rom. 8:24-25

This is exactly what Abraham felt when God told him he would soon have a son. Though he called something that did not exist as though it did, Abraham did not waver. His confident expectation was based on God's promise and thus, never wavering, his absolute trust gave glory to God.

Abraham ... believed — God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, ... 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, Rom. 4:17-21

We are now exactly in Abraham's position. Regardless of the circumstances, we too will never waver through unbelief. This is a living hope, that passes right through any terrible circumstances and even through death itself. When all other hopes are gone, this one is still lives!

"zao... to live... I prop. 1. to live, be among the living, be alive(not lifeless, not dead)... 2. to enjoy real life, i.e. to have true life and worthy of the name, --active, blessed, endless in the kingdom of god... 3. to live i. e. pass life, of the manner of living and acting; of morals or character..." (Thayer, p. 269-270; 2198)

This is the great difference between the one hope (Eph. 4:4) of the Christian that God has given to us all the other hopes and dreams that God expects us to leave behind. Men have devised many things to replace it, focusing on live, career, family and retirement. But these are dead hopes, destined to end when we leave this life. This living hope is different and it must supplant all these other hopes. Only in this way can we follow Paul and suffer the loss of all things. This hope, manifests God's great mercy, gives us another reason to speak well of and praise Him. This hope gives us a reason to live, as it is a joyful and confident expectation that what we are living for will bring a reward beyond our highest dreams.

This is the dynamic of motivation that keeps each Christian going. As Abraham before us, it is a living hope that cannot be quenched regardless of the obstacles. All other hopes this life offers

cannot pass the veil of death. “*We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*” (1Tim. 6:7). But the hope we have from God is living, active and alive. It will pass beyond this life into eternity.

The one living hope is fixed and firm. Everything else is only temporary. Even before death, these hopes will fade.

Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. 11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. Eccl. 2:10-11

This is a hope that all that we now do will pass with us into the next life. That which the Egyptians futilely attempted by burying their possessions with them God has freely offered to His elect.

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

The preposition “*through*” is first a description of a spacial relationship. It describes a movement that passes from one side to another. If we go through the house or through the city, we went from one side to the other. In the relationships where it is placed between two subjects, it is the means or instrument through which it is accomplished.

“*dia.* . A. with the GENITIVE: *through*... III. of the Means or Instrument by which anything is effected; because what is done by means of a person or thing seems to pass as it were through the same... 2. of the instrument used to accomplish a thing; or the instrumental cause in the stricter sense:... *by the service, the intervention of, by means of, with the help of*... 3. with the gen. of a thing DIA is used to denote the manner in which a thing is done, or the formal cause... II. of the Ground or Reason one account of which anything is or is not done; *by reason of, because of*... 1. of the reason for which a things is done, or of the efficient reason, when for greater perspicuity it may be rendered *by*... 2. of the reason or cause on account of which anything is or is done, or ought to be done; *on account of, because of*... “. (Thayer, p. 132-135; 1223)

Our “*living hope*,” was brought about by the means of, and through the agency of Jesus’ resurrection. Everyone believed that when the Jewish leaders killed Jesus the stopped His plans for a future kingdom. God’s ability to raise Him from the dead shattered that illusion. It proved that the hopes of those who serve God cannot be thwarted by man. Thus the more confidence we have that God raised Jesus from the dead, the stronger our hope will become. It is our conviction on this topic that not only gives us a living hope, but also reckons our faith as righteousness.

being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Rom. 4:21-25

This is the foundation and the proof upon which to base our living hope. It gives substance and assurance to it. The fact that Jesus was denied His life, was beaten, tortured, mistreated and killed, then raised from that death to receive blessings from God for making these sacrifices changes everything! It gives assurance to those who must do the same. The doctrine of the resurrection and the proofs that Jesus truly was raised from the dead gives great assurance to those who wish to believe that it can be done. The 500 witnesses prove that Jesus was raised and with that proven our own resurrection naturally follows. (Rom. 1:3-4; Acts 17:30-31; 1Cor. 15:12-19). The only logical conclusion to be drawn if we believe these things was summed up by Paul.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1Cor. 15:58

4 to an inheritance

Peter again used “*eis*” to denote purpose. Since the spatial use of “*eis*” is to enter into from the outside, it is often used in Scripture for the same purpose. We were outside of this inheritance, but everything God has done in mercy and grace has been done to allow us to “*enter into*” it. This is a secondary reason for Jesus resurrection. It is what our living hope focuses on concerning the resurrection. The resurrection is a portal, a means by which we gain something else. It is not the full fruition of the hope given to Jesus’ disciples by the mercy of God. It is only the door that brings it all to us. God promised an inheritance.

“kleronomia... 1. An inheritance, property received (or to be received) by inheritance... 2. What is given to one as a possession... a. Eternal blessedness in the consummated kingdom of God which is to be expected after the visible return of Christ... b. The share which an individual will have in that eternal blessedness... (Thayer, P. 349;2817)

God has given us some powerful promises regarding this inheritance.

*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and **if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. 8:15-18*

*And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and **if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** Gal. 4:6-7*

When anyone is born again they first become a Christian and a son of God. But as a result of becoming a son, they also have become heirs to the inheritance of eternal life with God in heaven. An inheritance so glorious that no tribulations, trials or suffering in this life are worthy to be compared with it. God explained through Peter that this was His purpose and the end result of His mercy. There are so many verses that describe this inheritance to us. We will receive an incorruptible body, a new heavens and new earth made out of the heavenly image. It will be a glory that cannot be compared with the sufferings of this present time.

incorruptible

Another reason why this is a living hope is because it is not subject to decay, it does not lessen with the passage of time as any other thing that we receive in this life can do.

*“aphthartos... uncorrupted, **not liable to corruption or decay, imperishable... immortal:** of the risen dead...” (Thayer, P. 349; 2817)*

(A no. 2) *diaphthora* an intensified form of No. 1, “utter or thorough corruption,” referring in the NT to physical decomposition and decay, is used six times, five of which refer, negatively, to the body of God’s “Holy One,” after His death, which body, by reason of His absolute holiness, could not see “corruption,” Acts 2:27,31; 13:34-35,37; (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:1312), *aphartos* “**not liable to corruption or decay, incorruptible**” (a, negative, and (A) No. 2), is used of (a) God, Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 1:17 (KJV, “immortal”); (b) the raised dead, 1 Cor 15:52; © rewards given to the saints hereafter, metaphorically described as a “crown,” 1 Cor 9:25; (d) the eternal inheritance of the saints, 1 Peter 1:4; (e) the Word of God, as incorruptible” seed, 1 Peter 1:23; (f) a meek and quiet spirit, metaphorically spoken of as “incorruptible” apparel, 1 Peter 3:4. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:862)

This inheritance is not subject to decay. It will not corrupt. It is not like a flower or even a human body. It is imperishable all that is around us now is corruptible. People, homes, cars, trees, fences, appliances. All grow old, decay and ultimately cease to function. Not so this inheritance.

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1Cor. 15:52-54

All that we see happening around us will not affect our hope. The corruption of this age will not pass through to our inheritance. It is above and beyond anything in this life. It will never decay, never grow old, it will retain its newness, cleanness, beauty and effective through out eternity.

and undefiled

“amiantos... not defiled, unsoiled; free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed and debased or its force and vigor impaired...” (Thayer, P. 32; 283)

Our inheritance is like the garden of Eden before sin entered. It is unsoiled and free from any of the things which could defile and debase it. This too is the hope for the child of God. It will never be changed for the worse. It is not able to be stained or scratched, bumped or scraped.

and that does not fade away,

“amarantos... not fading away, unfading, perennial...” (Thayer, P. 30; 262)

(A) *amaraino* ... was used (a) to signify “**to quench a fire,**” and in the passive voice, of the “**dying out of a fire**”; hence (b) in various relations, in the active voice, “to quench, waste, wear out”; in the

passive, “to waste away,” James 1:11, of the “**fading**” away of a rich man, as illustrated by the **flower of the field**. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:3133)

amarantos “**unfading**” (a, negative, and (A) above), whence the “amaranth,” an unfading flower, a symbol of perpetuity ... 353), is used in 1 Peter 1:4 of the believer’s inheritance, “that fadeth not away.” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:263)

A fire left untended will fade away. A flower once cut and given as a gift, immediately begins to fade. So does the finish on a new car, and the carpet in a new home. There are few gifts that one could give to another that would not fade and tarnish with the passage of time. But this inheritance will never fade. It never loses its beauty or its freshness. Though flowers fade, rapidly losing both their color and beauty, heaven will never fade or lessen in quality.

reserved in heaven for you,

“*tereo*... **to attend to carefully, take care of**; i.e. a. prop. **to guard**... b. metaph. *to keep*, ... *to hold firmly*... c. *to observe* ... d. *to reserve*...” (Thayer, p. 622; 5083)

Reserved is only one of the definitions of this term. Our inheritance is carefully being attended and guarded for us. Our God will keep it for us and no one can take it away. It will be there for us when we are ready for it. If we remain faithful in our service to Him then it will definitely be there. Our inheritance is being safely kept for us. It cannot be removed, broken into, defiled, or harmed. God is guarding and keeping it for us.

The greatness of this hope is enhanced when all other hopes and dreams that motivate us in our lives can be either willingly or by force taken from us. The natural aging process purges many of the false and foolish hopes from us. We brought nothing in and can carry nothing out. One by one all other hopes become dead or dying because we will lose everyone one of them as we pass from this life. But this one hope of the Christian is reserved in heaven and it cannot be lost or taken from us. Wise Christians remove the crutch of these false hopes and focus on this one hope (Eph. 4:4) that God has reserved in heaven for us.

5 who are kept by the power of God

Not only is this hope being preserved and guarded for us, but those of us who have that hope are also being guarded. While the former term has as one of its definitions “guarded,” this one, used here, is the military term, used exclusively for guarding, either by preventing a hostile invasion, or protecting and preserving those who are there.

“*phroureo*, 1. To keep... **to guard, protect by a military guard**, either in order to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight... **to protect by guarding**... *to preserve one* for the attainment of something... 1 Pet 1:5...” (Thayer, p. 658; 5432).

phroureo ... **a military term, “to keep by guarding, to keep under guard,”** as with a garrison (*phrouros*, “a guard, or garrison”), is used, (a) of blocking up every way of escape, as in a siege; (b) of providing protection against the enemy, as a garrison does; see 2 Cor 11:32, “guarded.” KJV, “kept,” i. e., kept the city, “with a garrison.” It is used of the security of the Christian until the end, 1 Peter 1:5, RV, “are guarded,” and of the sense of that security that is his when he puts all his matters into the hand of God, Phil 4:7, (Vine’s Expository Dictionary, NT:5432)

We are being guarded because we are in the center (*en - in the midst of some whole*) of God’s protective power. The church is likened here to a fortress, and those who have entered it are now under the protective power of God. This is God’s inherent power, in which there is nothing impossible or too powerful for God to deal with it.

“*dunamis*...*strength, ability, power*, a. univ. *inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth*... b. specifically, *the power of performing miracles*... c. *moral power and excellence of soul*... d. *the power and influence which belong to riches*... e. *power and resources arising from numbers*...” (Thayer, p. 159; 1411)

This was Paul’s point in Romans:

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:37-39

Jesus made a similar point using the protection those who come through the one door will receive.

7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ... 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ... 27

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one.” Jn. 10:7-9; 27-30

God is guarding and protecting both our inheritance in heaven and our own ability to be worthy to receive it. Thus both sides of hope are guarded. Our desire and our expectation are both fixed and established. Its value is beyond our imagination, and our ability to receive it is also more secure and protected than we can imagine. That is why all our fathers and we ourselves are completely sojourners and pilgrims here.

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. Heb. 11:13-16

through faith

Using the preposition “*dia-* of the means or instrument by which anything is effected; instrumental cause “ to stress that God uses our faith as the means or instrument through which the power of God will flow into our lives. Just like electricity flows through wires and the power of the battery flows through the cables to the switch next to the steering wheel then on to the starter. In exactly the same way, God uses our faith as the means that the power passes through to give us the power of God to be guarded.

At first glance, it might appear that this is simply a statement that the more we trust God's promises the more power they will have to guard us. If this were the only passage in the Scriptures we might think that this is a possible translation, but that is not the case. The power of God is in heaven, just like electricity is generated at the dam, or the power of the car resides in the battery. The cable that connects us to this power is in heaven.

Power in the Gospel

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

dunamis ... “inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth” (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:1411)

Dynamite, gasoline, batteries, bombs. Power is within and can be accessed anywhere.

*And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of the message, even **the word of God**, you accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also **works (energeo – energize) in you that believe**. 1Th. 2:13*

energeo ... in work, operative, active. To be at work, to be effective, operative.”

Energy – a general term for things that are operative or at work and functioning. Power can be inherent (within) or coming from outside.

Electricity, natural gas, but also batteries etc.

There is power in the Word of God, and our faith unlocks that power. It is not the faith, but the power in the word that contains the power. Faith is only the means that unlocks and opens it.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12-13

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isa. 55:10-11

Thus the portal allowing us to enter the power of God that will guard us is by the agency and means of our own faith. It is our faith in God's word that gives us access to this great power of God which keeps us safe so we can gain the inheritance that God is keeping safe for us in heaven. The mighty and omnipotent power of God resides in and operates through faith. The stronger the faith the greater the power, the less the faith, the less the power. God placed such a great premium upon faith that our access to His omnipotent power is gained through it.

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God

which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 1Th. 2:13

Paul explained to those in Thessalonica that it is our faith in the word of God causes the effective working (energizing) of God's power. God's who so prepared the gospel that for those who believe have access to great power The power is in the word and faith is like the dimmer switch that makes that power stronger and stronger in our heart. Peter simply expresses that God's power that keeps a Christian safe for the inheritance He is keeping for him is based upon his faith.

for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The preposition (*eis* - denoting entrance or the end to which a thing is adapted to attain, the result or effect) is used to again stress the purpose of the power that keeps God's people safe. God exerts this power for the purpose of saving us. This is similar to what Paul told the Ephesians:

making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward (eis — purpose / result) us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Eph. 1:15-21

God wanted us to know how exceedingly great this power actually possesses. The basis and example of this power is what God used to raise Jesus from the dead. It is the power God used from the moment Jesus' soul and life returned to His body until the moment He was seated at God's right hand. That is the power is available for our purpose and use in the gospel.

Peter now says something similar. This power will bring us to salvation just as God's power brought Jesus back to the right hand of God. If we put our full faith and trust in Him, He will exert that power in our behalf. We will never be tempted above what we are able to bear. God will always give a means to escape. God wants all men to be saved. His power is exerted to see to it that this is the case.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1Cor. 10:13

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Rom. 8:28-30

Thus our salvation, which is completely tied to our faith, is also tied to God's power. Salvation requires a danger or loss. The greater the ruin and destruction the more important the salvation becomes.

"sozo... to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction(opp. to apollumi)... a. univ., tina ... one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing) e. g. one suffering from disease to make well, heal, restore to health: to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save(i.e. to rescue)... b. to save in the technical biblical sense; negatively, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment,... to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance..." (Thayer, p. 610-611; 4982)

Being delivered out of a dangerous and precarious position of being lost and only one heartbeat away from eternal ruin and destruction is what the Scriptures always mean when they speak of salvation.

Yet even in this respect they speak of salvation in two distinct ways. In Mk. 16:16 Jesus spoke of salvation as something offered by God and received by man at the point where faith meets baptism. At that exact moment in time salvation is granted to the individual.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mk. 16:15-16

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse

generation.” 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ... 47 And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved. Acts 2:40-41

They are then saved and on their way to heaven. Salvation was granted at the moment of baptism. Yet that individual returns to his home with the same problems they had before they were baptized. They still get sick, they still suffer bereavement, they still can hunger and thirst, they can still be persecuted. Even greater in import than this is that through weakness and temptation they can even lose this salvation which God granted them on that day. Hence though the salvation is real and offered in God’s own integrity, for reasons of his own God has these people remain in this life for a time.

This leads to the other use which the Scriptures make of salvation. It is the final reception of it at the 2nd coming of Christ. That day described as one of joy and splendor; glory and of honor. The day of resurrection, the day of judgment, the day when the new heavens and the new earth are revealed to the wondering eyes of the saved. This salvation is the present possession by faith of every believer. But it will not be revealed in its fullest splendor and glory until the distinction between being saved and lost is fully understood and comprehended.

5 who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ... 9 receiving the end of your faith, (even) the salvation of (your) souls. 1Pet. 1:5, 9

When the day comes when the doomed and lost are cast screaming, gnashing their teeth; weeping in agony and pain into the eternal fires and we then turn to our own glorious home, then will salvation truly be revealed in the last time. Now it is a living hope, then it will be fully realized and experienced. Now it is the fire that keeps us warm when it grows cold through temptation and persecution, then it will be a living joy that can never be quenched.

The Power of God’s Promises

Each time we start our car some of the power in the battery is drained. It would soon have none if not for a continuous recharging that begins the moment the engine starts. We rely on this system to start our car many times each day. A problem arises only if the battery is draining when the engine is not running. If a door is left open overnight or the lights or radio left on, we may find a battery drained and unable to start the car. It usually takes one experience of the inconvenience of a dead battery to learn this important lesson. We must protect the power of our battery by turning off anything that might drain it.

Have you ever heard someone who is older speaking about the seemingly inexhaustible energy of children. You can see it in an old dog who lies around and doesn’t exert much energy and a younger one who never stops.

Have we also learned the spiritual counter lesson? Are we careful to protect the power we have gained from the gospel? God revealed that there are many different sources of power in his word. He also warns us that there are things that will drain this power from us and leave us empty. In our cars we have a volt meter or ammeter to tell us if the battery is charging or discharging. Have we developed a spiritual volt meter or ammeter to monitor our spiritual life and warn us if we are losing or gaining power?

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes(Rom 1:16) and energizes those who accept it as the word of God(1 Th 2:13).

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

And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe. 1Th 2:13

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom 10:17

As the power of the rain to unlock the seeds growth, God’s word generates power in our heart(Isa 55:10-11). Paul prayed that we would all see the great power that is working in us(Eph 1:16-21), for it is exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could ask or think(Eph 3:20-21).

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall

accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. 12 For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isa 55:10-12

having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might Eph 1:18-19

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:20-21

Sharper than any two edged sword(Heb 4:12), mighty to the casting down of strongholds(2Cor 10:3-5), strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might(Eph 6:10), and helping us to stand and minister in the strength which God supplies(1Pet 4:11).

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb 4:12

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 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. Eph 6:10-13

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Pet 4:11

From these and other Scriptures it is clear that there is great power available to each of us.

seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; 4 whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Pet 1:3-5

Yet just like the battery in our car needs the engine running to recharge, God warns us that there are things we need to do if we are to receive the strength he can supply. We are strengthened in prayer, reading the Bible, and attending classes and worship assemblies. When we do these things on a regular basis, we are not only recharging, but also gaining capacity for greater strength and a higher level of output. In this way our inner man is renewed and strengthened day by day(2 Cor 4:16-18). Those who do this find the strength to be faithful in their service to God year after year without wavering.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor 4:16-18

Yet we are also warned that there are things that can sap our strength leaving us weakened. In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains that the persecutions and tribulations that arise because of the word or even “temptations” (Lk 8:13) can sap so much strength from our heart that we can fall away(Mt 13:21).

But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

Luke 8:13-15

Perhaps more fearful for us today are those of us who are allowing thorns to block the power of the sun’s rays from keeping us strong. We must never forget that “the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things (Mk 4:19), and the “cares and riches

and pleasures of (this) life.” (Lk 8:14) can drain our strength and keep us from growing and remaining zealous. David found that sins we do not repent of can also sap our strength and leave us weak (Ps 32:1-5).

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. Ps 32:1-6

Brethren we have to learn to monitor our spiritual strength. If we are truly waiting for Jehovah then there is an inexhaustible source of power and strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. Isa 40:30-31

When we find ourselves weakening we have to identify the trouble. It may be that we are no longer recharging our faith and zeal. Perhaps our faith is wavering and the things God has designed are not working properly. Perhaps the cares & pleasures of this world have too strong a hold. Whatever it is, we can fix it and remain strong if we choose to do so. It is up to us how strong we want to be.

6 In this you greatly rejoice,

This phrase marks the transition from the description of the great hope God has given to keep us warm and strong to the things this hope must get us through and the reasons this hope can do that. The term “in this” is literally “in the midst of these things” “by the assistance of these things,” “by the instrument or means of these things.”

“en... 1. of Place proper; a. in **the interior of some whole**; within **the limits of some space**... 5. used of that with which a person is surrounded, equipped, furnished, assisted, or acts... d. **of the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished**, owing to the influence of the Hebr. prep... much more common in the sacred writ. than in the prof... where we say with, *by means of, by (through)*...” (Thayer, p. 209-212; 1722)

“hos... I. a demonstrative pronoun, *this, that, ...* II a relative pronoun *who, which, what*; 9. Joined to a preposition it forms a periphrasis for a conjunction... II Th. 2:10; **for which reason, wherefore**...” (Thayer, p. 454-456; 3739)

Hence, looking back at the previous section, we see “*which things*” we are “*in the midst or interior of:*”

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved (guarded and protected) in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice,
1Pet. 1:3-6

In This You Greatly Rejoice

**His abundant mercy
a living hope**

**begotten us again
resurrection of Jesus**

an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled

does not fade away

reserved (guarded and protected) in heaven

kept (guarded) by the power of God

salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

When we know we are within the interior of these things, and possess the instrumentality of these things, we can't help but “*greatly rejoice.*”

“*agalliao* to experience a **state of great joy and gladness**, often involving verbal expression and appropriate body movement - **to be extremely joyful, to be overjoyed, to rejoice greatly.**’ ...

‘my soul rejoices greatly because of God my Savior’ Luke 1:47; ... ‘my tongue rejoices’ Acts 2:26...” (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT:21)

agalliao “**to exult, rejoice greatly,**” is chiefly used in the middle voice (active in Luke 1:47; some mss. have the passive in John 5:35, “**to be made glad**”). In the OT, it is found abundantly in the

Psalms, from 2:11 onward to 149:2, 5 (Sept.). It conveys the idea of **jubilant exultation, spiritual “gladness,”** Matt. 5:12, **“be exceeding glad,”** the Lord’s command to His disciples; Luke 1:47, in Mary’s song; 10:21, of Christ’s exultation (“rejoiced”); cf Acts 2:26, “(My tongue) was glad,” KJV (RV, “rejoiced”); John 8:56, of Abraham; Acts 16:34, RV, “rejoiced greatly” (of the Philippian jailor); 1 Peter 1:6,8; 4:13 (“with exceeding joy”), ...” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:21)

As seen in the definition, this is not the common word for joy, but a superlative. Those disciples who have truly assimilated the information about the hope God has given to Christians are going to feel very powerful emotions. As they *“experience a state of great joy and gladness, often involving verbal expression and appropriate body movement.”* *“In the OT, it is found abundantly in the Psalms,”* *“conveys the idea of jubilant exultation, spiritual “gladness,”* Mt. 5:12.

Peter used this term three times to express this jubilation and excitement.

*In this **you greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 1Pet. 1:6-7*

*whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, **you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,** 1Pet. 1:8-9*

*but **rejoice** to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also **be glad with exceeding joy.** 1Pet. 4:13-14*

This is the sign of our faith! If we don’t ever feel this joy and desire to sing, leap, praise and relish, then our faith is not strong enough for it to guard us. Nor is strong enough to bring the power of God into our heart.

If we don’t exult in what God is going to do for us after this life is over, and rejoice exceedingly over all God’s promises both present and future, we have a faith problem. A short circuit that is stopping God’s power from creating it. We have lost sight of or have not brought to completion the joy the Eunuch felt as he went on his way, and the joy in finding that treasure.

*Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way **rejoicing.** Acts 8:39-40*

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and **for joy** over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Mt. 13:44*

There is a natural progression for the Christian leading to this joy. If we do not progress we will be too shortsighted to see it anymore and will forget the cleansing of our old sins that created that joy in the first place.

*For he who lacks these things is **shortsighted, even to blindness**, and has **forgotten** that he was **cleansed from his old sins.** 2Pet. 1:9*

This is what happened to David and all of us when we sin and refuse to repent. The joy of salvation is quenched and crushed.

***Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,** And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. Ps. 51:12*

While when we first understand these things and the joy of salvation burns brightly in our heart, it is spontaneous and unsought. It just comes. Yet over the years, as the newness wears off, or the callouses of sin cause it to fade, we have to stoke the flames again. Depending upon our efforts, in stoking this fire it will either burn as hot as a bonfire or grow as cold as a smoking match just blown out. We make the difference here, it is our meditation, our study and contemplation which enlightens the eyes of our heart so we can know it. It is the natural progression of a living and powerful faith, which comes by hearing, believing, trusting and building.

*Therefore **we do not lose heart.** Even though our outward man is perishing, yet **the inward man is being renewed day by day.** 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we **do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.** For the things which are seen are temporary, but **the things which are not seen are eternal.** 2Cor. 4:16-18*

When we see like this, we can visualize the greater riches and reward and be motivated. Then, as Moses leaving Egypt and Jesus He facing the cross, we will have the joy that can help us to endure whatever suffering comes.

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ **greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;** for he looked to*

the reward. *Heb. 11:24-25*

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. 12:2

Like all sacrifices, they are bitter and create great anguish and fear as we look at them in the future. Yet if we could look at them as we will when we are in heaven and have these sacrifices to remember as we are saved heaven, we will keep things in the right perspective. Those brethren who received this letter have been rejoicing for almost 2000 years because they allowed this hope and the power it can generate to keep them faithful until they could receive it. Yet Peter does not minimize the grief and sorrow that comes as we are first presented with them as future events:

though now for a little while,

The adverb “*though now*” presents an interesting concept in Greek, that is not as easily seen in English. It’s primary meaning is “*co–incidence*” which I have hyphenated since the word “*coincidence*” today has a very different meaning. This is an incident that closely follows another so it is a “*co - incident.*” It denotes “*strictly present time*” either moving from the past into the present or from the present into the future.

arti expressing “**coincidence,**” and denoting “**strictly present time,**” signifies “**just now, this moment,**” in **contrast** (a) to the past, ... (b) to the future, (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:737)

“*arti* ... Adv. just, exactly, 1. of the present, **just now, even now,** ... 2. **of the past, just now, just...** 3 in late writers **of the future, just now, presently,** ...” (Liddell & Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 737)

So this could be an event that we are in the midst of now, at this exact moment it began, yet did not exist in the past (yesterday). Or, as it appears to be here, it is used in the sense of the present moment as it moves into the future, at this instant. It hasn’t occurred yet, but it is obvious that it is coming soon.

This does not violate Jesus command, because though it is in the future, it is the future as it was then dawning.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Mt 6:34

Yet, though it is like the cloud bringing rain they could see in the distance and coming directly toward them, it will only be for a “*little while.*” When we consider the historical record of what Peter described here, the only way we can make sense of it is in the context of eternity.

Only in the context of eternity can Jesus’ death on the cross and the terrible indignities He suffered to be small, few and short. The same could be said of the Christians who would soon be swept up in the terrible persecutions Rome would unleash under Nero (54-68), Domician (81-96), Trajan (98-117).

Foxes Book of Martyrs describes the terrible things these emperors did to Christians. Their deaths were cruel and often prolonged. Faced with the prospect of being burned alive, fighting the gladiators, or being sewn into animal skins to be killed by wild animals or dogs. Watching your wife and children friends and brethren die, only to be killed yourself unless you were willing to say “There is no king but Caesar.” Yet the Holy Spirit summed up these things under the term: “*a little time*” “*short season.*” or “*little while.*”

“*oligos...* **little, small, few,** of number, multitude, quantity, or size: joined to nouns... of time, *short:* ... of degree or intensity, *light, slight...* **in brief, briefly...**” (Thayer, p. 443; 3641)

oligos... **a relatively small quantity** - ‘little, small amount.’ ... ‘**take a little wine** to help your digestion’ 1 Tim 5:23; ‘he knows **he has only a little time**’ Rev 12:12; ... *oligos* ... pertaining to a **relatively brief extent of time** - ‘**a little while, for a little while, a short time, brief, briefly.**’ ‘you think you will make me a Christian in a short time’ Acts 26:28. ‘I have written you briefly’ 1 Peter 5:12. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:3641)

Though this might be the longest “*little while*” one lives through in their lifetime, it must be kept in perspective. In the context of eternity it truly will be seen as a little while.

*For I consider that the **sufferings of this present time** are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom 8:18*

*For our **light affliction,** which is **but for a moment,** is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which*

are not seen. For the things which are seen are **temporary**, but the things which are not seen are **eternal**. 2 Cor. 4:17-18

Clearly Paul went even further than Peter. Not only is for a short duration, but it is also “*light affliction*” only “*for a moment*” and once again, it is only “*temporary*.” This too in the context of eternity. The “*light affliction*” compared to the “*eternal weight*.” The “**temporary**” set against the “**eternal**.”

But without being guarded by the power of God, multitudes have been unable to see it like this and have fallen.

if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

The need sometimes arises for God’s people to go through trials in order that the will of God may be accomplished. When the hatred of the wicked passes a certain point, God must either destroy them, or God’s people must endure their persecutions. When such times arise, God often chooses to give the wicked the time they need to repent at the cost of His own servants safety and peace. Yet when this occurs, He is only asking of us what He did of our Lord and Savior. It should be no great thing for Him to ask us to endure such things because of the “*need*” to accomplish the same purpose and task of helping the lost that His Son did.

“DEI... **It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper,** ... a. necessity lying in the nature of the case:... **necessity brought on by circumstances or by the conduct of others toward us...** c. necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end... d. a necessity of law and command, of duty, equity... l. e. necessity established by the counsel and decree of God...”

(Thayer, p. 126: 1163).

There are often reasons that make it necessary for God’s children to undergo trials. There are many examples in the Scriptures. We don’t know what Noah endured while the ark was being prepared, but for 120 years the need was there and he endured it. Joseph was sold into slavery, thrown into prison and faced great difficulties, all to bring about God’s eternal purpose by bringing Israel into Egypt.

He sent a man before them — Joseph — who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the Lord tested him. Ps. 105:17-19

Habakkuk and Jeremiah were righteous men born into an age where Israel needed to be taken into captivity. After Habakkuk had pointed out how unfair it was for a wicked nation to be destroyed by an even more wicked nation,

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he? Hab 1:13

Yet God still made His decree known:

Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 4 “Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. Hab. 2:2-4

There are times when things seem so unfair and unjust, but the righteous must live by his faith. The Hebrew writer used this exact verse when describing to those Hebrews who were about to go through persecution that would ultimately lead to the destruction of Jerusalem.

For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 “For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Heb 10:36-39

Joseph	God’s overruling providence	Gen. 45:5
Everyone	God’s chastening	Heb. 12:
Habakkuk	The consequence of the evil of others.	Habakkuk
Everyone	Time and chance happening to all	Ecc. 9:10
Job	A simple test of a mans fidelity.	Job
Abraham	A test of faithfulness	Gen. 22

The need is not always individual in character and we must divorce from our minds that all trials

and sufferings are sent by God to punish.

Yet regardless of the reason for them, when they come they will lead us to grief. The term chosen here is a common and general term for pain, grief and sorrow.

“*lupeo*... **to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief; to throw into sorrow**... in a wider sense, *to grieve, offend*... to make one uneasy, cause him a scruple... “ (Thayer, p. 383; 3076)

These problems would lead to pain creating sorrow and causing grief. Added to this is that there are a great variety to them. They were of different colors, different types and varieties.

“*poikilos* ... **many-colored, spotted, mottled, pied, dappled**, of leopards, fawns, Hom., etc. II. of robes, wrought in various colours, brodered, ... III. metaph. *changeful, various, diversified, manifold*, Aesch., Plat.:- (Liddell and Scott, Greek Lexicon. NT:4164)

With the term “*various*” having such a diversity of meaning, and the multitudes of members who are receiving this letter, it would appear that every type of trouble and trial, from persecution, to bereavement, from loss of job, to loss of health would be under consideration here. Even the term “*trial*” has a very broad meaning.

“*peiras*... **an experiment, attempt, trial, proving**... a. univ. *trial proving*... b. spec. **the trial of man’s fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy**... also **an enticement to sin, temptation**, whether arising from the desires from outward circumstances... an internal temptation to sin, ... of the temptation by which the devil sought to divert Jesus the Messiah from his divine errand... of a **condition of things**, or a mental state, by which we are enticed... **adversity, affliction, trouble**... sent by God and serving to test or prove one’s faith, holiness, character... c. ‘*temptation*’ (I. e. *trial*) of God by men, I. e. rebellion against God, by which his power and justice are, as it were, put to the proof and challenged to show themselves...”(Thayer, p. 499; 3986)

peirasmós masc. noun from *peirázœ* (3985), **to make trial of, try, tempt**. Trial, temptation, a putting to the test, spoken of persons only. **When God is the agent, *peirasmós* is for the purpose of proving someone, never for the purpose of causing him to fall.** If it is **the devil who tempts, then it is for the purpose of causing one to fall.** (I) Generally, trial of one’s character (1Peter 4:12, “to try [or prove] you”). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3986)

As with James 1:2-3, this is a term that is used for both trial and temptation, Yet there is a very clear distinction that must be made. When God uses them they are never above what we are able to bear and are for the purpose of trying and proving. When Satan uses them, they are always for the purpose of leading one to fall and be destroyed.

Trials and the grief they bring come from many different types, sizes, colors and intensities of trials, yet they all prove a man’s fidelity, integrity, virtue and continence and lead us to growth and strength. Every kind of trouble adversity, and affliction can bring about greater fidelity and virtue.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Jas. 1:2-3

7 that the genuineness of your faith,

Like all things that God is doing, there is a purpose, and the Greek adverb *hina* is often used to express that purpose.

“*hina*... I. An adverb of place,... a. **where; in what place**. b. *in what place; whither*... II a final conjunction (for **from local direction**, indicated by the adverb, **the transition was easy to mental direction or intention**) denoting purpose and end: **to the intent that; to the end that, in order that**... it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;... “ (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)

Thus there is another purpose and goal for all these things. Not only are we working with God and joining with Him in working out His eternal purpose as vessels of honor in His great house, but there is also a personal benefit that each of us will receive. Though we may never know or easily see why these trials are necessary, that is not important. Regardless of the manifold trial we are enduring, it will always result in showing “*genuineness*.”

dokimion... 1. *the proving*... 2. **that by which something is tried or proved, a test**... in Sept. of a crucible or furnace for smelting...” (Thayer, p. 155; 1383)

The stem word is *doke* “watching” ... *dokimos* ... as an adjective both of person and object thus denotes a. “**tested in battle,**” “**reliable,**” “**trustworthy,**” b. “a man who is tested, **significant, recognized, esteemed, worthy**” ... or “an object which is tested, **genuine or valuable**” ... *dokimion* is the neuter of an adjective *dokimios* “tested,” “genuine” In the substantive form, it has the same

meaning as the older ... “means of testing,” (Kittel TDWNT, NT:1383)

Since the basic meaning of this term is primarily testing, it also has a secondary meaning of passing that test and being approved because we were tested. We have proven ourselves to be genuine and reliable. This is what God did to Abraham when He asked him to sacrifice Isaac.

*Now it came to pass after these things that **God tested Abraham**, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” 2 Then He said, “**Take now your son, your only son Isaac**, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and **offer him there as a burnt offering** on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Gen. 22:1-4*

This test started with the command and Abraham’s immediate submission, leaving the next morning and making all the preparations, but God still wanted more. He waited until the wood was laid, the son was bound, and Abraham had picked up the knife. It was not until that moment that the test was completed and God knew.

*And **Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife** to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.” 12 And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for **now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.**” Gen. 22:10-12*

God is doing similar things like this for all of us. There are many passages that reveal the same truth that Peter is describing here.

*I know also, my God, that You **test** the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. 1Chr. 29:17
The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD **tests** the hearts Pr. 17:3*

*But, O LORD of hosts, you who judge righteously, **testing** the mind and the heart, let me see Your vengeance on them, for to You I have revealed my cause. Jer. 11:20*

*I, the LORD, **search** the heart, I **test** the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. Jer. 17:10*

*The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD’S throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids **test** the sons of men. The LORD **tests** the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Ps. 11:4-5*

When like Abraham, we have successfully passed through whatever the manifold trial, we have now been tested and our character is now proven. We too will then have a genuine faith and God will know us just as He knew Abraham.

Thus when trials and tribulations enter our lives they do the same thing to our faith that a furnace does to metal. Trials put faith to the ultimate test. They show its strength and its power in the life of the one who undergoes the trials. God tolerates these trials and temptation upon His saved family because in His wisdom He knows that what they produce is worth the pain and hurt.

Just as a parent allows a child to go through a heartache in order to teach them wisdom and the ability to cope with the world while we are still around to hold them up, so also in God’s wisdom, we are allowed to suffer in order that what is valuable might come to the surface. Just like God, we as parents do not like to allow our children to go through such, but we recognize that in a sinful world they must learn to cope.

being much more precious than gold that perishes,

A proven faith is “*more precious*” than gold.

*“polutimos (polus – much, timé – honor, value), **very valuable, of great price...**” (Thayer, p. 530; 4186)*

When God sees a faith that has been proven and tested, it becomes to Him something of far greater value than gold is to us. The compound term was used of the “*pearl of great price*,” that a man was willing to sell all that he had to gain and of the “*precious ointment*” that Mary used to anoint Jesus. It describes things that in man’s eyes are of far greater value than other things. So here, for God each of us who have this proven faith are more precious to God. The proven faith of one who has endured trials and adversities is more precious than gold. We need to recognize it as such and prize it as highly as God tells us here it is worth.

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields

the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: Heb 12:11-14

The reason faith is more precious than gold is that the value of gold will perish, but the value of faith will pass through into eternity. This is another portion of the living hope than never ends. In the day of judgment any gold we might have owned will have perished and be forgotten. It will not pass the dissolving of the elements Peter revealed in his final letter (2Peter 3:8-12). God will have no further use for gold and neither will mankind. It will have fulfilled its purpose and all those who sought it so diligently will forget all about it. But the faith that has been proved to be genuine will be of the greatest value at that moment. We will be able to use it to inherit eternal life.

though it is tested by fire,

Faith is tested by the fire of trials and tribulations. That is the nature of life. What God wants us to understand is that tested faith results in something wonderful. The term “*test*” comes from the same root word as “*proven*” above.

“dokimazo... to try 1. to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not), as metals... 2. to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy.” (Thayer p. 154; 1381).

dokimazo ... to assay or test metals, to see if they be pure, ... II. of persons, to put to the test, make trial of, scrutinize, III. at Athens, to approve as fit for an office, and in Pass. to be approved as fit, Plat., etc.; 2. to examine and admit boys to the class of ... to the rights of manhood; and in Pass. to be so admitted, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1381)

dokimazo ... to try to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing, often through actual use - ‘to test, to examine, to try to determine the genuineness of, testing.’ ‘I bought five pairs of oxen and am on my way to test them out’ Luke 14:19; ‘everyone should examine himself, and then eat the bread and drink from the cup’ 1 Cor 11:28. ‘being tested severely by the troubles’ 2 Cor 8:2. ‘the testing of your faith produces endurance’ James 1:3. ‘when your fathers tested and tried (me)’ Heb 3:9. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:1381)

The three definitions above give the full scope of this term which is the verb form of the adjective “*genuineness*” above. It takes in the testing to prove something in genuine, as well as the tests at the end of each year to see if the child is ready to pass on to the next grade. It was also used of testing oxen before buying them, and the testing each of us should do before we take the Lord’s supper.

In the Old Testament silver was more common, so it was often used in a similar way.

The words of the Lord are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times. 7 You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever. Ps. 12:6-7

For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. 11 You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. 12 You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment. Ps. 66:10-12

Here it is gold that has been refined, yet even the purest gold cannot compare with the genuine faith of the Christian after it has been approved by passing through the fires of persecution and tribulation.

may be found to praise, honor, and glory

It is here that we find the reason that it is so very precious. Those who pass through their trials and remain faithful will receive praise, honor and glory. Paul spoke in a similar way in Romans. There he spoke of glory, honor, immortality and peace.

who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God. Rom. 2:6-11

“*Praise*” is one of the most coveted and enjoyed of all the things one can give to another. For a Christian to hear praise from God is worth far more than the highest price that would need to be paid. Praise is commendation and approbation,

epainos... approbation, commendation, praise...” (Thayer p 227; 1868)

It is the expression of pride and esteem offered to another for what they have been able to accomplish. We see this expressed by the Lord in one of the parables.

“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ Mt. 25:21

Yet not only will there be praise offered to those who endure to the very end whatever is laid upon them, but they will also receive honor and glory. “Honor” is the high value one ascribes to something or someone. In this case, the value is great and God will make it known by showing that what they have done has pre-eminence.

*“time...(fr. tio, to estimate, honor,...)... (a valuing, rating)... 1. a **valuing by which the price is fixed**; hence *the price* itself: of the price paid or received for a person or thing bought or sold... 2. *honor* which belongs or is shown to one: the **honor of one who outranks others, pre-eminence... veneration, ... deference, reverence...**” (Thayer, p. 624; 5092).*

This is the same term Paul used when describing the type of vessel we are based on our efforts.

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for **honor** and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for **honor**, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2Tim. 2:20-21*

That there will be honor for the uses God makes of us in this life, bestowed upon us in the life to come, is a great blessing and something we should all be longing for.

The final term “glory” is actually a synonym to the other two. It refers to a *good opinion* concerning someone, then to the “praise” and “honor” given because of that opinion. It is obvious that the reason for this good opinion is the successful endurance of trials.

*“doxa,... I. opinion, judgment, view... II ... in the sacred writings always, **good opinion concerning one, and as resulting from that, praise, honor, glory**... to give or ascribe glory to God, why and how being evident in each case from the context: thus, by declaring one’s gratitude to God for a benefit received,... so as to honor God, to promote his glory... III As a **translation of the Hebrew** in a use foreign to Greek writings... **splendor, brightness**; 1. ...of the sun, moon, stars,... used of the heavenly brightness, by which God was conceived of as surrounded,... 2. **magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace**... 3. **majesty**; a. that which belongs to God; and b. the kingly majesty which belongs to him as the supreme ruler; ... 4. a **most glorious condition, most exalted state**:... b. *the glorious condition of blessedness into which it is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter after their Savior’s return from heaven...*” (Thayer p 155-156; 1391)*

That we will share in this praise, glory, and honor is a blessing beyond anything we could ever merit or deserve. Everything we now possess, including our eternal soul is a gift of grace from God. Yet God has promised to offer praise and honor to us if we can faithfully discharge our duties under the gospel of grace, mercy and forgiveness.

at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

This final point is important because it is the reason for this being a living hope. It comes to us either at the end of the age, if we are still alive, or it will come after our death! While everything else in this world and every other hope and dream will forever draw to a close at death or the second coming, this one single hope does not! This praise honor and glory comes after death. It comes at our Lord’s return (second coming). Ponder the final conclusion Paul made about our resurrection.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58

8 whom having not seen you love.

Peter then gave these brethren, and of course, through them, all future Christians as well, a great compliment. They had never laid eyes on Jesus. Yet their faith had passed far beyond simple belief and conviction to feelings of “*agapao-love*” for Him. They felt loyalty, devotion, and submission all combined into the powerful *agape-love* that leads to making every sacrifice He needs His people to make for Him. Surely the remembrance of Thomas had not yet faded from Peter’s mind.

Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Jn 20:29

Just as God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son, and just as Jesus laid down his life for us as an act of great love, so now, we love Him and keep His commandments.

*For **God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Jn. 3:16*

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. Jn. 15:13-15

*He who **has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.** And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Jn. 14:21*

*"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.** Jn. 15:9-10*

Though now you do not see Him,

There is an interesting parallel here between what Peter said about faith under trials and faith in Jesus. They follow the same path. We do not see Jesus, but faith doesn't need to be able to see.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. Heb. 11:1-2

Of course it is this conviction that makes all the rest possible. As Jesus told Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1Jn. 5:9-13

We walk by faith and not by sight (2Cor. 5:7). With all the evidence left by the Father, (Jn. 20:30-31) they and we can walk as firmly in our convictions as if we had seen it with our own eyes.

This is what they were presently doing, and God was commending them here through Peter. **yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,**

The conviction of their faith led them to the feelings of great joy which were the foundation of the power described above.

*who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this **you greatly rejoice**, 1Pet. 1:5-6*

The joy described there now reaches the level where it can't even be expressed.

*aneklaeto ... (alpha privative and eklaleo **unspeakable**: 1 Peter 1:8 (to which **words are inadequate**). (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:412*

*aneklaeto , adj. from the privative "a" (1), without, and eklaléœ (1583), to utter. **Unutterable, inexpressible** (1 Peter 1:8). (Complete Word Study Dictionary, NT:412)*

The joy simply passed higher than the words needed to express it. It is too high, too great, and can't be fully expressed in words. Though we ought to try!

I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. Ps 9:1-2

Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. 5 For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning. Ps 30:4-5

Could Peter say this about us who are alive today? Do we have that depth of faith? Does our own belief in the joy, glory, honor, praise, and hope set before us lead to such feelings as Peter offered here. The term *rejoice* is the same term as used in verse 6. They were leaping for joy, here, for the sake of emphasis, the Spirit added another term for "joy."

*"chara... joy, gladness; ... b. by meton. **the cause or occasion of joy...**" (Thayer, p. 664-665; 5479)*

*"chara ... **joy, delight**" (akin to *chairō*, "to rejoice"), ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:5479)*

They rejoiced! Peter rejoiced! They were filled with a joy so great, so powerful, so rich and so full that it was unspeakable. Words could not describe it. It is full of magnificent splendor and brightness. So awesomely bright and glorious that it could not be described.

9 receiving the end of your faith –

This is not the common word for "receive." It's root meaning in the active voice is that of bearing or carrying something. When they used the middle voice (acting with personal interest or in

reference to oneself), it takes on the idea of bearing or taking something from someone else into their own possession. As Vine noted, it was used most of the time when God's people received something from God to keep for themselves. Thus when standing in judgment we will receive what was done in the body (good or bad). It is also used of receiving "the promise," "the end result of our faith," and "a crown of glory." These things are now in God's possession, but will be delivered to us and we will carry them away after the judgment.

komizo ... denotes "to bear, carry," e. g., Luke 7:37; in the middle voice, "to bear for oneself," hence (a) "to receive," Heb 10:36; 11:13 (in the best texts; some have *lambano*, No. 1), 39; 9; 5:4; in some texts in 2 Peter 2:13 (in the best mss. *adikeomai*, "suffering wrong," RV); (b) "to receive back, recover," Matt 25:27; Heb 11:19; metaphorically, of requital, 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:25, of "receiving back again" by the believer at the judgment seat of Christ hereafter, for wrong done in this life Eph. 6:8, of "receiving," on the same occasion, "whatsoever good thing each one doeth,..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:2865)

What they would receive is the "end" of their faith. This is a very comprehensive term for the end, limit or purpose. In its use here, it carries the idea of the termination, goal or purpose of our faith. We have a faith that is going to cost us many things. The persecutions and trials of this life, along with the sacrifices we must make to serve God properly, and the battles we fight to destroy the lusts we grew to love before we gained this faith, are all borne so we can reach this termination and end. This is the destination, purpose and end result of our faith.

"telos,... 1. **end**, i.e. a. **termination, the limit** at which a thing ceases to be... b. **the end** i.e. **the last in any succession or series**... c. **that by which a thing is finished, its close, issue**... d... **the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose** I Tim. 1:5..." (Thayer, p. 619-620; 5056)

"telos ... the **fulfilment or completion of anything**, Lat. effectus, i.e. its **consummation, issue, result, end**, ... its issue, ... to put a finish to a thing, i.e. give it effect, ... one's prayers are accomplished, ... to have reached the end, to be finished or ready, ... II. the end proposed, chief matter, ... 2. the end of action, , the chief good, Cicero's finis bonorum, 3. perfection, full age, ... man's full age, manhood, ... to be grown up, ... 4. a final decision, determination, ... 5. the prize at games, Pind. ..." (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:5056)

– the salvation of your souls.

There are so many different figures and images to describe this salvation In figures, this is the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price. It is why "to die is gain," and to "depart and be with Christ is very far better." It is *the resurrection from the dead and the second coming of Christ*. It is the *completed judgment with the verdict of "well done good and faithful servant."* It is the *glory that can't be compared to the sufferings, "seeing Him as He is and being like him as He conforms our lowly body to His glorious body."* It is the *victory that overcomes the world, and the new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells*. These promises are enough to cause one to be in awe of what a great day the revelation of Jesus Christ will be when we really understand exactly what we will receive. The more we understand about this, the greater joy and excitement we will have and the more ability we will have to prepare for it. The completion of our faith is not to be found in the fringe benefits that some Christians feel are so important. We may or may not in the providence of God gain a happier life here. Not always will our faith bring enhancements to this life. It can and often does if other factors do not intervene, but just as our faith has the potential to make our lives here so much richer, it also has the same potential to destroy it. The only real factor are the times we live in and the tolerance of the wicked. But whatever it might lead to here, its main goal is the salvation of our souls.

you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory

**Even though now for a little while, if the need arises
You have been grieved by various trials,
So that proven genuineness of your faith, much more precious than gold
May be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
Receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.**

10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully,

The amazing nature of these promises was not only enough to motivate and make them excited, but this same salvation had done the same thing for the prophets who wrote the Old Testament Scriptures. This builds on James words:

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord— that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. Jas. 5:10-11

Peter now explained one of the reasons why they were able to endure. They saw dimly, through their prophecies, the same salvation now received by Christians under the New Covenant. The preposition “of” is “peri” from which we get perimeter, or periscope. It takes salvation and places it into their “circle of concern.” Everything within the circle of salvation is what their interest and attention revolved around.

“peri... prep., joined in the N. T. with the gen. and the acc. ... and indicating that the person or thing relative to which an act or state is predicated is **as it were encompassed by this act or state**; Lat. **circum, circa; around, about...** I. with the GENITIVE it denotes **that around which an act or state revolves**; *about, concerning, as touching, etc...* a. *about concerning...* after verbs of speaking, teaching, writing, etc. ...after verbs of hearing knowing, ascertaining,... after verbs of thinking, deciding, supposing, doubting, etc. ... b. *as respects* [A. V. often (as) touching]... *with regard to, in reference to...* gg. at the beginning of sentences, *concerning, as to...* “ (Thayer, p. 502; 4012)

This salvation was the perimeter in which the prophets sought and searched and inquired diligently. They were very interested in this salvation. Partly because it was their salvation too, partly because it is in intensely interesting subject. The OT prophets sought and searched about these things. Jesus spoke of this also.

“But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Mt 13:16-17

Although they didn’t see all of it, they were very concerned and interested in it and they remained laser focused on it.

It is important not to pass over the term “this” salvation. It is a relative pronoun that always refers back to the previous verb, substantive (noun) or preposition. In this case, the Holy Spirit wanted it clearly understood that the salvation they were interested in is the same salvation we enjoy.

hos, he, ho... II. **a relative pronoun who, which, what**; 1. in the common construction, according to which the relative agrees as respects its gender with the noun or pronoun which is its antecedent, but as respects case is governed by its own verb, or by a substantive, or by a preposition: . . . a. refers to nouns of the masculine and the feminine gender, and to plurals, when *that which* is denoted by these nouns is regarded as a thing...” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, 454-456 3739)

hos, he, ho... **a relative reference to any entity, event, or state, either occurring overtly in the immediate context or clearly implied in the discourse or setting** - ‘who, which, what, the one who, that which.’ ‘the star which they saw’ Matt 2:9; ; ‘and who is this concerning whom I heard these things?’ Luke 9:9...” (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:3739)

“*This salvation*” is “*the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.*” This is the subject of what they were inquiring and searching carefully. These are terms made more intensive by the preposition that is placed before it. It’s root is to seek and search, but with “out” placed in front of it, it is intensified as searching diligently and leaving no stone unturned, seeking in order to find or obtain it.

ekzeteo contracted *ekzeto* ... **from ek (1537), out, or an intensive and zetéeœ** ... (2212), to seek, to **seek out, search diligently** for anything lost (Sept.: Ezek 34:10,11,12). In the NT used metaphorically, to seek in order to obtain (Heb 12:17; Sept.: 1 Kings 14:5; Ps 122:9; Mic 6:8) or know (1 Peter 1:10; Sept.: Ps 44:21). **To seek diligently or earnestly after**, namely God, with a sincere and earnest desire to obtain His favor (Acts 15:17; Rom 3:11; Heb 11:6). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1567)

ekzeteo ... to **exert considerable effort and care in learning something** - 'to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination.' 'so all other people will seek the Lord' Acts 15:17. 'it was concerning this salvation that the prophets made a careful search and investigation' 1 Peter 1:10. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT: 1567)

The effort made is "to exert effort and care in learning something" and "to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination." This was not a casual search, but an intensive one as set forth in Hebrews:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Heb 11:6

Added to this intensive and extensive search, is a synonym that means the same thing. This time it is a search like a dog sniffing out food, police investigating a robbery, or investigate any matter in the legal sense. Again, the intensive "out" is added. In this way, God searches the heart, the Spirit searches the deep things of God, and the prophets searched and sought diligently. This is investigation searching, examining, and seeking out.

ereunao, exereunao, ... The **general meaning of ereunao is to "search after," both literally and figurative** It is first used a. **of animals** in the sense of "to sniff out" with the nose, It is then used b. **of men** in the sense of "to search" (esp. of houses or possessions, e.g., Aristot. Oec., II, p. 1351 b, 27), ... **sometimes synonymous with phoran in the sense of investigating a robbery** (Plat. Leg., XII, 954 b). It then comes to mean c. "to investigate a matter," esp. in the legal sense, though also in the more general sense of enquiry In the LXX we find both *ereunao* and *exereunao* ... in the various senses ... "to investigate," "to search," or "to seek out" (Kittel, TDWNT; NT:2045)

(1) eraunao or ereunao, ... "to search, examine," is used (a) of **God, as "searching" the heart,** Rom 8:27; (b) of **Christ, similarly, Rev 2:23; © of the Holy Spirit, as "searching" all things,** 1 Cor 2:10, acting in the spirit of the believer; (d) of **the OT prophets, as "searching" their own writings** concerning matters foretold of Christ, testified by the Spirit of Christ in them, 1Pet 1:11 (cf. No. 2); (e) of the Jews, as commanded by the Lord to "search" the Scriptures, John 5:39, *exeraunao* a strengthened form of **No. 1** (*ek*, or *ex*, "out"), "to search out," is used in 1 Peter 1:10, "searched diligently"; (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1830)

These words are used by the Holy Spirit to reveal the extent and strength of the prophets emotions and desires to understand. They sought out from every angle, they investigated and scrutinized. They searched out anxiously and diligently, they pondered and meditated over it. They wanted to understand what it was they were proclaiming.

This also gives us an indication of the limitations of inspiration. The Scriptures are clear that inspiration gave them the ability to preach it in a perfectly accurate manner.

"no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." 2Pet. 1:21

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Cor. 2:12-14

how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), Eph. 3:3-5

From the mind of the Spirit to the mind, mouth and hand of man is perfectly guided with no input from man's mind. But though by reading we can get Paul's and their understanding, that is as far as it went. They had no more insight into what it meant than we do when we read it. They could preach it perfectly, write it perfectly, but then they had to seek and search to understand. Inspiration did not give them any greater insight into its meaning. They had the same responsibilities to learn, comprehend and master it as those to whom they were preaching.

who prophesied

While only a minor role in their day, the Messianic prophecies have taken center stage after the Law was done away and the nations they had prophesied against had all been destroyed just as God had revealed. Most of the work of these prophets had become obsolete exactly as the Holy Spirit revealed:

In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:13

Overnight the vast majority of the writings of these prophets became obsolete, and that system

is ready to vanish away. The New Testament has a lot to say about the purpose now for these writings.

Written for our Learning. Rom. 15:4

Make the Man of God Complete 2Tim. 3:15-18

Written for our Admonition 1Cor. 10:11;

A Great Cloud of Witnesses Heb. 11-12

Make us wise to Salvation 2Tim. 3:15-18

Do Well to Take Heed. 2Pet. 19-20

Although the work these prophets did was wonderful in their day. Today, they are only for learning and example. **Only** the Messianic prophecies have any impact on those under the New Covenant.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. 2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. 3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. Gal 5:1-5

Their teachings on the Sabbath, Priesthood, Sacrifices, etc. are no longer compatible with the teachings of Christ. If we seek to continue to using them, we will become “*severed from Christ*” and “*fall from grace.*”

Hence the single most important element of the writings of the prophets for us today are those obscure passages that The Spirit now revealed these prophets were focused on, yet never fully understood. We call them the Messianic Prophecies because they foretold of the sufferings of the coming King and the glories that would result from them.

The primary duty of these prophets was to the people of their day. God raised them up to condemn the evil things that were being done at that time. They sought to lead those to whom they preached to repent. Yet God had given them another duty, one which they enjoyed, yet also evidently gave them great perplexity. From time to time God gave them small selected pieces of information about the future. Abraham was told that not only would he be blessed in having a nation, but at some time in the future, all nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed. How many prophets sought and searched for the meaning of that verse? Moses spoke of another lawgiver like him, how many sought and searched and pondered that verse? Why would they need another lawgiver? Then Jeremiah answered that question when he spoke of a new law and covenant that would replace the old. Yet that too created more questions as the sought and searched to determine more.

David spoke many things about the one who was to come and the kingdom He would establish. With the coming of Isaiah, great, specific, yet seemingly contradictory things were revealed. How Isaiah must have pondered and wondered at the things he revealed. So while the prophets main duty was to get repentance of from the evil people they were sent, yet their minds went out to the times in the far distance future as they meditated upon their own prophecies concerning this future.

of the grace that would come to you,

The Holy Spirit summed up all Messianic prophecies with the phrase “*the grace that would come to you.*” Clearly these prophecies had nothing to do with the law that was done away at the cross, or the needs of the people in the day they were prophesying. They were speaking about the salvation and the grace that would be given to those under the New Covenant and under the authority of Christ. The “*grace that should come unto you*” is a synonym for the salvation Peter described in the first few verses.

11 searching what, or what manner of time,

It is fascinating that the Holy Spirit would give us such insight into the minds of these great men. No where else in the Bible do we have such information offered. It is here made clear that the meditations of these prophets often went to the period of time Peter and those Christians he wrote were living. Peter repeated the word “*searching*” from the previous verse. This time he drops the intensive preposition “*ek - out*” and just used the verb. Yet, even without the intensifier, it is still the same basic concept. They were still “*searching*” in the sense of “*sniffing out,*” “*searching in a legal sense*” “*investigating*” and “*seeking*”

The Spirit now reveals that the purpose of this search had to do with time. Since everything revolves around this “*time*” we will seek to fully understand the term He chose.

Normally, when we think of time we think of duration. That is what the term *chronos* was

generally used for: "A length of time or extent of time." That is not the word that is used here. This term emphasizes a time of opportunity or a proper time. It is well captured in the book of Ecclesiastes:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; Eccl 3:1-2

These prophets were considering a time very different from their own. The season in which all the things they were prophesying about would occur.

kairos... III. of Time, the right point of time, **the proper time or season of action**, the exact or critical time, Lat. *opportunitas*, ... to be in season, ... 2. adverbial usages, ... **in season, at the right time, opportune**, ... IV. advantage, profit, fruit, ... (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:2540)

"*kairos*... 2. **a measure of time**; a larger or smaller portion of time; hence a. univ. **a fixed and definite time**... b. **opportune or seasonable time**... c. the right time... d. a (limited) *period of time*... e. as often in Grk. writ., ... is equiv. to what time brings, the state of the times, the things and events of time..." (Thayer, p. 318-319; 2540)

chronos [5550], *kairos* [2540]. ... **Several times in the N. T. but always in the plural, *chronoi* and *kairoi* are found together** (Acts 1:7; 1 Thess 5:1); ... ***chronos* is time, contemplated simply as such; the succession of moments** (Matt 25:19; Rev 10:6; Heb 4:7); ... ***kairos*, derived from *keiro*, as 'tempus' from 'temno,' is time as it brings forth its several births; thus *kairos* ...** (Matt 13:30); (Mark 11:13); Christ died *kata kairon* (Rom 5:6); and above all compare, as constituting a miniature essay on the word, Eccl 3:1-8: ... ***chronos*, it will thus appear, embraces all possible *kairoi*, and, being the larger, more inclusive term, may be often used where *kairos* would have been equally suitable, though not the converse; ... *chronou* (Gal 4:4), the fulness, or the ripeness, of the time for the manifestation of the Son of God, where we should before have rather expected *kairou* ...** From what has been said, it will appear that when the Apostles ask the Lord, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" and He makes answer, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons" (Acts 1:6,7), 'the times' (*chronoi*) are, in Augustine's words, 'ipsa spatia temporum,' and these contemplated merely **under the aspect of their duration**, over which the Church's history should extend; but 'the seasons' (*kairoi*) are **the joints or articulations in these times, the critical epoch-making periods fore-ordained of God** (*kairoi protetagmenoi*, Acts 17:26; ... when all that has been slowly, and often without observation, ripening through long ages is mature and comes to the birth in grand decisive events, which constitute at once the close of one period and the commencement of another. Such, for example, was the passing away with a great noise of the old Jewish dispensation; (Trench's Synonyms of the NT)

The NASB actually used *times* and *epochs*. An epoch is a period of time within time where momentous things happen. Daniel captured this well, as did Jesus and Paul. God holds both in His hands. Daniel places into the concepts of epochs the removal of kings and establishment of kings.

*Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. 21 "And it is **He who changes the times and the epochs**; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. Dan 2:20-22*

*"Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "**It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; Acts 1:6-8** Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 1Th. 5:1-2*

We know very little about these things ourselves. But the prophets revealed much about the epoch that was by them called "*the last*" or "*latter days*." This was the moment in time that God selected that would become this pivotal moment. It was this epoch or season that the prophets were focused upon.

Their thoughts, meditations and inquiries about this epoch and season revolved around two things. The first is described as the "*what*" of this season. Though what is a single word in English here, it is a prepositional phrase (*eis tina*). Literally "*into what season*" "*entrance into what epoch*," "*purpose of what time*," "*intent of what portion of time*" Clearly, the preposition bends the "*what*" into purpose, entrance, intent.

eis,... a Prep. governing the Accusative, and denoting **entrance into**, or **direction** and **limit**: *into*, *to*, *towards*, *for*, *among*. It is used II. *eis* after words indicating motion or direction or end; 3. it denotes the **end**; and a. the end to which a thing reaches or extends, i.e. **measure** or **degree**... b. the end which a thing is adapted to attain... c. the end which one has in view, i.e. **object**, **purpose**;... d. the end by which a thing is completed, i.e. **the result or effect**... (Thayer, p. 183-186; 1519).

So these prophets were first of all searching and inquiring diligently into the means of entrance, the purpose and intent of this time. What purpose and intent did this time signify. What would result from it, what would be the outcome? Second, the Spirit spoke of their search into the “*manner*” of time.

poios... “**of what sort**,” is translated “**by what manner** of (death)” in John 21:19, RV, (KJV, “by what”); in Acts 7:49, “what manner of (house)”; Rom 3:27, “what manner of law”; 1 Cor 15:35, “what manner of body.” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:4169)

poios... **interrogative pron.** corresponding to *hoios* (3634), such as, **of what sort, which kind**, and *toios*, such as. What, **of what kind or sort**. (I) Particularly (Mark 4:30; Luke 6:33,34; 24:19; John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Acts 7:49; Rom 3:27; 1 Cor 15:35; James 4:14; 1 Peter 1:11; 2:20). (Word Study Dictionary: NT:4169)

It is clear that these two terms sum up about everything one could think of about this period of time that would begin after Jesus died and the kingdom and new covenant were established. What kind, intent, purpose, manner, sort and nature would this epoch or season be like? They had revealed that the Old Law was going to end, and that a new lawgiver was going to come. They had revealed that He would be shepherd who as king and priest would sit on David’s throne. They had revealed that each man would be under his vine and fig tree, that the tabernacle of David would be rebuilt. But they did not know what it all signified. They didn’t know when. Could it possibly happen before I die? Will my children see it? Is it going to come within the next hundred years? They would ponder this. Then when they had exhausted this line of reasoning with whatever conclusion they had come to, they would also meditate upon the kind or quality of time that such a thing might occur in. What kind of a world will that be? What kind of people will dwell in it? How will the relationship with God have changed when such forgiveness and blessings are freely available to all?

We are doing exactly the same thing with the second coming of Christ and the glories that will follow it. So it isn’t hard to imagine what they were doing. What is interesting is that some day, we will be in that kingdom and we will be looking back just as they are now to see just how far off they really were.

the Spirit of Christ who was in them

Many questions have arisen over this construction here. Is this Christ revealing things to the prophets of the Old Covenant? Or is this the Holy Spirit given another title? In Rom. 8:9 and Gen. 1:2, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God.

*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God** was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then **God** said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. Gen. 1:2-4*

*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed **the Spirit of God** dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he is not His. 10 And if **Christ** is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the **Spirit of Him** who raised **Jesus** from the dead dwells in you, He who raised **Christ** from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through **His Spirit** who dwells in you. Rom 8:9-11*

In these two places there can be little doubt that it refers the third person of the Godhead even though it refers to him as The Spirit of God. We also see them all present at Jesus baptism, and again in our baptism.

*When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that **Jesus** also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the **Holy Spirit** descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a **voice came from heaven** which said, “**You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.**” Lk. 3:21-22*

*And **Jesus** came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to **Me** in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Mt. 28:18-20*

In Gal 4:6 He is called the Spirit of His Son, which again can not successfully be argued against as its parallel passage in Rom 8:9 calls him the Spirit of God.

God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Gal. 4:4-7

Thus in the above it is evident that the Holy Spirit is given names which tie Him to God the Father and to the Word who became flesh and became Jesus Christ the Son. Does this distinction continue here? Is "*Spirit of Christ*" also the Holy Spirit here. It is a conclusion that is strongly favored, but still cannot be stated with certainty, because this is part of God's ways that are not man's ways, and the secret things belong to God.

The strongest support is due to the fact that the Holy Spirit is the one who is consistently given the role of revealing God's word. In the role of revealing truth, the Holy Spirit is primarily involved.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Jn. 14:26

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. Jn. 15:26

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. Jn. 16:12-13

Note that He is sent both by the Father (14:26) and Jesus (15:26). Jesus revealed clearly that it would be the Holy Spirit who would complete their training and education, but that the Father would be sending the Spirit in His name, and that He would be sending the Spirit. For these reasons, it seems best to understand the "*Spirit of Christ*" here in the same way the we understand the "*Spirit of God*," although either way it works out to the same point. These prophets were inspired.

was indicating when He testified beforehand

There are two separate thoughts here attributed to the Spirit of Christ. First, He was "*indicating*" these things to the prophets. This is a term often used to "*to make something known by making evident what was either unknown before or what may have been difficult to understand.*" The Spirit in His revelations, sought "*to make evident, plain or clear,*" "*to show,*" "*to declare,*" "*to impart,*" "*to demonstrate*" these truths.

deloo ... a: to make something known by making evident what was either unknown before or what may have been difficult to understand - 'to make known, to make plain, to reveal.' 'the day will make it clearly known' 1 Cor 3:13; (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1213

deloo, deloun is common in Gk. (and the papyri) for "**to make evident, plain or clear,**" "**to show,**" "**to declare,**" "**to impart,**" "**to demonstrate.**" In Jewish and Christian writings it is first used in the ordinary secular sense of "to indicate," "to impart," e.g., Josh 4:7; ... In arguments we often find the phrase *delon hoti* 1 Cor 15:27; Gal 3:11; 1 Tim 6:7 similarly we have *delon poiein* (Mt. 26:73), "to make evident," ... In the NT *deloun* is less common than *apokaluptein* and *phaneroun*, which are used especially for the active and above all the eschatological revelation of God, whether still future or fulfilled and being fulfilled in Christ and the Gospel. *deloun* is used for the (future) divine act of revelation only in 1 Cor 3:13: ... *deloun* is more commonly used for the instruction given by the divine *pneuma* (whether in the old-time prophets, 1 Peter 1:11 or in the Scriptures, Heb 9:8; 12:21; (Kittel TDWNT, NT:1213)

The Spirit was also "testifying beforehand." This is the only time in the New Testament this word is used. It is a compound word made up of the root *matureo* testify or witness (we get *martyr* from it). To the root is added the preposition "*before.*" So it simply means to testify and bear witness before it happened. This is the power only the Godhead possesses.

promarturomai pró (4253), before, and *martúromai* (3143), to witness. To witness or testify or declare beforehand (1 Peter 1:11). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT 4303)

While the Holy Spirit was making things known and testifying beforehand, they were searching and inquiring diligently seeking to understand it. Since they were revealing things which they could not fully understand, it is obvious and presents a powerful testimony that they had no real control over what they were writing. It was not their own wisdom. Their own revelations became

their meditations in the night. It is interesting to consider that even with inspiration, they had to go home and do the same things with their writings which we have to do today.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:19-21

The Spirit of Christ was in them, and he was indicating something. As noted above, “*deloo*” describes something that is being “*made known*” or “*declared*.” The Spirit of Christ “*gave them to understand*.” While testifying beforehand is a single Greek term meaning “*to make known by prediction*.” Thus the Holy Spirit indicated and made known by prediction, and they sought and searched to figure out what He meant. Again, inspiration only revealed truth, it did not convey to the inspired man any better ability of understanding it, than we have today.

“*Testifying beforehand*” is an important foundation for what follows. These were testimonies and witnesses that had nothing to do with the times these men were living. Throughout the book of Acts, these scriptures formed the heart of the gospel. They testified to the death, burial and resurrection of the Christ, and the apostles used them powerfully.

While testimony after events happen is the only quality of testimony which the courts of our land will accept today. It is evident that God’s testimony was just as accurate though given 100’s or 1,000’s of years before. The power of this testimony being 100% accurate should be very powerful to each of us. What Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and others did, is not possible for mere men to do.

Therefore the testimony of David, many centuries old was just as powerful for the Jews in that first sermon as the testimony of the apostles who were eyewitnesses. Only the time frame was different. Peter did it after and they did it before. It strengthens the faith of all when they look at it in this way.

the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

The sufferings of the anointed Messiah is one of the clearest yet most confusing aspect of Old Testament prophecy. Beginning with Genesis 3:15 which revealed that his heel would be bruised and continuing through to its highest degree of specifics in Isaiah 53, the suffering Messiah is spoken of. Many of the Psalms speak of His suffering, beatings, and scorn. There must have been great confusion in the minds of these prophets, when at one moment they spoke of the Messiah of His great dignity and stature and the next moment spoke of His death. He was to be Immanuel (God is with us) (Isa. 7:14). He was “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”, and He was to sit on the throne of David for time without end. (Isa 9:6-7). Imagine the difficulty Isaiah had trying to harmonize what he had revealed in these passages with what was said in (Isa. 52-53). He will suffer a horrible death and God will be pleased to see it, yet he is to be Deity and dwell on the throne forever. Truly they must have sought and searched diligently!

The glories which would follow them includes the eternal kingdom which would become a mighty mountain (Dan. 2:44) into which all nations would flow (Isa. 2:2-4) which would have a divine king (Isa. 9:6-7), who would have the spirit of Jehovah resting upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah (Isa. 11:1-2).

In this kingdom the wolf will dwell with the lamb (Isa 11:6-9); and the fallen tabernacle of David would be rebuilt, where the plowman would overtake the reaper, and the captivity of the people would be brought back. (Amos 9:11-14). A time when the swords would be beaten into plow shears and the spears pruning hooks. (Mic. 4:1-4). On and on the glorious prophecies of the glorious period of time following the sufferings of Christ.

One of the interesting side points of this is all of these Old Testament prophecies must now be incorporated into the New Testament doctrine. The apostles did this for us in all the quotations they made in their letters and sermons. But now we learn that all the things God promised to His people in prophecy is also written for us. It is testimony beforehand, given to clarify and reveal many different things. Consider as one example the promises in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that there would be good shepherds to guide the flock (Jer. 23:1-6; Ezek. 34), when the seed of David

took His throne again (Jesus). It is therefore the duty of men today who qualify and are appointed as elders and shepherds to fulfill these promises God gave to His people.

12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves,

While they were seeking and searching diligently, the revelations continued and it became quite apparent that this was not going to happen in their lifetime. It was going to happen so far in the future that it could not really have any bearing upon them at all except for the comfort it gave to them that such a time was coming for others. It became evident to their minds that the purpose of these revelations had to do with those who would follow after them.

The Spirit at some point revealed this to them. It too had been hidden, and at the right moment, it too was revealed to them. We are not told how this was done. It is evident that there are some things that the Holy Spirit revealed to them that were not recorded in the written text. There is no such verse in the Old Testament. But it was “*revealed*” to them.

“apokalupto... 1. prop. to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; to disclose, make bare:... 2. Metaph. to make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown; a. pass. of any method whatever by which something before unknown becomes evident... e. of persons, previously concealed, making their appearance in public... “ (Thayer, p. 62; 601)

The Holy Spirit revealed this (perhaps to each of them). This much He did reveal. He uncovered and made it bare. He determined “*to make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown*” that the purpose of these revelations was not for them. The term “*that*” is often used to identify and explain exactly what it was that was revealed: “*that, namely, that is, namely that.*” What was revealed to them is summed up by this term. It is the substance and content of the revelation, though it may not have been worded exactly that way to each of them this was the gist and essence of the revelation.

hoti ... markers of identificational and explanatory clauses - ‘that, namely, that is, namely that.’ ... ‘this is the judgment, namely, that the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light’ John 3:19; ‘this is the witness; namely, that God has given us eternal life’ 1 John 5:11. ‘no one has greater love than this; namely, that he gives his life on behalf of his friends’ John 15:13; (Lou & Nida (Greek-English Lexicon NT:3754(
“hoti... I. the substance or contents (of a statement), that; 1. joined to verbs of saying and declaring... II the reason why anything is said to be or to be done, because, since, for that, for, (a causal conjunct. ...)... a. it is added to a speaker’s words to show what ground he gives for his opinion;... b. hoti makes reference to some word or words that precede or immediately follow it...”
(Thayer p 458-460; 3754)

It was not for them, nor for their benefit. This portion of Scripture had nothing to do with that age. It was not for them or for those they were preaching to. The portion of Scripture we call Messianic prophecies, that the apostles used to prove the gospel were not revealed for the benefit of these prophets or those living in their day. They are actually more New Testament doctrine than Old Testament doctrine,. Hence they were not done away at the cross as the rest of the Old Covenant.

but to us they were ministering

All the work they were doing in prophesying for the future was not for them nor for the people of that day. he explained the true purpose of all prophecies that were given to reveal the “*last days.*” The reality was that it had not been revealed for them, “*but - “adversative, distinctive, disjunctive,”* to us

“de ... but: conjunctive Particle, with adversative force: it commonly answers to “mein” and may often be rendered by while, whereas, on the other hand, v. -but mein is often omitted, de being used merely to pass on from one thing to another.” (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1161)

“de... a particle adversative, distinctive, disjunctive, but, moreover... used 1. univ. by way of opposition and distinction; it is added to statements opposite to a preceding statement...” (Thayer, p. 126; 1161)

Although these prophets wanted to know about these prophecies, the Holy Spirit revealed that they had not been revealed for them or for those in that age and under that covenant. Instead of being for the prophets who revealed them or the people they revealed them to, the exact opposite was the case. They were “*ministering*” to us. This is same term that is translated “*deacon*” and is used many times in the NT for a personal service, like serving tables. Thus the OT prophets were serving us in a very personal way by giving us these prophecies. Though we

had not yet been born, this was a great service they had done for us.

The original frame of reference for the use of the entire word group of the *diakon-* stem in secular Greek was that of **table service**. The basic meaning of the verb, correspondingly, was **wait on tables**. (Exegetical Dictionary NT)

In secular Gk. *diakoneo*, which is first found in Herodotus and is never too common, means a. “**to wait at table**”: ... In Greek eyes serving is not very dignified. Ruling and not serving is proper to a man... The formula of the sophist: “How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?” expresses the basic Greek attitude (Kittel TDWNT NT:1247)

“*diakoneo*... to be a servant, attendant, domestic; to serve, wait upon; ... 1. univ. ... **to minister to one; render ministering offices to**... Pass. to be served, ministered unto... 2. to wait at table and offer food and drink to the guests... 3. to minister l. e. to supply food and the necessaries of life:... 4. with the acc. to minister l. e. attend to, anything, that may serve another’s interests... to serve as deacons... to minister a thing unto one, to serve one with or by supplying any thing...” (Thayer, p. 137; 1247)

“Fundamental to an understanding of *diakoneo* in all its uses is the fact that it has an original concrete sense which is still echoed in its figurative meanings. In secular Greek *diakoneo* which is first found in Herodotus and is never too common, means a. “**To wait at table**”;... b. Rather more generally it **means”to provide or care for”**... in this sense it is often used of the work of women... On the basis of these original senses, it has c. The comprehensive meaning “to serve,” (Kittel, TDWNT, Vol 2 p. 82)

How happy this made these prophets is left in obscurity. They were serving those who would receive the blessings of their work.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Heb. 11:39

They did not receive the revelation just as they did not receive the promises themselves. God wanted us all to have an unity and oneness in this.

the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--

Peter now brings in the labor which the Apostles and prophets of the New Covenant had expended. What Moses started in Gen 3:15, and continued through to Deuteronomy where he promised a new lawgiver and was then supplemented by all the prophets who foretold of these days.

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:24

They laid the groundwork, they foretold of the parameters and guidelines. Everything that Peter along with the rest of the apostles and prophets of the New Covenant, revealed fit perfectly into what those who lived before them had foretold. But it was left to the apostles to put it all together. The Spirit completed the revelation given to these prophets in the Old Testament. That which the OT prophets sought was finally revealed under the New Covenant. They used them to reveal as much of the mystery as God intends to reveal at this time.

*how that **by revelation He made known to me the mystery** (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in **other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets**: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and **to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ**; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Eph. 3:3-11*

*Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may **be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior**, 2Pet. 3:1-3*

Yet everything they were preaching in the gospel had already been touched on in general by those who had lived before. This is exactly what Paul said about all his preaching. **NOTHING**

Paul preached was different from what these prophets had revealed.

*Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, **saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come** — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23*

It was for this reason that the Bereans could go home and search their Scriptures (the Old Covenant) to see whether what Paul was preaching was true.

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. Acts 17:11-12

things which angels desire to look into.

It appears from this verse that perhaps the angels were in the same position as these Old Testament prophets. They too had the “*desire*” to see these things. This is one of the strongest emotions man possesses and which now is ascribed to angels.

*“epithumeo... prop. to keep the thumos turned upon a thing, hence [cf. our to **set one’s heart upon**] to have a desire for, **long for**; absol. to desire [A. V.] **to lust after, covet**, of those who seek things forbidden ...” (Thayer, p. 238; 1937)*

*“thumos,... (fr. *thuo* to rush along or on, be in a heat, breathe violently; ... accordingly it **signifies both the spirit panting as it were in the body, and the rage with which the man pants and swells**)... In the N.T. 1. *passion, angry heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again, ... 2. glow, ardor...*” (Thayer, p. 293; 2372)*

That this term for lust has a strong negative component is undeniable. But that it also has a good use is just as clear. Jesus used it in the gospels to describe how the prophets and wise men felt about the same thing the angels here wanted.

*“for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men **desired** to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Mt 13:17*

Jesus felt it in regard to eating the final pass over with his disciples:

*Then He said to them, “With **fervent desire** I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; Luke 22:15*

And Paul toward going to be with Christ when this life is over.

*For I am hard pressed between the two, having a **desire** to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Phil 1:23*

This is how the angels felt about what the Old Testament prophets were revealing. This brings up a host of questions that we only have a few Scriptures to draw the answers from. First, we now understand that the angels did not know everything about God’s plans for mankind. What God did reveal and when He did it is part of the “*secret things*” that belong to God.

*and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which **from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God** who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now **the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Eph. 3:9-10***

*the mystery which **has been hidden from ages and from generations**, but now has been revealed to His saints. Col 1:26*

*Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to **the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26** but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— Rom 16:25-26*

In these passages it is clearly stated that God’s plans were hidden and kept secret until they were fully revealed. That revelation began with the “*prophetic scriptures*,” (the ones Peter has described here) and concluded with the full disclosure through the gospel preached by the apostles and prophets.

But were the angels kept in complete darkness. That is perhaps too strong a conclusion for what is here stated. Peter simply revealed that they desired to look into it. Either this means the angels were also kept in the darkness on all this and could only get their information as these prophets themselves revealed them, Peter is simply affirming in a general way that these

revelations were very interesting to them.

Either way, it ought to have an impact upon us. We hold within our hands the eternal purpose of God. It is the most important document in existence. We should be even more interested in understanding it as these angels since we have so much more to gain from it. Yet we are here informed that the angels keep their “*thumos*” turned toward these things. They have an intense and strong desire to “look” into these things. This is a very interesting term that needs more than one definition to get a full and clear picture.

“*parakupto*... **to stoop to... a thing in order to look at it; to look at with the head bowed forwards; to look into with the body bent; to stoop and look into...** metaph. *to look carefully into, inspect curiously*... of one who would become acquainted with something...” (Thayer, p. 484; 3879)

“*parakupto*... b ‘to stoop and look into,’ 24.13) to **make considerable effort in order to try to find out something** - ‘to try to learn, to desire to learn.’ ... ‘things which (even) the angels desire to learn about’ 1 Peter 1:12. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:3879)

parakupto lit. and primarily, “**to stoop sideways**” *para*, “**aside,**” *kupto*, “**to bend forward**”), denotes “to stoop to look into,” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT: 3879)

When speaking of mankind, this is a look that begins with great intensity and desire to see and ends with the intention to make whatever changes are necessary based on what is seen. It is like being in the dark and hearing a noise that doesn’t fit with the circumstances and may require fight or flight. Whenever we are hearing God’s word there is the possibility that something will be heard that requires immediate changes in order to avoid great danger. So this is not just a casual look, it is intense, with the body bent and stooped, prepared to make instant corrections depending on what is seen.

It can also be the curious look at something that could bring great reward. When we see something that might be very valuable, we stop and look at it from every angle to get the best possible perspective.

Imagine the angels stooping in order to look at, look into with the body bent, to stoop and look into. They were “*looking carefully into*” these things. Hence these angels, had a strong burning desire, were stooping over with the head bowed forward and the body bent. It is important that we understand that God uses this same term to describe how we are to look into the completed and “*perfect law of liberty*” which is the combination of all the Scriptures.

*But he who **looks into** the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:25*

What then is Peter trying to reveal to us with all this information? What does our knowing about the prophets and the angels desire to understand what we now possess have to do with us? How are we supposed to respond to it? He appears to be seeking to instill an appreciation for the value of that which is possessed in the Scriptures by giving as much information about it as he can. The prophets and the angels give some powerful testimony to the value of the gospel. We must not forget. Comparing how they felt about this knowledge and how we feel about it is very enlightening to us. If we are not that interested in learning about it, what does that say about us?

The Prophets in God’s Eternal Purpose

The Bible opens with the simple fact of creation. God doing exactly as he planned and each day ending: “*it was good.*” Everything in this creation began with flawless perfection, exactly as God desired. But when man exercised his free will and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was like breaking a priceless object of china. All was shattered, ruined and vanity (Ecc 1:1-11; 13-15).

From the perspective of Adam and Eve there was nothing left but to sweep up the pieces, throw them into the trash and begin again. They had no answers. There was no wisdom or power within them to fix what they had done. But God’s “*ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts*” (Isa 55:8-9). Often man has no answer and is ready to give up. “*When the vessel that he made of the clay was marred ... he made it again another vessel.*” (Jer 18:4). Surely God could simply send Adam and Eve to chains of darkness and begin again with another man and another woman. His flawless creation uncursed and prepared for others more

worthy than they. God had done this with angels, for *“God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, “kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”* (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)

But he did not! He chose instead to begin the plan he had already devised long before. At the moment, when all was lost and broken, God began to reveal the *“manifold wisdom”* of his *“eternal purpose”* *“which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Eph 3:10-11). He told the serpent (Satan) that the woman’s seed would *“bruise your head.”* Later he gave more insight to Abraham promising, *“in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”* (Gen 22:18). Scripture was designed to reveal, prepare, and complete this eternal purpose.

God knew that *“through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned,”* and *“through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners.”* But he had already prepared the solution: *“through one man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”* and *“through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.”* (Rom 5:12, 18-19).

No wonder Paul was so moved with amazement as he ended his theme of justification and righteousness through faith in Christ.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!” Rom 11:33

THINK OF IT! It was not after Adam and Eve ate of the tree. It was before Adam and Eve were even created and placed in the garden, and before they were even warned about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God’s eternal purpose and plan for the salvation of all sinners was made before he ever said *“Let their be light!”* He loved us before we were created and planned to pay the cost of our forgiveness before we sinned!

This sounds hard to believe and if we have never seen this or thought of it before it certainly needs more proof than what has been cited up to now. But God has supplied us with abundant proof. He wants us to know this to understand the depth of his love and the power of his forgiveness.

Paul told the Romans that his preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ was *“according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested.”* (Rom 16:25-26). Most of what God had planned was hidden not only from the creation until the preaching of the gospel. It was before times eternal (i.e. even before the creation). In speaking of parables Jesus quoted one of the prophets. *“I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world”* (Mt 13:35). All that Jesus revealed in his parables was God’s eternal purpose. Peter also spoke of this eternal purpose when he said *“him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay.”* (Acts 2:23). God revealed these plans hundreds of years before they happened in Isaiah 53.

Paul told Timothy that God *“saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal”* (2 Tim 1:8-10) The gift of Jesus was not a plan devised after Adam sinned. This gift was given to us *“in Christ before times eternal”* (i.e. before the foundation of the world).

He told Titus that our *“hope of eternal life”* was *“promised before times eternal”* (Titus 1:1-2).

Think about that. God’s promise of eternal life to those of us who had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God had already been promised before times eternal (i.e. before the foundation of the world).

So all these plans and purposes were *“kept in silence,”* *“hidden,”* *“given,”* and *“promised,”* before times eternal.

So what period of time is *“times eternal?”* Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world”* (Eph 1:3-5). Thus the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation. So the plan clearly precedes the events in the first chapter of Genesis. How much further is not something we can understand or need to know.

God’s eternal purpose through the church began long before the creation. Though Adam and

Eve had no plans beyond the moment they made the wrong choice, God had already thought out all possibilities and prepared for it. The prophets and the gospel are simply the revelation of these plans.

Messianic Prophecies

The most important passage concerning the prophecies concerning Jesus is found in the letters of Peter wrote. He explained that while the prophets in the Old Testament spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit, they did not always understand what they were writing and speaking. Yet Peter makes one thing very clear. The salvation we are now awaiting at the last time is the end of our faith. This is the same salvation that the OT prophets inquired and searched diligently about. It was tied to the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow. Although they wanted to know about these things, it was revealed that the portions of Scripture that they did not understand concerning “*the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow,*” were not part of their Scriptures or the Old Covenant. These were things that they were ministering to us in the new covenant, and they are the same things “*reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.*”

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ... 8 Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:19-21

For many years, I have been cautious about this conclusion, but after further study of other passages in the New Testament it is the only conclusion possible. The prophecies we call Messianic are not part of the Old Covenant, but the New Covenant. These were the things that God “*foretold by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ would suffer.*”

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” Acts 3:17-19

When Moses told the people another prophet would rise up like him, he was speaking of the days of Peter and the apostles. This passage is just as much a part of the New Covenant as it foretold the end of the Old.

For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ Acts 3:22-23

Not only does this include Moses, but all the prophets from Samuel. As Peter later wrote, so now he states that “*all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many have spoken*” what they were writing “*foretold these days.*” Hence these same prophets who “*testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,*” are the ones who foretold of these days.

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.” Acts 3:24-25

The Jews and their rulers asked for Jesus to be crucified for two reasons. First, because “*they*

did not know Him,” and second because they did not hear “the voices of the prophets read every Sabbath.”

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. Acts 13:27

Paul also preached these things both in his letters as well as his sermons in Acts. In Romans he revealed that the gospel was “promised before through the prophets,” “concerning His Son Jesus Christ.

Paul, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom 1:1-4

Not long after writing these words He told Agrippa that all that he was preaching was “no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come.” So these writings were given as much for us as for them. Specifically, Paul states that these prophets revealed that “Christ would suffer,” “rise from the dead,” and “proclaim light” both to Jews and Gentiles.

Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

When Paul went to Rome, and spoke to the Jews there, he “he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and prophets.” Hence, both the teachings of the kingdom of God and Jesus are clearly found in the writings of the Old Testament.

So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. Acts 28:23-25

After His resurrection, Jesus also used “the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” He revealed that contained with them are “all things must be fulfilled which were written about Me.” Jesus then “opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:44-48

With all these Scriptures it is evident that the Old Testament prophecies that were written about Jesus, the glories that would follow, His suffering, resurrection, were just as much a part of the Old Testament as the New.

Considering all the places where God’s eternal purpose was fully developed and completed before the foundation of the world (Rom. 16:25-26; 2Tim. 1:8-10; Titus 1:1-2; Eph. 1:3-5; 3:10-11).

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. Gal 3:8

Knowing the end from the beginning, God gave the glimpses necessary to allow Paul to say that everything he preached was “saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22). God revealed enough to give the shadow and outline of all Paul preached and wrote. These prophets, selected by God, laid the foundation to give those preaching the gospel what they needed to validate their preaching. God revealed enough of his eternal purpose that the apostles only needed to complete the details. Thus the revelation of God’s eternal purpose was seamless.

These prophecies gave the scriptural proof needed to convince Israel and save souls. They also

revealed enough information for the apostles to make pithy doctrinal points using the prophecies to give the extra information to make it clear. Even today we use these prophecies to gain a clearer perspective and clarify things in the NT. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah is still read today as one of the most comprehensive summations of the life and death of the Messiah. Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Ezekiel 34 offer additional insight about elders working as shepherds. Jesus' ascension and reign are seen more clearly after reading Psalm 2 and Daniel 9:7-14. Finally, prophecy is often the foundation for important NT revelation. For example the Hebrew writer used the order of Melchizedek to help us better see our Messiah as a priest reigning on his throne (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5-7).

We are greatly indebted to these prophets. They give us admonition (1 Cor 10), make us wise unto salvation, and help us be complete unto every good work (2 Tim 3:15-18).

How the OT Prophets were “*ministering to us.*”

Review:

Peter revealed that some of the words of the prophets who lived under the Old Covenant “**prophesied of the grace that would come to you.**” Clearly these writings, though found in the Old Testament Scriptures can be used to further explain and elaborate on the grace we are enjoying today. Though they wanted to better understand this period of time when “**sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,**” it was revealed to them that the information contained in these prophecies were not designed for those living then. The Spirit revealed to them that it was “**not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things.**” So these prophecies were not a part of the Old Covenant. These writings were written to minister to those of us who live under the New Covenant. The same things they wrote “**now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.**” The apostles and prophets of the New Covenant were “*reporting*” or preaching the same things these OT prophets had revealed long ago.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

When Paul summed up all that he preached as “*saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 25:22-23), he made it clear that their inspired preaching was simply building upon what God had already revealed to the prophets.

having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

Other Passages that Speak on the Importance of these Writings.

But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Matt 26:56

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.” 3 ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.’” 4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:1-5

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, 71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: Luke 1:70-73

“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” John 1:45

But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would

suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Acts 3:18-19

whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, **which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.** Acts 3:21-22

Yes, and **all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.** Acts 3:24-25

To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43

And **with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:** Acts 15:15

separated to **the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,** Rom 1:1-2

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, **being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,** 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. Rom 3:21-22

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 **that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,** 2 Pet. 3:1-3

How the Apostles reported "what the Prophets had Prophesied."

In Peter's first sermon, he stated that the tongues of fire and the speaking in the languages in which they were born "*is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel,*" making it clear that the words of Joel had not been written for them but for us.

Thus "*the last days*" started with this event. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, he filled all of them and they began to speak with other tongues. This was the answer that the prophets sought and searched diligently to understand. Although it began with the apostles, Peter here revealed that Joel had said He would be poured out on others as well.

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, **That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.** Acts 2:16-18

Jesus of Nazareth a Man Approved of God ... You Killed

Peter then combined the recent history they all knew so well with the prophecies that had also spoken about these days. Jesus was approved by God by all the miracles He had performed, but they had rejected him, just as Isaiah had warned. Peter summed up Isaiah 53 and the second Psalm with the statement:

being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; Acts 2:23-24

Those who wanted to go back into the Old Testament need go no further than Isa 53 where this entire event was described.

3 He is **despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.** And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was **despised, and we did not esteem Him.** ... 5 The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ... 8 For **He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.** 9 And they made His grave with the wicked — But with the rich at His death, ... 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, **Because He poured out His soul unto death,** And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors. Isa 53:12

More than that, after the first persecution, Peter uses Psalm 2 to show that the entire event had been explained in detail. David, had long ago revealed exactly what was going to occur.

who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.' 27 **"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be**

done. Acts 4:25-29

Paul later said. That those in Jerusalem and their rulers did not know “*even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath.*” The very things they did fulfilled exactly what the prophets had said would happen.

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. 28 And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Acts 13:27-28

God Raised Him from the Dead

Peter clearly states that David spoke of the resurrection of the Christ. David was speaking about Jesus when he gave this prophesy in Psalms 16:8-11. “*David says concerning Him.*” This was a clear statement about the Messiah and David knew it when he wrote it. He knew it was not talking about him, so “*foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.*”

For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. ... 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ... 29 ‘Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. Acts 2:25-32

Not only did David speak about His resurrection, but also spoke clearly about the ascension and glory that was given to Him.

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Acts 2:34-35

There are other prophecies that further elaborate on this moment.

6 ‘Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.’ 7 ‘I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’” Ps 2:6-9

13 ‘I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed. Dan 7:13-14

The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Ps 110:1-2

The Hebrew writer ties a lot of this together with his own use of these prophecies. He quotes Ps 2 and 45

upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You’? 8 But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’ Heb 1:3-5: 8-9

After healing the lame man, Peter preaches his second sermon, he revealed the events of Jesus death as “*things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets,*” and the remaining time until the second coming are “*the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old.*” He quoted Moses and revealed it was Jesus who was “*A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you.*” All who refuse obedience would be “*utterly destroyed from the people.*” Finally, “*all*

the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days" (Acts 3:12-26).

17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But **those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.** ... 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:17-18; 22-26

After Peter and John were arrested and threatened, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David (Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing. "The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass." (Acts 4:23-31).

Phillip joined the Eunuch using the words of Isaiah 53 and "beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus." (Acts 8:35).

Peter preached to Cornelius saying "to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (10:43).

In Paul's first recorded sermon he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and "of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Savior, Jesus." All who lived in Jerusalem "because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him." His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, "when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb." Through the gospel the apostles "bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers," for "in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption." Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets." (Acts 13:23-41)

When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles, James said the prophets had already revealed God's will. "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written..." It was the prophets who were used by "the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old" (Acts 15:14-18).

In his defense before Turtullus and Agrippa Paul summed up his service to God with "so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14), and "I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come," (Acts 26:22).

In his discussion with the Jews in Rome, he was "testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening."

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do

well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet 1:19-21).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

How Prophets” ministered to us and “gospel preachers reported it”

Review:

The prophets who lived under the Old Covenant “**prophesied of the grace that would come to you.**” They were describing “**sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.**” These things were given “**not to themselves, but to us they were ministering.**”

It was given to the apostles to complete the process as they were “**now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.**”

Peter’s 2nd Sermon

After healing the lame man, Peter preached his second sermon. He began with the basic historical facts they all knew, ending with explanation of the healing of the lame man. Which the Sanhedrin later admitted: men? “*For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.* (Acts 4:16).

God glorified His Servant Jesus

You delivered up

You denied in the presence of Pilate

Pilate was determined to let Him go.

You denied the Holy One and the Just

You asked for a murderer be granted to you

You killed the Prince of life

God raised from the dead, — We are witnesses

Peter offers some consolation with their ignorance. Yet now that the gospel being preached, it was all being revealed. **Even the apostles were learning it for the first time.** God was actually fulfilling the things foretold by all the prophets. They needed to repent and be converted for three reasons.

1. *Receive the remission of sins,*

2. *Time of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*

3a. *God can send Jesus Christ (His Second Coming)*

3b. *Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things,*

3c. *God has spoken by mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

The last three points are an amazing revelation. They reveal that there was still more that the Old Testament had revealed that was yet to be fulfilled.

17 “*Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.* Acts 3:17-21

As Jesus had revealed, heaven and earth cannot pass away (which will occur when Jesus returns (2Pet. 3:10-13).

“*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

18 *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.* Matt 5:17-19

The conversion of the Jews would lead to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the restoration of the tabernacle of David that had fallen down. This prophecy was first spoken by Amos and then clearly applied by James at the Jerusalem conference. It was preached first to them and God expected them to obey it and help fulfill all these things.

“On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”Says the Lord who does this thing. *Amos 9:11-12*

James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And **with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:** 16 ‘After! this I will return And **will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,** Says the Lord who does all these things.’ *Acts 15:13-17*

Peter then quoted Moses and revealed that it was Jesus who was “a Prophet like me from your brethren.” Jesus was the one Moses had made direct reference to. It was Jesus whom they must “hear in all things, whatever He says to you.” The apostles had heard these very things from Jesus not long before:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.** 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. *Matt 28:18-20*

They were in grave danger of violating the very thing Moses had strictly charged against. If they refused to obey, they will be “utterly destroyed from the people.”

22 **For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.** 23 **And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’**

Peter concluded by revealing something very similar to what he revealed years later in his letter. All the prophets have foretold of these days. “sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” (1Pet. 1:11). He then reminds them that they are the heirs of the covenant God made with Abraham. This is why God had allowed them to hear the gospel first.

Yes, and **all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.** 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of **the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’** 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.” *Acts 3:22-26*

During the trial that followed Peter made another reference to the restoration of all things, and the role God had hoped the Jews would have in all of it. But the leaders had rejected the role, Just as God had foretold.

*If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, 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 stands here before you whole. 11 **This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’** 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* *Acts 4:9-12*

Peter also returns to this theme in his first letter.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 **who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.** 1 *Peter 2:4-10*

The three prophecies Peter refers to are found in Ps. 118:19-26; Isa. 28:16-17 and Hos. 1:6-11

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord. 20 This is the gate of the Lord, Through which the righteous shall enter. 21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation. 22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. 25 Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. Ps. 118:19-26

Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. 17 Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; Isa 28:16-17

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "**Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away.** ... 8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said: "**Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God.** 10 **'Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'** 11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel! (Hos. 1:6-11)

After Peter and John were arrested and threatened, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David(Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing.

"The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass." Acts 4:23-31

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." Ps. 2:1-6

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written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14), and "I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come," (Acts 26:22).

In his discussion with the Jews in Rome, he was "testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening."

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet 1:19-21).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

How Prophets" ministered to us & "gospel preachers reported it"

(2)

From several passages in the NT, God revealed that His eternal purpose was fully prepared and planned before the creation. God knew everything He was going to do and how man was going to respond to it. It also makes it clear that this eternal purpose was not simply for what we see and understand in this creation, but that it was also intended to accomplish some very important things in God's creation as well.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to **make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God,** Eph. 3:8-10

according to **the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal now is manifested.** Rom. 16:25-26

I will open my mouth in parables; I will **utter things hidden from the foundation of the world** Mt. 13:35

Him, being delivered up by **the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,** Acts 2:23

For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 **to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.** Acts 4:27-29

saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... **according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal** 2Tim. 1:8-10

"In hope of eternal life" was "**promised before times eternal**" Titus 1:1-2

"He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world**" Eph. 1:3-5

Hence, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God were "kept in silence," "hidden," "given," and "promised," before times eternal. What exactly is meant by the concept of eternal? Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:3-5). Thus all the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation.

Using the formula Peter revealed in the title, we will begin with what the prophet said and then see how those who preach the gospel used them.

To them it was revealed that, **not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by:**

the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

The Plans for Evangelism

God revealed many things in the prophets that explain how the book of Acts unfolded. James summed all this up in the discussion over how the Gentiles would enter the church in Acts 15.

And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16 'After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.' 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works. Acts 15:15-19

When all these things Come upon you the Blessing and the Curse.

The concept of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David is first mentioned by Moses. After describing all the blessings God would begin to give them and the curses that would follow upon their disobedience, God revealed what would happen after both Israel (ten tribes taken by Assyria) and Judah (residue taken by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon). After they are driven into all these nations, God made a promise to those who "return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul," that He would "bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you."

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. Deut 30:1-6

Although this had a minor fulfillment when Cyrus sent a small remnant back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, it's main fulfillment was described in the great commission by Jesus Himself and "was reported by those who preached the gospel to us."

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt 28:18-20
Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-17
Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:46-48
you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth Acts 1:8

Within these passages we see the fulfillment of Moses words: "**If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.**"

Yet there is more than this in Moses' words. We also see the plan of salvation unfolded in the words: "**the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.**"

Jesus' discussion of baptism is later revealed by Paul to be this "**circumcision of the heart.**"

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in

baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Col 2:11-14

The Second Gathering

Isaiah takes the words of Moses and combines them with the “*tabernacle of David that has fallen*” that James described. At his call, Isaiah asked how long he would preach and God told him it would be until “*As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump.*” (Isa 6:13). He begins by describing the state of the tabernacle of David.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Isa 11:1-2

Isaiah then takes all these thoughts and weaves them together. At the time that “*the root comes from the stump of Jesse (Jesus),*” He will be a banner to both the people (Jews) and the Gentiles will also seek Him. It will be in that day “*that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left.*” Again it will be in that day, as described by Jesus in the great commission that God “*will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.*”

That this is a summation of the entire book of Acts is obvious.

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.” 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. ... 16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt. Isa 11:10-12, 16

The words so closely match. Even the highway is described as something that John the Baptist would begin.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; Isa 40:3-4 A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray. Isa 35:8

The Shepherd Will Search for His Sheep

In the midst of condemning the shepherds of Israel who had been responsible for the destruction of the sheep, God returns to this theme, describing the work revealed in Acts as a shepherd seeking for the lost sheep. He begins by promising “*Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep.*” The book of Acts revealed how “*I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land.*”

For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. 16 “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.” Ezek 34:11-16

A little later in this prophesy, God makes it clear that He is again speaking of the time of the Messiah. All of this will occur when ***"I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David."*** Hence at the very moment that Acts began and Jesus became their shepherd and prince, all of these things would occur. There is no other time except in the book of Acts that ***"I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken."***

22 therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. Ezek 34:11-16

I will Gather My Flock out of all the Countries I have Driven Them

God also used Jeremiah to describe the conditions as they were fulfilled in Acts. He again condemned the shepherds of Israel as Ezekiel had done. This time not only does God promise that: ***"I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds."*** but also revealed that it would be at that same time ***"I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking."*** Even the growth and development of the eldership to shepherd the flock is described here.

"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the Lord. 3 "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord. Jer. 23:1-4

The time date for all these events takes us right back to the words of James, ***"I will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up."*** God promised that: ***"I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper."***

5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer 23:1-8

I will Take you from Among the Nations, Gather you out of All Countries

Ezekiel gives us one more prophecy to tie all these things together. This would not be done for their sake, because they had profaned God's name. It would be done for God's Holy name. He promised: ***"I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols."*** This too is described Hebrews 10:19-24: ***"having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."***

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you

shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31 **Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.** 32 **Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!" Ezek. 36:22-32**

Messianic Prophecies - 5: Prophets Ministering to Us

Introduction: A small portion of the writings of the Old Covenant were not written for those then living. They were placed in the Scriptures for the purpose of giving those who would live under the New Covenant an additional rock upon which to build their faith. Many of these prophecies were accurate descriptions of events that would occur hundreds and even thousands of years in the future. Many of these passages were used by the apostles and prophets in the New Covenant age to give assurance to those hearing their preaching that what they were saying was true. Other prophecies were given to give a clearer understanding to obscure things that would occur in the future. The eternal purpose of God is so infinitely complex that often it takes both pictures, shadows and types to help us understand them.

As the apostles and elders gathered together to discuss the relationship of the Gentiles to the Jews under the New Covenant, it was such an unexpected and amazing thing that many had great difficulty understanding that the law was simply a middle wall of partition and once it was done away, there would no longer be any distinction. To sooth and calm some of the more zealous Jews, James quoted one of them.

And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16 'After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.' 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works. 19 Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, Acts 15:15-20

The context of Amos is as important as the few passages the James quotes. It began with God's proclamation that the decision to destroy the entire house of Israel had already been made even at this early date. Everything that God had previously condemned in the 10 tribes of Israel was also being done in Judah. So God gives Amos a vision of God standing by the altar in Jerusalem, proclaiming that the temple would be destroyed and all of them destroyed along with it. This is a very accurate picture of what Nebuchadnezzar did long after the 10 tribes had been destroyed and removed.

I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, And break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered. 2 "Though they dig into hell, From there My hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, From there I will bring them down; Amos 9:1-2

God continued by revealing that He has had His eyes on the sinful kingdom, just as Moses had revealed:

"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; 27 for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord, then how much more after my death? 28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." Deut. 31:26-29

The time for judgment was nearing and God was very clear exactly what He would do. Once again, God reveals exactly what the book of Acts was written to reveal. Through the gospel, "as

grain is sifted in the sieve, not the smallest grain will fall to the ground.”

Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,” Says the Lord. 9 “For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. Amos 9:8-9

Even as James was speaking the words of fulfillment, a portion he had omitted was also drawing nearer for the second time.

All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, Who say, ‘The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.’ 11 “On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:8-11

The fall of that tabernacle was accurately described by Jeremiah as He strictly warned Israel that at that moment their fate was still in their own hands and if they would stop violating the Sabbath, they could keep the tabernacle of David.

“And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully,” says the Lord, “to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. ... 27 “But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.”” Jer 17:24-25, 27

Later is Jeremiah, He returns to this moment that came and promises the same thing He did in Amos.

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he

shall be saved out of it. 8 ‘For it shall come to pass in that day, ‘Says the Lord of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. 10 ‘Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob, ‘says the Lord, ‘Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you,’ says the Lord, ‘to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.’ Jer 30:7-11

The Rod from the Stem of Jesse and Branch from his Roots

Changing the figure from a tabernacle (dwelling place) to a tree that has been cut down, Jesus is depicted as the branch that has grown out of the stump of David to become the tree that would fulfill all of God’s promises given to David.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. 3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. Isa 11:1-5

At the same time that this Branch grows from his roots, He will stand as a banner to the people. At that time two things will happen that completely explain what James is describing. He will be a banner. The Gentiles will seek Him and God will set his hand the second time to call the remnant of his people back to Him.

“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.” 11 It shall come to pass

in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. Isa. 11:10-11

Jeremiah also described the Messiah as a branch. In this prophesy, God adds a few more details. What had fallen was God's promise about a man being on the throne of David. Israel had forfeited that blessing when they refused to heed Jeremiah regarding the Sabbath. But God would find a better way to fulfill the promise by finding a descendant who would be faithful for all eternity. Once again, God also promises that it will be at that day that all of God's promises to Israel and Judah would be fulfilled. God also introduces something new. The Priests and the Levites would also be restored.

Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: 15 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' 17 'For thus says the Lord: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.'” Jer 33:14-18

God continues this prophesy by comparing it to the covenant God made with day and night. This covenant was tied to the promise God made to Noah after he left the ark and offered a sacrifice to the Lord (Gen. 8:20-22). Just as the covenant could not be broken, neither can the covenant that David would lack a son to reign. That promise had only been suspended because of the wickedness of Israel and His descendants, which God had even made a part of the promise as Solomon had pointed out: that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, “If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,” He said, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.” (1Kings 2:4). God again mentions the Levites and priests as His ministers. He will multiply the descendants of David like the sand of the sea. Since this promise is the same one God gave to Abraham, it appears that God's promise to Abraham also came through David. Yet not only through David, but also through Levi. This has created some difficulty for some, but is the only logical conclusion when we look at the passages in the NT.

And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 “Thus says the Lord: ‘If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.” Jer 33:19-22

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 and (having) a great priest over the house of God; 22 let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, Heb 10:19-22

Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:15-16

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. Heb 13:10 unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, 5 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Pet 2:4-5

But ye are a elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for (God's) own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pet 2:9-10

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, (who is) the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth

us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and **he made us (to be) kings, (to be) priests unto his God and Father; to him (be) the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.** 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. 9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in tribulation and kingdom and patience (which are) in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Rev 1:4-9

And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and madest them (to be) **unto our God kings and priests; and they reign upon earth.** Rev 5:9-10

Zechariah gives us all there is the picture of the Righteous branch.

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, **For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.** 9 For behold, the stone That I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says the Lord of hosts, '**And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.** 10 **In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree.'**" Zech 3:8-10

Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12 Then speak to him, saying, '**Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the Lord; 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."**' 14 "Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the Lord for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." Zech 6:11-15

A more literal explanation was given in Isaiah.

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isa 9:6-7 13 Therefore

The term "therefore" is generally used to prepare the reader for a transition. The author is not quite ready to let go of the previous thought, but is preparing to move on to a related item. In the Greek language, the Holy Spirit had access to many different terms to make this transition. The KJV translates seventeen different Greek words with "therefore." Each of them emphasizing the transition in a slightly different way. Because of this is it helpful to look up each "therefore" to be able to see what type of transition is being made. The "therefore" here is used about fifty times in the NT. A careful look at the definitions reveals the subtle nuance in this "therefore." It could be literally translated "through which things," because it is made up of the preposition "dia - means or instrument through which something is accomplished," and "hos - relative pronoun, referring back to the previous thought. Hence "through which previous thoughts,"

dió; conj. from *diá* (1223), *for*, and the neut. relative pronoun *ho* from *hós* (3739), *which...*"

(Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT 1352)

dió, ... **relatively emphatic markers of result, usually denoting the fact that the inference is self-evident - 'therefore, for this reason, for this very reason, so then.'** , *dió*: 'therefore, that field was called Field of Blood' Matt 27:8; .. 'for this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God' Luke 1:35. *dioper* 'therefore, if meat causes offense to my fellow believer, I will never eat meat' 1 Cor 8:13; ..." (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1352)

dió... **serves to coordinate what follows with what precedes** ... occurs esp. in Acts (8 times), ... Pauline letters (22), and in the other letters of the NT (11, of which 9 are in Hebrews) ... (Exegetical Dictionary of the NT NT:1352)

"Which" previous things does Peter through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit want us to use as

the motivation for what he is about to ask? If one looks carefully at the previous twelve verses, it reveals what God has done to save us.

- (1) God is to be praised because of all that he has done for man to make this possible!
- (2) Based on God's mercy(1:3), Jesus' resurrection(1:3), one hope(1:4), and power of God(1:5).
- (3) Though "fiery trials" come, they bring a faith more precious than gold.
- (4) This will lead to God give giving us praise honor and glory at Jesus' coming.
- (5) This salvation was of intense interest to the Old Testament prophets and the angels.

Although all of these fit the word, the context would lead us to the last one (5). He had spoken of the prophets under the Old Covenant who were seeking and searching, trying to understand more fully the salvation of our souls under the new covenant. They sought and searched diligently, and even the angels desired to look into these truths. The implication seems to be that because the prophets and angels have shown so much interest, we should too. But because we have to live up to its conditions to receive the salvation, we need to give careful consideration to our part in the covenant. These are things we need to approach with zeal, excitement and enthusiasm. It follows the same line of reasoning as Paul after speaking of the amazing blessings of the resurrection:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58:

Because of this "therefore," we must now:

- (1) Gird up the loins of our mind (be ready to work hard mentally). :13
- (2) Be sober, and rest our hope fully on grace. :13
- (3) Be obedient children, not conforming to the former lusts, while ignorant :14
- (4) Be holy as He is holy in all our conduct, :15
- (5) Conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear; :16

gird up the loins of your mind, having girded up the loins of your mind,

The grammar is as important to our understanding of this phrase as the vocabulary. This is an Aorist Middle Participle) Before speaking of the terms themselves, the describing the tense of this verbal noun, gives English translators and readers some difficulty. How do you translate a past action (Aorist - action summed up as a single event) with personal interest (Middle - in reference to myself), and a participle which makes the action being done into the person doing that action, turning it in a noun (the man who *is running* is now *the runner*). Literally we might attempt to say "the *girded loins of yourself*," "*your girded loins*," or "*you girded up ones*" yet no one would really understand because we don't speak like this in English. An Aorist tense takes an action in the past and simply references it as a single point that was done. Some verbs make it easy to do this and others are nearly impossible. While we can easily say and understand the meaning of "one who died," it is a little more challenging to understand "*the one who girded*." Yet that is exactly what Peter said. Once we speak of the use of "*girded*" in the Scriptures, it will be easier to see why the Holy Spirit put this in the Aorist Middle.

"*Gird up the loins*" is an idiom used in that day to describe the act of preparing for work or effort. It developed from the type of clothing they wore. Because of the heat and the customs they wore robes which were loose, which though it makes them more comfortable in the heat, it also hinders the ability to work or move quickly. Hence, whenever it became necessary to work or to run, they would take a wide belt of leather and tie up (*gird*) the clothing around the waist (*loins*) which would hold the clothing out of the way and allow them to work or run without hindrance. Hence during those parts of the day when there was not much to do, they could relax in their long flowing garments and be quite comfortable. When there was work or other purposeful activity, they would gird up the clothes so their movements would not be hindered. Consequently when someone saw another girding up his clothing, he knew he was about to begin work. We have much the same idea in the term "roll up the sleeves." When a man rolls up his sleeves, we know he is about to work.

anazonnumi ... "to gird up" (*ana*, "up," and No. 1), is used metaphorically of the loins of the mind, 1 Peter 1:13; cf. Luke 12:35 (see No. 4). **The figure is taken from the circumstances of the Israelites as they ate the Passover in readiness for their journey, Ex 12:11; the Christian is to have his mental powers alert in expectation of Christ's coming. The verb is in the middle voice, indicating the special interest the believer is to take in so doing.** (Vine's Expository Dictionary

NT:328)

anazonnumi ... (an idiom, literally 'to bind up the loins of the mind') **to prepare oneself for learning and thinking - 'to get one's mind ready for action, to be ready to learn and to think, to be alert.'** (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:328)

Going back to the first Passover, the history of girding up the loins as a means of showing oneself prepared for action. Elijah girded up his loins in preparation to run before Ahab, and Jesus also used it to describe His own expectations for His disciples to be ready and prepared to work.

And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is Jehovah's Passover. Ex 12:11 and the hand of Jehovah was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. 1Kings 18:46

Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; 36 and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Lk. 12:35-36

All of the later translations (NAS, ESV, NKJV, NIV) have replaced the idiom with what the idiom means, but in doing so, they make a paraphrase instead of a translation. While "*prepare your minds for action,*" is the meaning we can take from the idiom, it is better for Bible readers and students to learn the idioms that go all the way back to the Passover.

Taking the figure of the Passover, before they started the meal they were girded in their loins, then for the entire meal they would be the "*girded up ones.*" So here, we are living our life with "*girded up loins of our mind.*" Always ready for action.

of your mind,

Peter extends the use of the idiom for work to include the mind. This is not the common word for "*mind,*" and is only used 12 times in the NT.

diánoia, fem. noun from *dianoéomai* ... **to agitate in mind, which is from *diá* (1223), denoting separation, and *noéō* (3539), to think over. Understanding, intellect, intellectual faculty, thought, mind.** (I) By metonymy the mind, thoughts, intellect, i.e., the thinking faculty..." (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1271)

diánoia... The anthropological-psychological concept of *dianoia*, , which is especially favored in Greek and in Hellenistic Jewish literature, appears in the NT only 12 times and does not form part of Pauline anthropology..." (Exegetical Dictionary of the NT : 1271)

It is primarily an Old Testament word, translating the Hebrew term.

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Mt. 22:37 Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Heb. 8:10; 10:16

Thus with "*all the mind*" we are to love God with and it is within the *mind* that God will put His laws. Thus it needs to be girded and ready for action. Unless we keep our minds active, meditating and imagining, we will hinder Him in this efforts to help us. When our minds are in their comfortable and easily entertained state, we can't move quickly enough. When daydreaming and meditating, it is often in a slow and easy manner. Peter warned that when we approach Scripture, we need to keep our minds prepared for hard work. He uses this figure of preparation for hard labor to stress that there will be hard mind activity ahead for those who wish to make it to heaven.

be sober, (Present Active Participle) the one being sober, the sobering one

Once again, the grammar is as helpful as the definition. Here it could be translated "*you sobering one*" or "*ones being continually sober.*" This is his action, just like the runner, or one running, it sums up his action as a person. Again, we can't say well it in English, but it is important to at least try to understand how it was spoken in Greek.

But more important is the vocabulary. Just like in English one is sober, when they are not under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol clouds the judgment keeping one from thinking clearly and is therefore not "*sober.*" But Greek speaking people found a more comprehensive view when used in a figurative sense.

nepho ... **The verb is found in the NT only in the figurative sense, always in exhortations.** It is

used with *gregoreo* in 1 Thess 5:6 and 1 Peter 5:8; with *sophroneo* in 1 Peter 4:7; and in the sense of **sober watchfulness** in 1 Thess 5:8 and 1 Peter 1:13. 2 Tim 4:5 reads: “you, however, show **sound judgment** in all things.” (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament 3525)

We see this clearly in Paul’s use of this term:

*Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be **sober**. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be **sober**, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 1Th. 5:6-8*

Christians cannot allow anything to keep them from thinking clearly, not tribulation and bitter loss on the one hand nor cares and pleasures of life on the other. These things can make the mind as unable to think clearly as alcohol and need to be carefully monitored. As the Lord is writing His laws in our minds, we need to be thinking soberly and clearly. We must never allow the things of this life to cloud his mind and cause us to think in foolish ways. Christians must be sober. They must be calm and collected, as well as temperate and circumspect, watching carefully over all areas of their life. Things must be seen clearly and for what they are.

It is too easy in this life to allow emotions, temptations, or tribulations to force our minds to think things that are not true. To avoid this danger, God warned us to keep our minds girded and ready to work, and our minds dispassionate and circumspect.

and rest your hope fully (set or fix your hope - Aorist Imperative)

Imperatives (commands) are easy to see and understand when we speak them, because the tone of our voice is different when we command. In writing English, word order helps us also. In Greek, it is a little more subtle, but no less binding. This is a command. Peter revealed in 1:3 that our “*living hope*,” to be the basis of our blessing and praising God. Our desires and expectations based on His promises, transcend all other hopes in this world because they will die with us. Since it is certain “*we can’t carry anything out*,” because as Job, we will leave here as naked as when we entered. We are now commanded to “*hope*.” Hence, we must “*fix*” “*rest*” or “*set*” this hope. Thus sober minded Christians have focused their hope to this one single thing. It is a vital part of being sober and keeping our loins girded at all times.

Peter has already introduced what he here commands. As each disciple is born again, this “*living hope*” removes all others.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1Pet. 1:3

Paul spoke in a similar way to the Romans. This is the true purpose of the adoption into the family of God. The spiritual redemption of the soul comes first and the redemption of the body at the resurrection comes second.

Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Rom. 8:23-25

It is this eager waiting that Peter seeks. Since this hope is the one of our calling, our hope must be fully set upon it.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; Eph 4:4-5

The term “*fully*” comes from a word group that describes things that are brought to their goal or completion and thus the goal of this command requires completeness and fullness.

“*teleios... perfectly, completely... 1 Pet 1:13; ...*” (Thayer, p. 619; 5049)

The only way God’s promises can bring their full power to the Christian is to put our entire focus upon them. When other things are allowed to also enter the heart, they are weakened. It is the business of disciples to closely monitor this hope. When doubt, or other hopes dilute it, it becomes our highest priority to fix it. This one living hope is the anchor of our soul (Heb. 6:13-20), based on the promise of eternal life that God made before He created the heavens and earth (Titus 1:3). While others allow hope for a long life, good health, wealth, prosperity, or peace, God never promised or swore with an oath to give such things. Those who allow these hopes to enter into the heart, will be severely stung when they are lost (the thorny heart Mt. 13:20). The anchor of the soul is the living hope.

that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we

have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, Heb. 6:18-20

Christians must gird up the loins of their minds, become ready to work and labor, and soberly evaluate their lives, never allowing any other hope to cloud or intoxicate the mind. We should test ourselves from time to time. Only those who like Paul, see dying as gain have their hope perfectly and completely set where it ought to be.

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. 24 Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. Phil. 1:21-25

This is why God revealed that all the holy men and women of old had their hope perfectly set on what was coming after their death.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. Heb. 11:13-16

This is both the barometer and the scale upon which to weigh hope and assess if it is as fully, completely and perfectly fixed as those who lived before us. To continue to feel day after day like a stranger and pilgrim here requires constant vigilance, effort and sober thinking about the promises of God. The Spirit demanded a great deal of commitment here from those who are called, but the outcome is too great for any lesser commitment.

Since this world is real, and our five senses keep us in constant contact with it, it exerts a powerful influence over us. No one has work hard for this influence to strongly move them in their decisions. All can taste, touch, see, hear and feel it. Pain is real, as also are lusts and desires. The sin that is all around us, the need to feel accepted and to be accepted by others, the power of money to purchase things are all powerful forces that we have to overcome. Only by girding up the loins of the mind and actively thinking about the promises and responsibilities can anyone continue on the strait and narrow path. All the difficulties for the Christian in getting into heaven are countered when the powerful hope and heavy anchor hold fast. This is how Paul used it:

*But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom **I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ** 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 **if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.** 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but **one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.** Phil. 3:7-14*

Those who do not keep their minds in a constant sense of preparation and readiness to think about that hope and that goal and that prize set before us, will never be like Paul or like Moses who also girded up the loins of his mind while in Egypt and considered the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Consider how Paul finished the passage:

*Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, **join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.** Phil. 3:15-16*

Even Jesus had to set His hope fully in order to endure the cross.

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who **for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,** and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. Heb. 12:1-3*

God revealed that it is possible to fulfill all responsibilities and be allowed to enter into heaven. But He never promised it would be easy. He never promised that He would do it all for us. Those who want to be all that God seeks, must gird up the loins of their mind on a daily basis and do all that He asks with diligence.

upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Peter sums this up as *"the grace to be brought to you."* It is interesting how closely we are imitating the prophets Peter described. They were told that they were ministering to us when they prophesied of the grace that should come to us. They then had to be content to live out their lives, knowing they would not receive the things that they had revealed, but could look at them in hope. Now we are doing exactly the same thing. This grace will be brought to us when the Lord returns. We will not receive it while we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It is coming, and we are searching and seeking diligently to understand.

When our minds are fully girded and ready for action, our sobriety and clarity of thinking is complete and our hope is fixed perfectly, then it will all be based upon and resting this grace as a foundation. The preposition *"upon"* would be used of a chair we sit in or the earth we walk upon. It is the surface and basis of support.

"epi... upon the surface of ... 2. Metaph.; a. of that upon which any action, effect, condition, rests as a basis or support; prop. upon the ground of; and a. of that upon which anything is sustained or upheld... b. of that upon which anything rests (our upon)... d. of the reason or motive underlying words and deeds..." (Thayer p. 231-236; 1909)

In this case, the basis of our perfectly fixed hope is upon the surface of grace. It must not be alloyed with anything else. No other hopes can be allowed to compete with it. This grace becomes the rock upon which our hope is set, firmly fixed upon it.

"charis... grace; Latin gratia: I. outward grace or favor (as we say well or ill favored), grace, loveliness, Hom., etc.; II. grace or favor felt, whether on the part of the Doer or the Receiver: 1. on the part of the Doer, grace, graciousness, kindness, goodwill, ... for or towards one, ... 2. on the part of the Receiver, the sense of favor received, thankfulness, thanks, gratitude, ... for a thing, ... to acknowledge a sense of favor, feel grateful, ... to feel gratitude to one for a thing, ... (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT: 5485)

Grace takes in three things. First, it is the emotional state of mind of the one who is giving it. There is kindness and a desire to make someone else happy. Second, it encompasses all the gifts given as a result of that state of mind, these are undeserved precious unimaginable gifts. Finally, it also describes the affect of those gifts in the heart of those who receive them. There is a sense of favor, blessedness, that creates gratitude, awe, humility and favored. When we fix our hope perfectly and completely on this grace (which sums up all that God has revealed about what is waiting for us), it becomes our foundation. The grace that is to be brought to us will begin to be revealed after our death when we enter paradise, but when the Lord returns, we will receive it in full.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1Jn. 3:2-3
For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. ... 1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. Phil. 3:20-21; 4:1

When we see Jesus, we will be like Him, when we see Him as He is. As we see Him for the first time, immediately, our own lowly body will be dissolved, and transformed to be conformed to

His. When our hope is perfectly and completely centered on this then, we will “*purify ourselves as He is pure,*” and we “*will stand fast in the Lord.*”

This is the culmination of every good thing God has done for us from the beginning of time until now. Every act of kindness reaches toward this great gift. When God exempts us from the punishment we deserve, recreates us in our new spiritual body, and creates an entirely new world for us to live in for ever and ever, we will know it was worth all the sacrifices and all the agony it took to receive it. The key though is to focus fully on that now. It will be too late to change after God shows it to us. We have to act by faith now.

14 as obedient children,

Peter now makes a comparison. We are to take the grace that He will bring and use it to make ourselves “as” obedient children.

“*hos... adverbial form of the relative pronoun hos, he, ho, which is used in comparison, as, like as, even as, according as, in the same manner as, etc. ... When thus used hos refers a. to the manner ('form') of the action expressed by the finite verb, and is equiv. to in the same manner as, after the fashion of; ...c. Hos makes reference to a similarity or equality... d. hos so makes reference to the quality of a person, thing, or action, as to be equiv. to such as, exactly like, as it were*” (Thayer, p. 680-682; 5613)

There is a comparison here that needs careful consideration. This term is much like the center point on a balancing scale. What is on one side of the scale must be the same as what is on the other side. This comparison is either the first one, referring back to the grace, or it could also be the second comparison.

If the comparison is to be carried to the next thought, then it would be a comparison between being obedient children and not being conformed to our former lusts.

Hence to the degree we seek to be obedient children, to that degree we must not conform ourselves to our former lusts.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:2

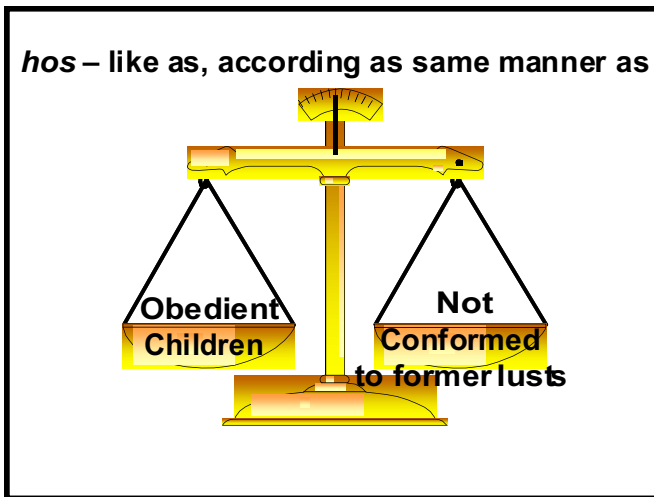
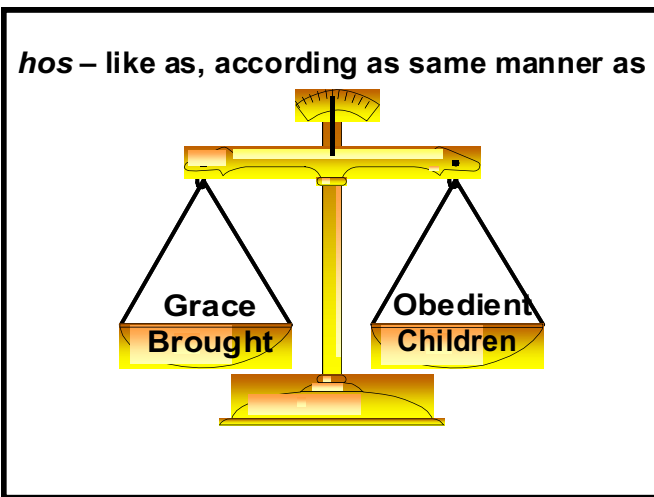
God, as all parents seeks obedient children. It manifests respect and brings security. All

commands are given for our good always and they are not burdensome or difficult (Deut. 6:24; 1Jn. 5:3). Thus obedience not only brings the reward of grace, but also protects us from the dangers of the forbidden.

“*hupakoe.... “obedience” (hupo, “under,” akouo, “to hear”)* (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:5218)

“*hupakoe, fem. noun from hupakou̅̅̅ae (5219), to obey, listen to something, hearken. Obedience, compliance ... Generally in the NT it refers to the obedience of a slave to a master (Rom. 6:16). Elsewhere it always refers to the faith which obeys God’s will in a special sense, of relationship and subjection to that which, in the sphere of divine power and revelation, is right (Rom 5:19; Heb 5:8). More especially, it refers to subjection to the saving will of God revealed in Christ and referred to as obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1:22); ... the unquestioning obedience that is demanded by Christ (2 Cor 10:5).* (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5218)

“*Hearing under*” another, means that we do not seek to place ourselves above, but always in the



submissive role. We obey, listen to and comply with the commands of our master and God. This is what Samuel sought to teach Saul and something we must learn.

*So Samuel said: "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in **obeying the voice of the Lord?** Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.**
23 **For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.**
Because you **have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.**"
1Sam. 15:22-23*

This is the contrast. Obeying the voice of the Lord, and heeding, on the one hand or rebellion, stubbornness, and rejecting God's word on the other. The hope, grace, mercy and compassion of God, all hinge on the fulcrum of trust and obedience. God can't help those who are disobedient. It was our rebellion and refusal to listen that led Jesus to die on the cross.

not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;

The term "conform" is defined:

*suschematizomai ... to form or mold one's behavior in accordance with a particular pattern or set of standards - 'to shape one's behavior, to conform one's life.' 'do not shape your behavior to the standards of this world' Rom 12:2. ..." (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT 4964)
*suschematizo.... from sún (4862), together with, and schematízō to fashion. To fashion alike, conform to the same pattern outwardly. (Rom 12:2 and also 1 Peter 1:14). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:4964)**

This term is only used twice in the New Testament and both times it is in the negative, because the only thing we have to conform to is what we see around us, and the only thing we can transform into is what God has revealed in the Scriptures.

*And do not be **conformed** to this world, but be transformed (metamorphosis) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:2*

We do not want to fashion ourselves after the pattern of our former lusts. We have patterned ourselves after our parents in language, dress, food, and multitudes of other things. Sadly we have also patterned ourselves after the evil companions of our youth.

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." 1Cor. 15:33

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2Tim. 2:22

We do not want to pattern ourselves any longer after the rebellious things we learned as we opened the doors into sinful lusts in our youth. We must not pattern ourselves according to this world, or the lusts that this world has devised to misuse our emotions. The strong desires which operated in the period before one learned the truth must not be allowed to continue to be a pattern for future conduct. Though we walk, talk and live much the same way after conversion as before, some things must not continue in the same pattern. The term "former" is defined:

*"proteron... the neuter of proteros, the comparative degree of pro, is **always used of time, and signifies "aforetime, before,"** e. g., John 6:62; 9:8; 2 Cor 1:15; Heb 7:27; ... in Heb 10:32 it is placed between the article and the noun, "the former days"; so in 1 Peter 1:14, "the former lusts," i. e., the lusts formerly indulged. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4386)*

Peter leads us back to remind us of the lusts we used to be patterned after before we learned the truth. He will return to this thought again later in this letter. Once again contrasting what we used to do with what we now ought to do.

that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them 1Pet. 4:2-4

These were lusts we created and allowed to reign before we fully knew anything about them and what they signified. At the time we were patterned after those things is because of "ignorance."

agnoia lit., "want of knowledge or perception" (akin to agnoeo, "to be ignorant"), denotes "ignorance" on the part of the Jews regarding Christ, Acts 3:17; of Gentiles in regard to God, 17:30; Eph 4:18 (here including the idea of willful blindness: see Rom 1:28, not the "ignorance" which mitigates guilt); 1 Peter 1:14, of the former unregenerate condition of those who became believers (RV, "in the time of your ignorance"). (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:52)

We did not know what God wanted of us. We therefore did not use what God wanted of us as the basis for determining what to do with our desires. Now that we know, we must use the new and different standard which God has now revealed to us.

15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

This is the stronger *“adversative particle, alla”* It emphasizes something exactly the opposite of what had previously been done. Now we have a new person to pattern ourselves after. Instead of conforming ourselves to our former lusts, we must be holy as God is holy. The term “as” is often used to reveal a comparison of proportion or relationship.

“kata,... II with the Accusative... 3. it **denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts**; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... **as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;**...c. **according to, agreeably to**; in reference to **agreement or conformity to a standard**, in various ways (aa) *according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...*(bb) **in proportion to, according to the measure of...**” (Thayer, p. 328; 2596)

Just exactly as God is holy, so should we be. They should be equal to one another. A true mirror image is the goal.

beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor 3:18
Peter tied this command to our *“calling.”*

*“kaleo... to call... a. to call aloud, utter in a loud voice... with gen of place, l. q. to call out, call forth from metaph.. to cause to pass from one state into another... b. to invite... (... everywhere in the N. T. Epp. only those who are spoken of as **called by God who have listened to his voice addressed to them in the gospel, hence those who have enlisted in the service of Christ...**”*
(Thayer, p. 321; 2564)

He invited us to spend eternity with Him. He invited us back into fellowship with Him. The gospel called us into fellowship with Him (2Th. 2:14) He demands we repent (change our minds) about our previous life and begin to serve God with an obedient walk. The destination of this walk is to be holy as He is holy. God is a Holy God. He lives a life of righteous perfection. He is the perfect standard by which what is holy, sacred, and worthy of veneration is determined. The life He pictures in His word is holy, for it is set apart for Him.

The term holy, sanctified, saint, consecrated, etc all come from the same root word.

“hagios,... 1. properly, **reverend, worthy of veneration...**a. of things which on account of **some connection with God possess a certain distinction and claim to reverence as places sacred to God** which are not to be profaned,... b. of **persons whose services God employs**; as for example, apostles... 2. **set apart for God, to be as it were exclusively his...** Just as the Israelites claimed for themselves the title *hoi hagioi*, because God selected them from the other nations to lead a life acceptable to him, and rejoice in his favor and protection... so this appellation is very often in the N. T. transferred to Christians as those whom God has selected ... 3. Of sacrifices and offerings; Prepared for God with solemn rite, pure, clean... 4. In a moral sense *pure, sinless, upright holy...*” (Thayer, p. 6-7; 40)

Anything connected to God is holy. God used this word for the first time when He told Moses the ground he stood on had become holy because of God’s presence (Ex. 3:5). Then the Passover was a holy convocation (Ex. 12:16), then the holy Sabbath was revealed (Ex. 16:23). After that, many different things that were connected to God were called Holy. His words are holy, His temple was holy, His saints are holy.

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘**You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.** 3 Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.’” Lev. 19:1-3*

***Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God.** 8 And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you. Lev. 20:7-8*

For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. Deut. 7:6-7

*“**The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways.** 10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. Deut.*

28:9-11

People died when they sought to draw near to God without the proper reverence and holiness. This is what Moses saw and told Aaron.

*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and **offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.** 2 So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying: '**By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.**'" So Aaron held his peace. Lev. 10:1-3*

Although "holy" is not used, one of the strongest scriptures to describe the great difference in conduct was that of what Egypt and the seven nations of Canaan were doing and what God now expected of His people.

*"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. 3 **According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwell, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do;** nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4 **You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them:** I am the Lord your God. 5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord. Lev. 18:2-5*

After listing the perversions of these nations, He returned to Israel and warned them.

***'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.** 25 **For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.** 26 **You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations,** either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 **lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.** Lev. 18:24-28*

So now we have a stark contrast. The life we lived in our ignorance using our emotions, mind and body in evil ways patterned after the schemes of men. Or, to now use our minds, emotions and body in a holy manner with God as the absolute standard. His conduct must be our conduct, His holiness must be our holiness His desires must be our desires His priorities must become our priorities.

In all realms of life there are standards. We have tape measures for distance, scales for weight, thermometers for temperature. Each of these is a standard by which all things are measured and sized up. I might think I have a piece of wood 6' long, but when the tape measure tells me it is only 5'11", then I know it is 5'11". Consider this in the spiritual realm. I might think myself to be holy, but I cannot measure myself by that standard.

God wants our "conduct" to be holy. Our manner of life and behavior must be sacred and devoted to Him. Peter uses this term eight times in his two letters (1Pet. 1:15,18, 2:12, 3:1,2,16; 2Pet. 2:7; 3:11).

*"anastrophe... (fr. the pass. *anastreophomai*, see the preceding word*), prop. **'walk' i. e. manner of life, behavior, conduct...** Hence **life in so far as it is comprised in conduct, ...** " (Thayer, p. 42; 391)*

the preceding word is: "*anastrepho...* 3. **to turn hither and thither pass. reflexively, *to turn one's self about, sojourn, dwell...* b. like the Hebr. ... to walk, of the manner of life and moral character, *to conduct one's self, behave one's self, live...* simply *to conduct or behave one's self, "walk" ...* " (Thayer, p. 42; 390)*

*anastrophe to turn up, to move about. A turning about. In the NT, **mode of life, conduct, behavior, deportment** (Gal. 1:13; Eph. 4:22; 1Tim. 4:12; James 3:13; 1 Peter 2:7; 3:11); **life, as made up of actions** (Heb. 13:7; 1 Peter 1:15)..." (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:391)*

From the literal "turning hither and thither," it came to mean what one **does** while they are "*turning hither and thither:*" Hence, manner of life, conduct or behavior. So this is the word that would be used to sum up the nature and quality of our life. Essentially, it is the entirety of the judgment day, where we will be judged by what we have done while moving hither and thither in this life.

All of our conduct, thoughts, entertainment, what we look at what we meditate upon, everything must be reevaluated and hard decisions to cut off, pluck out and put off must be done. God revealed through Ezekiel how it has been and always will be:

*the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and **put a***

mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” 5 To the others He said in my hearing, “Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. 6 Utterly slay old and young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary.” Ezek 9:4-6

We must hate sin and defilement. We must want to be holy as He is holy and flee with disgust all those things that are abhorrent to him. Just as Lot did:

delivered righteous Lot, who was **oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked** 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, **tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds**) — 9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 2 Peter 2:7-9

Those whose mind is girded and hope completely set on God’s grace will be like Lot and would have received a mark in the days of Ezekiel.

16 because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

“Because” is defined:

dióti; conj. made up from *diá* (1223), for, and *hóti* (3754), that. **On account of this or that, for this reason, that, simply because, ...**” (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1360)
“*dioti*, conjunction, equiv to *dia touto, hoti*; 1. **on this account that, because...**” (Thayer, p. 162; 1360)

This is the reason why God’s people need to be very concerned about being holy. This is a quotation from the OT Scriptures. This verse is found immediately after the passage quoted above about the abominations of the seven nations of Canaan and his command to keep His statutes and ordinances.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Lev 19:1-2

Clearly they were faced with the same choices we have today. Those who draw near to God must be Holy as He is Holy. We must be set apart from the world. The world is not holy. Though God made man upright, they have sought out many schemes (Ecc. 7:29). It is full of evil, deceit and corruption. It is full of people who overreach and take more than belongs to them. God, in love, created us and gave us holy and lawful means to fulfill all the desires He created us to have. Those in the world are not content with God and His means of fulfillment. They want more than one woman, they want more than they have and are willing to take it from others. They are unholy, unthankful and disobedient. We cannot follow them. We must pattern ourselves after our holy God and not our unholy friends. We must gird up our minds to see things clearly or we will see them in a blur and make bad decisions.

Therefore **“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”** 18 “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.** 2Cor. 6:17-18; 7:1

*This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should **no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. Eph. 4:17-24***

*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 **For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. 1Th. 4:3-8***

*If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at***

the right hand of God. 2 **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.** 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore **put to death your members which are on the earth:** fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 **Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,** 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. Col. 3:1-7

1Pet 1:17-21

17 And if you call on the Father,

With “*the loins of our minds*” are still *girded* and ready for mental work God expects of us, Peter introduced another important truth to work with and upon. With minds girded, always aware of and properly applying these things to our walk as a Christian. As we are **striving** to rest our hope fully on the grace Jesus will bring at His return, and we **struggle** with the lusts we created while ignorant, and now **seek** to be holy as He is holy, there is another important emotion and state of mind that we must be continually striving to create and maintain.

As His obedient children, we not only see ourselves as His children, but we also call on Him as our Father. Both Peter and John emphasize this in their books, stressing how important this are. John spoke first in the gospel that bears his name about how the Jewish people had rejected Jesus. His life and teachings were repugnant to them. The reason it was repugnant is exactly what Peter is seeking to bring into our minds.

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Jn. 1:11-13

The gospel taught by Jesus was a gospel (good news) of duty, obligation and responsibility. It was a gospel that required us to become like Him in every possible manner. As Jesus discussed this with them in detail, it all came to the surface.

I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.” 19 Then they said to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” ... 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” 39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father — God.” 42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. . Jn. 8:18-19, 23-24, 38-42, 44-45

There are two fathers in this world. God is the Father of those who know and love Jesus. For the rest, the devil is their father. When we do the works of Abraham, God is our father. Those who have devil as their father do the works of the devil. For this and many other things like this they did not receive Him.

The father we call upon is based on the above. If we call upon God as our Father, then we have the same obligation Jesus had. If we love Jesus and keep His commandments, the Father will love us as He did Jesus.

*He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” Jn. 14:21
“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. Jn. 15:9-10*

Thus the honor and privilege of being a child of God comes with a steep price. The same price Peter is speaking about here.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1Jn. 3:1-3

Thus Peter revealed how to purify ourselves as He is pure. God is holy. He is sanctified, He is set apart, we must also be holy and set apart. Consider the magnitude of this idea of holiness. It forces conviction and principle into the minds of all the followers of God. There are just some things that we cannot do. No matter what the outcome might be, no matter how much easier it might make our lives, no matter how many friends we might keep or how much pleasure we might derive, God is Holy and so must we be. Sanctification to principle must be done by all who take this great responsibility upon themselves.

The term “call on” is a Hebrew idiom based on its use in Joel.

“epikaleo... 4 to call upon, to invoke mid. **to call upon for oneself on one’s behalf** Hebraistically... to call upon by pronouncing the name of Jehovah... an expression finding its explanation in the fact that prayers addressed to God ordinarily began with an invocation of the divine name ... (Thayer, P. 239; 1941)

It is quoted three times in the New Testament:

And it shall come to pass That **whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.**’ Acts 2:21
And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, **calling on the name of the Lord.**’ Acts 22:16

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For “**whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**” 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? Rom. 10:12-14

Thus calling on the name of the Father, just like calling on the name of the Lord is a tacit admission that we want to be under His authority and protection. Calling on the name of the Lord and the Father in this way reveals our expectation that He will act on our behalf. Those who have that expectation must understand that it is a two way street. God has expectations of us as well if we call Him Father. Just like Jesus did when we call Him Lord:

“But **why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?** 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. Lk. 6:46-48

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Mt. 7:21

When we use the term Father to call upon God, when we invoke Him by that name, we are saying something. We are claiming to be His children. We must therefore be holy, and now we must also pass our time here in fear. The reason for the fear is set forth in the next clause.

who without partiality judges according to each one’s work,

God has no “partiality.” He respects no one’s person.

“*aprosopoleptos...* (a - priv. and *prosopoleptes*, Q.V.), **without respect of persons**, i.e. impartially... (Thayer, p. 70; 678).

God is completely impartial. The things that matter to men do not matter to Him. God will not allow wealth, beauty, intelligence or power to sway His judgment. Not only that, but He will not allow the simple fact that we call on His name, worship Him on the first day of the week, or any other action to sway Him either.

For **there is no partiality with God.** 12 For as many as have **sinned without law will also perish without law**, and as many as have **sinned in the law will be judged by the law** 13 (for **not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;** Rom 2:11-14

He will judge with absolute impartiality. What that means is that each person will get exactly what they deserve based on God’s law. Since the context of God being an impartial judge seeks to promote fear in the hearts of those who serve God, it appears that God wants it clearly understood that this impartiality also passes into His family.

If a father is ruler over a people or a judge, those in the family might feel that the rules made for others do not apply to them. They are somehow different. They are specially favored and need not concern themselves with such rules because their father will overlook them. God proclaimed that this will never be the case with Him. His judgment will be based upon each persons “work.”

“*ergon...* 1. **business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied...** 2. **any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind...** 3. **an act, deed, thing done: ...**” (Thayer, p. 248; 2041)

His assessments will be based on one’s accomplishments. That with which one is occupied. His judgment based upon acts, deeds and things done in the body.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive **the things done in the body, according to what he has done**, whether good or bad. 2 Cor. 5:10

There will be no partiality. Each one will be judged by the same law of grace. A law that requires faith in Jesus Christ and deeds of purity and holiness based upon that faith.

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. Jn. 12:48

This is why we must be obedient children! All God's children who call upon Him as Father must be obedient children. For they will be judged by the same standards as everyone else. Christians need to appreciate what great duties and obligations their membership in the family of God places upon them. One is not put into the family of God to be a privileged person who doesn't need to work or toil for the Lord anymore. Just the opposite is true. This is why Jesus was so emphatic:

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. Mt. 5:29-30

Many different times in His parables He emphasized that the unfaithful, disobedience and slothful we be cast from the kingdom. First in the parables of the tares, and dragnet

*The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will **gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,** 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be **wailing and gnashing of teeth.** Mt. 13:41-43*

*“Again, **the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet** that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. **The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire.***

***There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”** Mt. 13:47-50*

Then later in the parable of the householder and the talents.

*But if that evil servant says in his heart, **‘My master is delaying his coming,’** 49 and begins to **beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,** 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and **will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.** There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Mt. 24:48-51*

*‘For to **everyone who has, more will be given,** and he will have abundance; but **from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.** 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ Mt. 25:29-30*

There is nothing in this life that will sway God. If we are wicked we will be cast away, so we must pass each day of our lives with this realization.

conduct yourselves

The term “conduct” is repeated from verse 15: *be holy in all your conduct.*” Here, as a verb, it has the same basic meaning of walking, moving and turning.

*“anastrepho... 1. to **turn upside down, overturn...** 2. to turn back... 3. to **turn hither and thither** pass. reflexively, to turn one's self about, sojourn, dwell... b. like the Hebr. ... to walk, of the manner of life and moral character, **to conduct one's self, behave one's self, live...** simply to conduct or behave one's self, “walk” ... “ (Thayer, p. 42; 390)*

This was the Greek idiom for how one lives their life, because it represents the limits of where we will go and what we will do. It is translated conversation, walk, live, pass the time, but it never really loses it's main idea that it presents the limits of our movement and activities.

So while in English, we **live** our lives in Hebrew and Greek we **“walk”** or **“turn hither and thither”** in our lives. Here, God focuses on the moral character of how we “turn hither and thither” where do we stop, and how far do we go. What will we do and not do. We need to conduct ourselves in this respect with two important considerations. The first is that it is only temporary, and the second that there should be awe, reverence and respect.

throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

“The time of your stay” is another word that carries the same basic idea as stranger and a pilgrim at the beginning of the chapter. This is not our real home. We cannot become too comfortable here. The term refers to one who is dwelling in a strange land which is not their own:

*paroikia... a **dwelling near or with one...** hence a **sojourning, dwelling in a strange land** ... properly, Acts 13:17 ... Metaphorically, the life of man here on earth, likened to a sojourning: 1 Peter 1:17 (Thayer, P. 490; 3940).*

*paroikia a **sojourning in a foreign land,** (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:3940)*

The basic idea behind this term is clearly seen in its other use in the New Testament.

*The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they **dwelt as***

strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. Acts 13:17-18
 When someone from a different land begins to dwell among a new people, the difference in language, culture, customs, dress and other things cause them to see themselves and to be seen by others as strangers and sojourners. They cannot be assimilated without changing these things. Such people can change their customs language and dress to become assimilated. Christians cannot do this. (Heb. 11:13-16). This world is not our home. It is not a holy or sanctified place. It is full of things our Father does not approve of. (1Jn 2:15-17). We are only staying here, in the world, but not of the world. Our citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20-21). We must never lose sight of the realization that we are only temporary residents of this world. God can call us away from here in a moment without warning or indication. This is the “time” we are spending here. It is limited by the time when our death will remove us from this time. But the entire duration of moments that occur from our conversion to our death, are to be filled with this “fear.”

chronos ... masc. noun. Time. This word **perceives time quantitatively as a period measured by the succession of objects and events and denotes the passing of moments.** (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5550)

chronos whence Eng. words beginning with “chron”—, denotes “a space of time,” whether long or short: (a) it **implies duration**, (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:5550)

We must therefore pass this time (succession of moments filled with thoughts, deeds and words) as those who are sojourning away from our true home and desires with “fear.” In the Greek, as well as in English, the term has a secular sense and a religious one. In our daily life, fear comes any time danger crosses our path. Panic, dread and terror are all degrees of this fear, depending upon the source, duration and consequence, it can be a temporary sense of concern all the way to abject terror in the face of elements we cannot control.

phobos (*phobomai*) **flight**, the only sense in Homer ... II. **panic fear, such as causes flight**, – then generally, fear, terror, properly of **the outward show of fear**, and so distinguished from *delos* (the sensation of fear), Aesch., etc.: the Object of fear is in gen., fear of another, Id., etc.... 2. an object of terror, a terror; ...” (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:5401)

It is interesting that the original sense of *phobos* was flight, or to run away out of fear. Then it became much more common of things like fear, terror or panic that caused the desire to flee.

“*phobos* first had the meaning of **flight, that which is caused by being scared**; then, that which may **cause flight**, (a) **fear, dread, terror**, always with the significance in the four Gospels; ... (b) **reverential fear**, (I) of God, as a controlling motive of the life, in matters spiritual and moral, **not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him**, a fear which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence, Rom. 8:15 and which influences the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God...” (Vine Vol 2, p 84)

In the spiritual and religious realm, this fear often manifests itself as reverence, respect and awe, tinged with fear both because of God’s power and majesty as Creator, and His justice and righteousness as Judge.

phobos ... **profound respect and awe for deity** - ‘reverence, awe.’ ‘and (the church) lived in reverence for the Lord’ Acts 9:31. ‘let us worship ... with reverence and awe’ Heb 12:28. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT 5401)

When speaking of God, Jesus and His apostles seldom described terror and panic, but were emphatic that in spite of all God’s grace and mercy, we should never divest ourselves of this fear, awe and reverence. Jesus warned that nothing man can do should cause more fear and lead us to be overwhelmed. Our fear of God must be higher and have much more power since He has power not only over the body, but also the eternal soul.

*And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom **ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.** Lk 12:4-5*

In a similar way the author of Hebrews warned us that what happened to Israel in the wilderness should be a clear indication to us that fear and reverence should be our natural response to God, even though His grace has been revealed.

Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith

with them that heard. Heb 4:1-2

Paul took this in a different direction when warning Gentile Christians that the fact that Israel had been cast away should not lead to any feelings of entitlement on their part. It should be a clear indication that God could just as easily cast them off in exactly the same way if they were to fall into the same error.

*Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. **Be not highminded, but fear:** 21 for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. 22 Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. Rom 11:20-22*

Perhaps the closest to Peter's thoughts here is Paul's warning following a similar command. With God's promise of walking among us as our Father comes the grave duty of being worthy by coming out from among them and being sore distressed with the conduct of those who despise God.

*Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.** 2 Cor 7:1*

Thus while a lightning bolt, tornado, or tidal wave can inspire awe, reverence and respect when it is watched from a safe distance. The same event is seen very differently when it is about to bring about our own destruction. When any of these things strike us personally, they bring terror dread and fear. This is the fear that leaves a strong taste in your mouth if you live through it and which brings death if you do not.

From a distance, sin and rebellion should be seen with a reverential fear and respect that keeps us far away from them. When we are in their grasp, we should feel great terror and dread. This is how we need to conduct ourselves while we are here. With a poor spirit and a mourning heart, we must live our lives very concerned about these things.

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold,

The Spirit of God had access to many different terms for knowledge as well as a large number of grammatical ways to express it. In this case, He uses a term for know that covers initial understanding where the light comes on and we can say "I see" or "I see clearly," all the way to someone who has seen and understood it for so many years that it is thoroughly seen and understood.

"*eido... lat. video... The tenses coming from eido and retained by usage form two families, of which one signifies to see, the other to know... 1. to see 1. to perceive (with the eyes)... 2. lat. video, to perceive by any of the senses... 3. univ to perceive, notice, discern, discover... 4. to see, i.e. to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything; a. to pay attention, observe... b. ... to see about something i.e. to ascertain what must be done about it... c. to inspect, examine... d. to look at, behold... 5. to experience, any state of condition... 6. to see i.e. have an interview with, to visit...*" (Thayer, p. 172-174; 1492)

The Spirit had one other tool to express His thoughts. The grammar can describe the type and manner of the action of knowing. In this case, it is a perfect participle. A participle is a verbal noun. It takes a man who is running and calls him the runner or the running one. Here it is "the knower" or "the knowing one." The perfect tense is the tense of perfected action. This was an action that began and reached completion long ago, but the reverberations and affects of that knowledge have continued unchanged except for strengthening from that moment until the present.

As Paul revealed his prayers for the Ephesians, he revealed the conduct and understanding of a "knowing one."

*making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the **spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power Eph. 1:16-20***

This is a knowledge that is clearly understood because it is first set forth before our eyes, and then through our own efforts and prayers, that sight becomes ever more clear and detailed as the eyes of our heart and understanding are lit up with more and more information and more and more application.

Peter specifies the exact nature of this knowledge is in redemption. This ought to be something

every Christian has developed. It is the true purpose of the Lord's supper, which, being offered ever first day of the week, reminds of of the body he gave and the blood of the covenant that bought remission of sins. How could this not have become a fundamental part of all we see and know as Christians. The awesome cost for our redemption is not only see each first day of the week, but every time we sin and need to be redeemed from it. We have become both "knowing" and "seeing" from the moment of our baptism into His death, and in our remembrance of the events of the crucifixion of the inexpressible cost for our "redemption:"

"lutróœ ... 1. to release on receipt of ransom... 2. to redeem, liberate by payment of ransom... univ. to liberate... Mid. to cause to be released to one's self... by payment of the ransom, i. e. to redeem; univ. to deliver..." (Thayer, p. 384; 3084)

lutróœ ... "To free by ransom." The active denotes the action of one who has to free prisoners of war etc., hence "to let free for a ransom." But it can also be used of the one who gives the ransom, hence "**to buy back by a ransom.**" The middle means "to purchase for a ransom," the passive "bought by ransom," or "set free." In the NT we find only the middle *lutrousthai*, and it is used exclusively for the redeeming act of God or of Jesus. The usage seems to be the same as that of the LXX. ... (Kittel, TDWNT, NT:3084)

The ransom that brought about the payment of the eternal consequences for all the sins of each of us is what we are to know, see and fully understand with every waking moment. Paul made this clear by telling us that it is each single sin that brings death and the need for ransom.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 6:23 Peter's initial point was not to speak about the ransom, but of what the ransom wasn't. While all ransoms in this world are based on corruptible things like silver and gold, our ransom was far above these things.

Those who trust in their wealth And boast in the multitude of their riches, 7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, Nor give to God a ransom for him — 8 For the redemption of their souls is costly, And it shall cease forever. Ps 49:6-8

Silver and gold are corruptible things, they will not pass from this life into the next and are consequently on an eternal and spiritual scale, valueless. Even the billions and billions of dollars which the possession of all the gold and silver in existence would not suffice to buy one out of this bondage and slavery. Hence the price God paid is greater than all the money in the world. Do we often consider that our purchase price cost God more than all the money in the world. It is a price beyond calculation. Because it cost God so much more. But before he speaks of the actual cost, he powerfully reminds us of what we were redeemed from as we wandered aimlessly before God called us and purchased our souls.

from your aimless conduct

This is God's verdict on the lives we lived before He called us. We were wandering aimlessly in our turning hither and thither.

"mataios... devoid of force, truth, success, result [A. V. uniformly vain] ... useless, to no purpose.... ta mataia vain things, vanities, of heathen deities and their worship..." (Thayer, p. 392-393; 3152) *mátaios*; , adj. from *máten* (3155), **to no purpose, in vain. Vain, empty, fruitless, aimless.** It is building houses on sand, chasing the wind, (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT 3152).

What else could any form of life be when it is based on the ultimate folly and vanity.

*The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. 2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 **They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.** Ps. 14:1-3*

Whatever life one builds after leaving the presence of the Lord like Cain did is going to be a life built on futility, with no purpose no turth and no success.

*Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For **the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.** For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness"; 20 and again, "**The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.**" 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. 1Cor. 3:18-21*

Regardless of the culture in which we were raised, there will always be some of this. For those raised in idolatry, whatever explanations of creation and the inner workings of these "so called gods," along with the moral values of the culture will be vain and aimless, leading no where. For those raised in atheism or false doctrines, they will face the same issues, only in different

realms.

It was truly a cruel bondage that God redeemed them and each of us from. We should praise God highly for redeeming us from this!

received by tradition from your fathers,

This entire phrase is the translation of a single Greek compound made up of three words. The first is the term father, the second is the word beside and the third is the term hand over. So Peter is speaking of things that have been handed down from generation to generation

“patroparadotos...handed down from one’s fathers or ancestors...” (Thayer, P. 496; 3970)

patroparadotos “handed down from one’s fathers” (*pater*, and *paradidomi*, “to hand down” *para* - beside, *didomi* to give), is used in 1 Peter 1:18. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:3970)

paradidomi from *pará* (3844), to the side of, over to, and *dídōmi* (1325), to give. To deliver over or up to the power of someone. (Complete Word Study NT 3860)

This is a strong statement for some to accept. It is also an insult to any culture. That which is handed down from father to son is generally considered of the highest value. The natural respect, honor and love in which a son holds his father often leads to a son “walking in his father’s footsteps and “being a chip off the old block.” In many ways this is a good and wonderful thing. Through this powerful teaching method many Christians have helped their own children to serve God well. God commended Abraham for this:

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.” Gen. 18:19

Unfortunately, something that can work for the good, in this case has done the opposite. What their fathers had handed down to them concerning spiritual things and morality was aimless and devoid of force. Their morals, ethics, religion and life were far too low. This is obviously a very difficult thing to accept, but without ripping out the bad, they could not accept the good. The Spirit of God sought to empty them of what their father’s had handed down so He could fill them with what God wanted handed down. When God gave them up to a reprobate mind, they began giving themselves to vile lusts and evil and selfish actions.

God had to redeem us from that folly and uselessness, and it took more than silver and gold to do it. Those things handed down were grievous sins. What started with Adam passed to all and so it has come down to each one of us. This was a difficult but necessary foundation necessary to accepting the absolute holiness of God. In the second chapter of Ephesians and the first three chapters of Romans, Paul made clear that this was true of both Jew and Gentile. The Jew should have done better, but didn’t. When parents even in loving ignorance hand down vain traditions it is the duty of their godly children to reject them. Peter does not hold back here. To do so would be dangerous. Evil companionship corrupts good morals whether the companion is friend or family. Peter now returns to what God had to pay to redeem all Christians from the many schemes which man has handed down from generations gone by.

This is why Paul told the Romans to be transformed. Nothing we have learned can be fully trusted until we have assessed it by the Scriptures.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:1-2

There are three main points that Peter has laid and will use to draw some important conclusions.

(1) **conduct yourselves** throughout the time of your stay here **in fear**; 18 (2) **knowing** that you were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from (3) your **aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers**, 1Pet. 1:17-19

If we can keep these three points clear in our minds from day to day, we will be greatly blessed and strengthened. We must never lose side of the fear and respect we owe to God. As we pray, worship and serve our holy God, we must conduct ourselves with the proper reverence. We will do this when we always remember our redemption was of the highest value and not of this creation. Becoming holy as He is holy will become much easier if we keep this fear in our mind. Realizing that the knowledge and understanding what we received from our fathers, while once

seemed so normal and rational, is actually vain and empty.

19 but with the precious blood of Christ,

With the adversative conjunction “*alla*,” Peter now contrasts what they were not redeemed with (*corruptible things like silver and gold*) against what actually did redeem them (*precious blood of Christ*). Things are precious either because of its intrinsic value (gold and silver) or what they are deemed to be worth (antiques).

“*timios... a. properly held as of great price, i.e. precious... b. metaphorically held in honor, esteemed, especially dear...*” (Thayer, p. 624; 5093)

The blood of Jesus is precious because it can do something that the lives of animals and man cannot do. Only the precious blood of Jesus can bring grace, redemption, propitiation, and eternal life. After His death and shedding of His blood these things, that could never before be given have now become freely available.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Rom. 3:23-26

This truth, if we are the ones who have come to know it and continue to know it, will help us in our battle to become holy as He is holy and cease from conforming to our former lusts. We have been bought with a great price

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. 1Cor. 6:19-20

We were bought with a price from the terrible things we have done in the past. Meditating on the magnitude of that cost will make it clear that our lives, time and possessions are no longer our own. We must glorify God in our body and spirit. Pondering what Jesus suffered on the cross, makes our own sacrifices much easier to make.

When we truly understand these things, spiritually, intellectually and emotionally, all the passages in Scripture that demand crucifixion, change, putting off and putting on, abstaining, removing and denying all worldly lusts make perfect sense.

as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

This term has great Old Testament significance. For years beyond count, God had accepted only the best of the flock in sacrifice. Abel brought such a sacrifice and was accepted, Noah gave them (Gen. 8:20-21), as did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the Law it was permanently recorded that only choice lambs could be offered for sacrifice. No others were acceptable.

Any blot blemish or spot on the lamb rendered unusable. Jesus was such a sacrifice. A perfect man who was beloved to God was used to purchase such great redemption. Not only does this increase the value of what was done for us, but also powerfully illustrates why we must also be as pure clean and holy as we can possibly be. All our efforts should be employed to be holy as He is holy.

20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world,

The Spirit of God again emphasizes the complexity and antiquity of the plan of salvation. While Peter had already revealed that God had revealed certain portions of this plan to the Old Testament prophets and angels, the Spirit now reveals that this plan was actually devised before any of the events in the first chapter of Genesis had occurred. Jesus was foreordained as the “*lamb without blemish and without spot*” before the foundation of the world. The term “foreordained” is only used five times in the New Testament.

“*pro-ginosko... to have knowledge of beforehand; to foreknow...*” (Thayer, p. 538; 4067)

“*proginosko* “to know before” (*pro*, “before,” *ginosko*, “to know”), is used (a) of Divine knowledge, concerning (1) Christ, 1 Pet. 1:20, RV, “foreknown” (KJV, “foreordained”); (2) Israel as God’s earthly people, Rom. 11:2; (3) believers, Rom. 8:29; “the foreknowledge” of God is the basis of His foreordaining counsels; (b) of human knowledge, (1) of persons, Acts 26:5; (2) of facts, 2 Pet. 3:17 (Vine’s Expository Dictionary Vol 2 p 119)

Stop and take careful thought about what is said here. Before the world was founded, God already knew the Word would become flesh, and His blood would be shed to pay for our sins.

How can what was handed down from our fathers be compared to this? God's plans for us to be holy and without blemish date to before the creation even took place. Hence much more reverence and respect should be given to God's traditions than those handed down by man.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should **be holy and without blame before Him in love**, 5 having **predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself**, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. Eph 1:3-6*

Only through the gospel can these things be fully revealed and understood. They predate even man's rebellion in the garden. God's plan for Jesus' death has been fulfilled, now it is up to us to gird up the loins of our minds to make that sacrifice of value to each of us.

but was manifest in these last times

Although God knew about this plan all along, for His own reasons He kept them hidden, only giving prophecies to the prophets for them to minister to us until the fullness of time (Gal. 4:4).

Now, it has all been "*manifested*"

"phaneroo,... to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way... to make known by teaching... b. with an acc of the person, to expose to view, make manifest, show one ... Pass. to become known, to be plainly recognized, thoroughly understood..." (Thayer, p. 648; 5319)

God made it known first through Jesus own teaching while He was here and then more clearly through His apostles and prophets.

which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: Eph 3:5-6

The reason God calls these times the last days is because all that remains now is the end. Peter had already made this clear in his first sermon when he quoted Joel and revealed that what they were seeing was the manifestation of what Joel had revealed would happen in the last days.

*"But **this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days**, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Acts 2:16-17*

The "last" times/days refers to the period of time which began when Jesus become God's final spokesman.

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has **in these last days** spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; Heb. 1:1-2*

After this comes the end.

*But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. 24 **Then comes the end**, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 1Cor. 15:23-24*

for you

This forms a very pivotal clause between the two verses. It expresses the "ground" or "reason" why He was manifested in these last times.

*"dia.. B. with the accusative ... II. of **the Ground or Reason on account of which anything is or is not done; by reason of, because of...** 1. of the reason for which a thing is done, or of the efficient reason, when for greater perspicuity it may be rendered by... 2. of the reason or cause on account of which anything is or is done, or ought to be done; on account of, because of..." (Thayer, p. 132-135; 1223)*

God did it for **you!** It was "on account of" and "because of" **you!** The **you** Peter refers to here are those he identified at the beginning of the letter.

*the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 **elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: 1Pet. 1:1-2***

Yet, the words have been written in such a way that this was not closed at that time. The "you" will always be those who through the centuries do exactly what they did.

21 who through Him believe in God,

This exactly defines and describes who is being considered. As Paul told those in Athens:

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man

whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” Acts 17:30-31

Although all men have been given this assurance, and multitudes have rejected it, those who were foreordained are those who believe. They are the ones who receive this blessing.

who raised Him from the dead

The resurrection is the greatest proof which the gospel holds to its validity. The proofs of this great event are listed by Peter in Acts 2 and by Paul in I Cor 15. Because Jesus was raised, the gospel is true and we are compelled to believe. Those who reject all this are actually calling God a liar.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1Jn. 5:9-12

and gave Him glory,

Jesus suffered and died for something high and glorious. He came to earth to seek and save the lost. He died a terrible and shameful death. At no time did God act in Jesus' behalf during his life on earth to stop or prevent this suffering. Even though Jesus begged Him to do so in the garden, it was all part of God's counsel and plan from before time began.

Yet after that death, God gave Him great glory. It did not end at His death and shedding of blood. Jesus received His glory at the resurrection, ascension and return to God's right hand.

Paul made a similar point

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.... 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore **God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, Phil. 2:5, 8-9***

We can trust God to do exactly the same thing for us as He did for Jesus. Being faithful and suffering for even to death is therefore something to be proud of. This is what Shadrach Meshach and Abednego told King Nebuchadnezzar:

“If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 “But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Dan. 3:17-18

so that your faith and hope are in God.

This was all done in the manner described “so that” our faith and hope might be fully and joyfully placed in God without any doubt or wavering.

*“hoste, ...a consecutive conjunction, i.e. **expressing consequence or result**,...1. so that, [A. V., frequently *insomuch that*];... it is also used of a designed result, so as to i.q. *in order to, for to*... 2. so then, therefore, wherefore...” (Thayer, p. 683; 5620).*

God wanted us to be able to trust Him to live our whole lives here without any proof except His word that it would all be worth it. He wanted us to trust and hope in Him and be able to successfully deal with all that might come. Jesus is therefore the foundation. His death, burial, resurrection and ascension not only bought our salvation, it became a personal example to all of us that God can be trusted to make good come out of the most amazing and trying of circumstances. Since God has already done for Him what He promised to do for us, it is much easier to put our trust and confidence(faith), and our desire and expectation(hope) no matter what this life might do that contradicts it. So we gird up the loins of our mind in order to bring these things into reality in our own lives.

1 Peter 1:22-25

REVIEW: Because this is the conclusion of the entire chapter, it will be helpful to review from the beginning the logical and spiritual reasoning that has led to it. The Holy Spirit began the chapter with being “*born again*” and now ends it with the same “*born again*.” What was the purpose of the things revealed in between. They were both an the introduction and summation. God “*had bore us again*,” to create hope in our hearts. A hope unlike all others because it is a living hope that can never be lost. Regardless of how the life of a Christian unfolds, this hope will become the fire of motivation that can never be quenched. Jesus’ resurrection generated and established this hope.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has **BEGOTTEN US AGAIN TO A LIVING HOPE** *through the resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead,

First, just as Jesus resurrection had brought Him into His inheritance as King and Priest, so also it brings us to ours. As long as that hope fills the heart, the fiery trial can be endured. This inheritance cannot be harmed by anything man can do. Second, this hope was to be based on the power of God that would keep and preserve (Heb 13:5). Thus the salvation, received by promise when begotten again, (Mk. 16:15-16), would then be completed. His power would keep and preserve them until that moment arrived. What God needed from them was an unwavering faith. If they could maintain that through all their persecutions, God could do the rest.

4 **to an inheritance** incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, **reserved in heaven** for you, 5 who are **kept by the power of God through faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

There would always be a mixture of joy and grief. Joy and rejoicing because of the promises, grief because they must remain in the world as sojourners to do God’s will. A strong faith in this would lead to two different outcomes. It would bring them into an ever closer relationship with God while at the same time creating an ever widening chasm between those who were called and those who remained behind. Jesus warned that this would bring a sword that would set us against all previous relationships (Mt. 10:34-39), creating the fires of persecution. Yet even in the midst of this fire, their faith led into a triumph so great they would still rejoice with inexpressible joy! This joy as Paul observed in Romans 8:18 is based on a glory that cannot be compared with any of these fires of suffering. All they needed to do was focus on the end of their faith: The salvation of your souls!

6 In this **YOU GREATLY REJOICE**, though now for a little while, if need be, **YOU HAVE BEEN GRIEVED** by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, **YOU REJOICE WITH JOY INEXPRESSIBLE** and full of glory, 9 **RECEIVING THE END OF YOUR FAITH — THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS.**

This is the same salvation the prophets under the old covenant had be fixated upon. Even though they only had a small glimpse through their prophecies, they were intensely interested in them. Just as this salvation strengthened the prophets, it could no strengthen them. They are added to the great cloud of witnesses (Heb 12:1-3) and we are therefore all tied together.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Heb. 11:39-40

Even the angels were moved and interested in what we now have and what we are now doing with it. The fact that prophets and angels were interested in this salvation is additional motivation to endure.

10 Of **this salvation** the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the **grace that would come to you**, 11 **searching** what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He **testified** beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was **revealed** that, not to themselves, but **to us they were ministering the things** which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things

which **angels desire to look into.**

These initial truths became the foundation upon which the next section rested. Yet the mental effort to follow and keep this focused would be great. They needed to see themselves as Israel did during the Passover, with loins girded and staff in hand. Yet it was not their garments but their minds that needed to be girded and ready. With girded mind they could rest their hope fully and completely on the revelation of Jesus at His second coming which would lead to their resurrection.

13 Therefore **gird up the loins of your mind**, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; This hope would also motivate them to become obedient children, seeing all former desires and cravings in the light of the truth God had revealed. God created man in His image and likeness. Yet in this age, as a result of the world being under the influence of the evil one, all that is in the world (lust of flesh and eyes and pride of life), is not of the Father but is of the world. Hence the girded mind is focused on His ways and His thoughts in order to become holy as He is holy, and not worldly as those left behind were worldly.

14 **as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts**, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "**Be holy, for I am holy.**" As obedience strengthens, and calling on God as Father becomes more natural, His holiness becomes ours. This leads each Christian to a sense of awe, fear and reverence. Every time we call on Him as Father, these thoughts become ever clearer. An understanding of this holiness will lead to an awe and reverence that would protect them from the trap that destroyed Nadab and Abihu (not treated God as holy. (Lev. 10:1-3). It would also protect them from the sin that ensnared Moses, who struck the rock he had been commanded only to speak to, failing to sanctify and treat God as holy (Num. 10:1-12). A girded mind, focused on this holiness would protect and shield. God's commands, ordinances and even opinions and expediencies now seen through the eyes of awe, reverence and respect. The price paid for our redemption is far too high and precious for us to see it in any other way. He is the potter and we are the clay (Isa. 29:13-16).

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of **YOUR STAY HERE IN FEAR**; 18 knowing that you were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with **the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

With all now in their girded minds, they were prepared to allow the Spirit to lead to the next step.

22 Since you have purified your souls

This is a difficult phrase to translate into English, because it is a perfect participle. Some translations used "*since*" or "*seeing*" to capture the perfect. Another used the more literal "*having purified*" to simply express the state. What we need to see in this opening phrase is a pre-existent event (long ago for many) that continued and would always require the specific response revealed here.

Since everything began with "*purification.*" and because it will always be necessary, Peter draws from it. This word shares the same root with the term "*holy*" in "*be holy for I am holy.*" "*Holy*" is the translation of the term "*hagios,*" which is also translated "*saint.*" "*Purification,*" is the translation of "*hagnizo*" and the process of purification necessary to return to holiness. God introduced this to Israel at Mount Sinai. All that was revealed in Leviticus about both the moral and ceremonial purity of the priests, tabernacle, temple and sacrifices that properly prepared them to become holy to God, so they could minister to Him. All of that as a type and shadow of what God would do for Christians as described here.

"*hagnizo... to purify*; 1. Ceremonially... (to **cleanse themselves from Levitical pollution** by means of prayers, abstinence, washings, sacrifices... *to take upon one's self a purification...* 2.

Morally..." (Thayer, p.7; 48)

hagnizo ... to **purify and cleanse ritually and thus acquire a state of ritual acceptability - 'to purify, purification.'** 'many people went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves' John 11:55. ... 'he gave notice of how many days it would be until the end of the purification' Acts 21:26. to cause a state of moral purity - **'to purify, to cause to be pure.'** *hagnizo* 'he purifies himself even as that one is pure' 1 John 3:3; 'purify your hearts' James 4:8. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:48).

The Holy Spirit reminded them of the decision and commitment they made at the very beginning. God had created the power of purification, both through the blood of Jesus, and the ordinances God gave to man so that by obeying them they would purify themselves. The covenant made with God after baptism allowed Him to purify their soul, but also laid upon each Christian the obligation described here. Yet God allowed their participation. By their obedience they purify themselves. By using the perfect active participle, the Holy Spirit described an action that **they** had done (*active*), in the past, but which still affected them up to the present moment (*perfect*). This is the purpose for the perfect active tense. It described any action of the verb that someone had done in the past, but it was not a onetime act. It still continued to have an affect on the present. Every Christian is someone who "*having purified*" in the past "*has continued in purification*" up to the present moment.

How can a sinner become a purifier? How can those who are defiled and ungodly have any part in the process of purification? It is like a farmer. A farmer relies on God to make the seed grow, bring the rain, give the sunshine, etc. Yet because the farmer prepared the soil, sowed the seed, and was involved day, doing his part to bring the harvest, though his role is small, he is still a harvester.

The day a sincere sinner whose heart was full of faith and trust fulfilled **all** the conditions upon which God offered purification and made one holy again, is the moment Peter described here. Peter will return to this thought in his next letter to give a stern warning of what can occur if it doesn't have that continual impact on all our waking moments.

For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 2Pet. 1:9

By doing what Peter revealed here this consequence can to be avoided. That is the reason for the active instead of passive. Each Christian had a role in his purification, and continues to have a role. God did not simply do this for us, He did it only after we did our part in obedience! It is interesting that while most Scriptures rightfully reveal the importance of God's initiative, power, wisdom and grace, this one adds to the revelation by revealing we too were actively involved. This is part of the good news! God has set up the power of Christ's blood and the redemption it purchased in such a way that our active part is as important as His to gaining redemption. This in no way affirms that it is **as** significant, or **as** powerful. What God did is 99.9999% and what the sinner can do in obedience is .0001%. But without that .0001%, all who are lost will stay lost, in spite of all the power God expended, all the wisdom He used and all the grace He offered. Only after a sinner believes, repents, confesses and is baptized is a sinner purified. God credits a sinner after doing those things with being a purifier of himself by doing it.

In order to appreciate this truth, we must remember that God was simply setting up the spiritual realm of redemption in exactly the same way He created the material universe. In the beginning, God saw that everything He had made was very good (Gen. 1:31). Yet after completing the creation God made it very clear that He did not do everything. He could have, but He didn't. It is not an insult to God to say that He left being fruitful, multiplying, and subduing the earth to man whom He had created. These are the things God left for man to do. Such opportunities were given to man to make life challenging, exciting and worth living. He did all the things that required divine power and then left for man things to do that require human power. To this day, if a man does not sow he will not reap. If a man does not marry and know his wife, he will not have children, if a man does not study and give diligence he will remain ignorant.

This is exactly how God designed and created the spiritual creation. God exerted His divine power (2Pet. 1:3-4). He sent His Son, gave the gospel, set up great and marvelous things. Yet He left a small portion undone and asked man to do that part. It is up to man to preach the word, give diligence, and purify His soul with the means God left to do so.

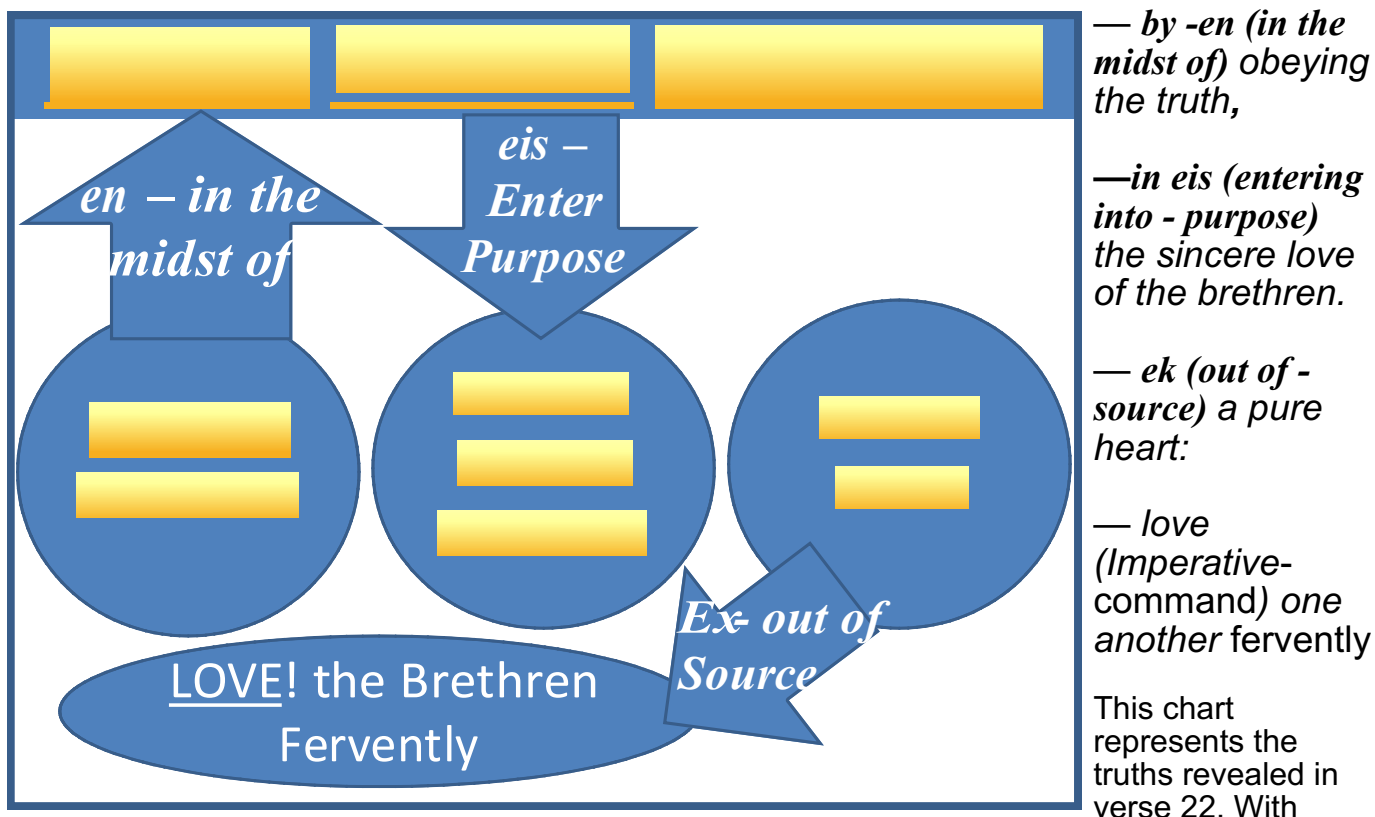
Did we purify our soul in obeying the truth? Did we use the power of God's Word to believe and trust God (Rom. 1:16)? Did we hearken to God's demand to repent by repenting (Acts 17:30-31)? Did we comply with God's request that all confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)? Did we arise and be baptized and wash away our sins (Acts 22:16)? If we answer yes to all these questions, then we have purified our soul by complying with all God's requirements (the truth). Certainly it was God who did the washing while we were in the watery grave of baptism (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:11-13). But God, in grace and mercy gave us part of the credit.

We should see this as an additional act of grace on God's part. There are many who want all the credit for the gifts they give. They do everything themselves. We should learn from God here. It is an additional act of benevolence to give those in need of grace a part in it. It is selfish to do everything just to show them just how much in our debt they are. This may make the giver feel more important, but it destroys the self-esteem of the one receiving the gift. How much better to give them a small task to do. It doesn't really earn the gift, but it makes both the giving and the receiving much more enjoyable for both sides. By giving man the tools to redeem himself, God gave man something to build self-esteem with.

It is a wonderful blessing that God credits faith as righteousness (Rom. 4:9) and purifies our souls. It is a wonderful honor that God would see our feeble efforts and reward them with praise and eternal life.

Peter used this as a tie that binds. Since all Christians have mutually used these great gifts of God, and have all made something special of themselves, it brings them into a special relationship to each another. All fight the same obstacles and endure the same agonies and disappointments. All have shared the same joys. Since each Christian has done this, it naturally leads to a sense of oneness and unity. We are all in this together.

By cleansing and purifying ourselves in obeying the truth, we become cleansed and pure. This is the foundation upon which this section is built upon.



great precision the Holy Spirit explained exactly how we purified our souls and what we continued to do after it. When we obeyed the truth, we purified our souls. As noted above, our

contribution was so insignificant as to make it easy to ignore and may false teachers have ignored it. But by choosing this preposition, we cannot misinterpret or misunderstand it. The preposition “in” is primarily used of a physical place. *IN* the house, *IN* the car, *IN* the country. Whatever benefits are gained by being inside of something are captured by this preposition. If we want to move, we have to be in the car! If we want to purify ourselves, we have to be “*in the midst of*” obeying the truth.

It was by means of and through our obedience of the truth that we entered into the condition of being *purified*. We did our part (obeying the truth), God did His part, *purified our soul*. It was the act of “*obedience*” that caused us to enter the circumstance, and God credited us for that.

“*hupakoe... obedience, compliance, submission... obedience rendering to any one’s counsels... of the thing to which one submits himself... the obedience of one who conforms his conduct to God’s commands...*” (Thayer, p. 637;5218)

The root meaning of the *akoe* is listening and hearing. The suffix “*hupo*” intensifies and qualifies the hearing, by placing us under the one who is speaking so that as those who are hearing under, we are fully compliant.

hupakoe “obedience” (*hupo*, “under,” *akouo*, “to hear”), is used (a) in general, Rom 6:16 (1 st part), RV, “(unto) obedience,” KJV, “(to) obey”; (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:5218)

When we listen under, we hear, obey and submit. It requires that the hearing be complied with and submitted to. This was God’s complaint of Saul’s obedience to His command. He did not listen carefully and seek to do it exactly as God said it:

And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah he hath also rejected thee from being king. 1Sam. 15:22-23

Because Saul did not listen carefully enough and did not place himself under God’s command, he did not obey the truth. He instead obeyed his own will. This was viewed by God as a total rejection.

By using this term for listening, Peter confirmed that what God expected of Saul He expects of all. Purification of the soul will only be accomplished through a reverential listening and the desire to comply fully with the truth revealed in the word (Jn. 17:17). This does not negate the power of the blood, it only sets God’s restrictions and parameters around it. He alone can apply the blood of Jesus Christ to a soul defiled and impure because of sin that will purify it. God promised to do this on the basis of our carefully listening and submitting to the truth. Therefore those who submit are purified and those who do not here intently with the desire to do it exactly as revealed remain defiled. This is why Jesus revealed the terrible consequences for those who refuse to fully listen under and be fully obedient.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Mt. 7:21-23

in (unto) sincere love of the brethren,

Using the preposition “*eis*” brings two ideas for any Greek speaking person. Just like “*into*” or “*unto*” does in ours. While traveling, once we enter the destination, we have completed the purpose of the journey. If we have set a goal, then the purpose or reason for all our efforts is directed toward that goal and when it is all completed, we have reached the goal:

“*eis*,... a Prep. governing the accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: *into, to, towards, for, among*. It is used II. *eis* after words indicating motion or direction or end; 3. it denotes the end; and a. the end to which a thing reaches or extends, i.e. measure or degree... b. the end which a thing is adapted to attain... c. the end which one has in view, i.e. object, purpose;... d. the end by which a thing is completed, i.e. the result or effect... (Thayer, p. 183-186; 1519).

Thus by this preposition, the Holy Spirit gave a second purpose and goal for our purification. Not only did God want our obedience to the truth to result in and bring about a purification that began when we obeyed the truth and has continued since, But He also wanted it to bring us to the goal and purpose of a sincere love of the brethren. We need to understand the direct tie between the purification of our soul and our sincere love for the brethren.

By considering as an example of what Peter is revealing, look at what John said:

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us — 3 **that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.** 1Jn. 1:1-4*

Jesus appeared to the apostles and they heard and saw everything He did while in fellowship with Him. When they declared and we obeyed the truth He taught to them, it brought us into fellowship with them, and because they were also fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, we too are on fellowship with them.

This is what Peter does here. We all obeyed the same commands and all entered into the relationship with the Father and all of us “*like Isaac are children of promise.*” Since all Christians call upon God as their Father (1:17), and each Christian was born again (1:3, 23) the next logical step leads to how we are view one another. Using the imagery of a plant Paul told the Gentiles the same thing:

For if the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

*17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, **remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.** Rom. 11:16-24*

Everyone who obeys the truth has been joined to the root and become holy. What we must never lose sight of is the obligation this brings to every Christian. The root (Abraham) supports us, both as branches in the same tree, and as children in the same family. From the time of Abraham, the brotherhood of believers has been made clear. Since we, like Isaac are also children of promise and born into the family of Abraham (Gal. 3:27-29), we are all children of God, and this new relationship must have the proper emotional response. The proper response of what all purified believers must share is “*brotherly love.*”

“philadelphia... the love of brothers (or sisters), brotherly love... In the N. T. the love which Christians cherish for each other as “brethren”...” (Thayer, p. 653; 5360)

The love within the family of those who have the same parents is the perfect term to describe the love that every purified saint within the church has those who have also been born again. This was the way everyone in Israel saw themselves because Abraham was the father of their nation. All that Israel had in this respect was brought into the church, and we are all brethren.

***Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.* 1Pet. 2:17**

*Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; **love as brothers**, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing 1Pet. 3:8-9*

*But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things **have fervent love for one another**, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” 9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. 10 As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1Pet. 4:7-11*

*But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness **brotherly kindness**, and to brotherly kindness love. 2Pet. 1:5-8*

When people have the same Father, the same hopes and dreams, the same fears and the same enemies, they have mutual affection. When they share adversities, sorrows and disappointments, they begin to build affection for each other. This is natural and not something that has to be forced. It always occurs when people think along these lines. Those who feel that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Heb. 11:13-16) and who understand that due to the holiness of God they will never fit into this world, and will have to be sojourners until they die (1Pet. 1:17) are going to grow close together in spite of themselves.

What these brethren will find with God as their Father and all others of like precious faith as their brethren is that they can only feel comfortable and content when around fellow sojourners. They will therefore grow in their affection one for another. The more godliness each brother has, the

closer the ties of affection will be felt toward them. All mature Christians are leading toward this tender affection and brotherly love.

This is why it will be genuine. It will not have to be "feigned."

"anupoktitos... unfeigned, undisguised..." (Thayer, p. 552; 505)

"anupoktitos... from a, negative, n, euphonic, and an adjectival form corresponding to A, signifies unfeigned; ... "without dissimulation," ... "without hypocrisy;" ..." (Vine Vol 1 p 324)

It will be real genuine affection. There will be no acting or pretending.

The Scriptures have a lot to say about this relationship as described in the following articles.

Our Father Abraham

Although there are many evil and wicked influences in the world. There is a very powerful and positive one in the Scriptures themselves. One of the greatest value we have in reading our Bibles are the powerful influences for good that we have there. While the world is filled with evil companions and people who will give false testimony about the value of the world, the Scriptures are filled with examples to follow, people who can influence us for good and people who can testify to us about the value of doing what is right.

One of the greatest examples of these witnesses is Abraham.

*"Listen to Me, **you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him."*** Isa. 51:1-2

The importance of this passage to Christians today will be the purpose of today's lesson. Before we can fully appreciate it however, we must clearly establish the tie between Christians and Abraham.

*just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 **Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.** 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then **those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.** Gal. 3:5-9 5*

*For **you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.** 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.** Gal. 3:26-29*
*Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that **Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.** 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and **he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar-- 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children-- 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.** 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband." 28 **Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.** 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, **we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.** Gal. 4:21-31*
*But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For **they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."** 8 That is, **those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.** Rom.9:6-8*

As one ponders these passages, it becomes evident that we are the spiritual seed of Sarah and Abraham, and that all that was said to the Jews about Abraham still applies to us today. We are to look at the law as a giant parenthesis between the promise to Abraham and its fulfillment in Christ.

*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, **that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are***

uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. 13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Rom. 4:1-13

Abraham is the father of the circumcision (the Jews) and the uncircumcision (Gentiles), but only if they “walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had.” The promise was then offered to all men. Both to those who were of the law (physical seed/if spiritually related also) and of “those who are of the faith of Abraham.”

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that **the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all 17** (as it is written, “**I have made you a father of many nations**”) in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; Rom. 4:16-17 16

There can be little doubt after looking at all these Scriptures that God intends for all Christians to view Abraham in exactly the same way that the Jews did. He is the father of our nation. Every one of us who has been baptized into Christ and trusts in Jesus Christ is of the seed of Abraham. With this in mind carefully consider that Abraham is the rock from whom we were hewn and the hole of the pit from which we were dug. All of us who are following after righteousness and seek the Lord are to look to the rock from which we were hewn and the hole of the pit from which we have been dug. God called Abraham blessing and increased him. We were all added to his family when we were baptized. We are to look to him to learn how to be righteous.

There are three pivotal moments in the life of Abraham that God bids us look to and then imitate, promising that if we do the works of our father Abraham we will be saved.

1. When God called he went.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:8-10

2. When God made an impossible promise he believed.

(as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Rom. 4:17-25

3. When God made an impossible demand and he fulfilled it.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:21-24

“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. Isa. 41:8

“Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 2 Chr. 20:7

In all this, God wants us to walk in the steps of our father Abraham. If we live as he lived, we will be blessed as he was blessed.

It is not Good for us to be alone - Genesis 2:18

So God created marriage and family, Later he also created nations. When he designed the church he incorporated both of these because he did not want us to be alone.

Why are God's children alone?

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' Mt. 10:34-37

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Jn. 15:18-20

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. Jn. 3:19-21

We are alone because we obeyed the Gospel. Multitudes have been left bereft and alone when they leave the world to walk the path leading to life that only the few are walking.

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Mt. 7:13-14

God gave us a new family and a new nation when we left the world to walk this path.

So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life. Mk. 10:29-30

So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life." Lk. 18:28-30

God has compared us to Isaac and called us the children of promise because we are all made children of Abraham

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Gal. 4:28-5:1

What can we learn from this?

Abraham is our father too!

Abraham the father of us all Rom. 4:16-25

Then you are Abrahams seed Gal. 3:26-29

They are not Israel who are of Israel

Not all Abraham's seed are of Abraham

In Isaac your seed will be called. Rom. 9:1-8

The father of all who believe. Rom. 4:11-12

The heirs of the promise Heb. 6:13-18

We are the Circumcision! Phil. 3:3

The Kingdom was Given to Us!

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'? 43

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder Mt. 21:42-44

Abraham our now the father of all who obey the gospel and all those who are baptized into Christ and become Abraham's seed are now brothers and sisters in Christ.

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock whence

ye were hewn, and to the hold of the pit whence ye were digged. 2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many. Isa. 51:1-2

Sarah is now the mother of all those who obey the gospel.

For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror. 1Pet. 3:5-6

The Bible is now our history. Scriptures are not simply the story of Israel but the beginnings of our own nation and our own history. We are truly strangers and sojourners in the world, but we are not alone! God is our Father. Jesus calls us brethren (Heb. 2:11-12) and we are the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). The great cloud of witnesses are now a part of our heritage, history, nation and family. (Heb. 11:1-12:3)

love one another fervently with a pure heart,

Not only are Christians to cultivate family ties, but of all people on earth, Christians ought to be using this *agape-love* toward one another. This is very similar to what he will do in this second letter.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness (philadelphia), and to brotherly kindness love (agape). 2Pet. 1:5-8

Thus both *philos* and *agape* are used here. The one is the natural affection of those in this world and the other is the natural affection that exists in the world to come. This term is the very essence of what God is reveals is part of His character. We should love one another because we are cultivating the true attitudes that we will feel toward each other after the resurrection.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 1Jn. 4:7-9

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1Jn. 4:16

On his final night, Jesus revealed the new nature of this command that could not have been given before.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Jn. 13:34-35

What does Jesus mean when He reveals this command as being new? This word is only used for things that are unused or fresh. Things that are recently made.

"kainos... new, i.e. a. as respects form; recently made, fresh, recent, unused, unworn..." (Thayer, p. 317; 2537)

Jesus gave a brand new command. One that could never be given before. Only after Jesus came and revealed the true nature of the love that exists in heaven could this command be given. Before Jesus revealed the fulness of *agape-love*, God was limited on how He could ask us to love those of like precious faith. Before Jesus manifested the love that exists on heaven, God could give a relative command to "love" Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. These are subjective (based only on how much love I have). Since each man has a different level of love, no one had an absolute standard. What Jesus commanded was that we compare His love for God and for us and then seek to love one another to that degree.

Although we may not yet fully comprehend it, we can now use this objective standard to compare ourselves. This is why Paul prayed that our love would grow with knowledge and discernment.

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, Phil. 1:9

Without the precise and correct knowledge of *agape-love*, it is impossible for *agape-love* to grow and abound. This is especially true when we realize that *agape/agapao* is a purely biblical and ecclesiastical word! This means it has very little history outside the Bible. Jesus took

a word from the Greek language and modified, expanded and elevated it to describe a love that at that time only existed in heaven.

“agape, ... a purely bibl. and eccl. word... affection, good-will, love, benevolence... (Thayer, p. 4-5; 26) This word expresses ideas that were previously unknown and unimaginable. Although it was used in the Old Testament to translate a Hebrew term, there was not point reference to lift it to the level where Jesus placed it. It can't even be found in the Old Testament Scriptures, because Jesus, having not yet come and died for us, could not be used to illustrate and expand it.

“agapao and the corresponding noun agape... present “the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, enquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the N.T... (Vine Vol. 3 p. 20-21)

This love had no real interest among the pagans who lived before Christ. They saw it as a servile emotion better suited for slaves. No freeman would subject his own words and responses to the needs of those he considered beneath him. They preferred the passion of *eros* which is not even used in the New Testament because it was a selfish emotion that tended toward evil because it allowed and even forced them to use others for their own sexual desires caring nothing about them.

They also saw value in *phileo* (which is the basis of *phil-adelphia*) as it was the basis of family love which was the glue that made a nation stable and powerful. But *agape* is almost never used by the poet or philosopher.

Basically, there are three expressions for love in pre-biblical Greek: *eran*, *philein*, and *agapan*. 1. *eran* is passionate love which desires the other for itself. In every age the Greeks sung glowing hymns to sensually joyous and daemonic *eros* ... *philein/philia* on the contrary, signifies for the most part the inclination or solicitous love of gods for men, or friends for friends. ... In the word *agapan* the Greek finds nothing of the power or magic of *eran* and little of the warmth of *philein*. Its etymology is uncertain, and its meaning weak and variable. Often it means no more than “to be satisfied with something... But whereas *eros* consistently engages the thinking of poets and philosophers from Homer to Plotinus, *agapan* hardly ever emerges as a subject of radical deliberation. It is indeed striking that the substantive *agape* is almost completely lacking in pre-biblical Greek... a love that does not desire but gives. ...” . (Kittel TDWNT; 26)

What these scholars reveal is that Greeks, like most of humanity treasured the selfish misuse of others for their own pleasure more than the sacrifice of self in order to please and help others, which is the love that exists in heaven and that God personifies.

“Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to “all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,” Gal. 6:10.... (Vine Vol 3 p 20-21)

All of the above is summed up by the apostle John. Since love is of God, God is love, and it was that love that sent Jesus into this world to sacrifice Himself for us, it is only in that context that we can understand this love.

Beloved, let us love (agapao) one another, for love (agape) is of God; and everyone who loves (agapao) is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love (agapao) does not know God, for God is love (agape). 9 In this the love (agape) of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, (agape) not that we loved (agapao) God, but that He loved (agapao) us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved (agapao) us, we also ought to love (agapao) one another. 1Jn. 4:7-11

This love is greater than faith (1Cor. 13:13) and the bond of perfection (Col. 3:12-14), it is used over 250 times in the NT. A lifetime of effort and toil must be put forth to grasp it's vast height, depth, length and breadth and only after it is understood can we be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph. 3:14-19)!

that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love (agape) ,ove, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love (agape) of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may

be filled with all the fullness of God. Eph 3:17-19

But God demonstrates His own love (agape) toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Rom. 5:8,10

Both *phileo* and *agapao* are given as part of our purification. It is the destination we should all be striving to reach. It is the love of intelligence and of the mind. An attitude and state of mind which prompts active good will and the best interests of others. The term “*fervently*” further intensifies it.

“*actinias... earnestly, fervently...*” (Thayer, P. 200; 1619)

actinias “earnestly” (*ek*, “out,” *temno*, “to stretch”; Eng., “tension,” etc.), is used in Acts 12:5,

“earnestly,” RV, for KJV, “without ceasing” in 1 Peter 1:22, “fervently.” The idea suggested is that of not relaxing in effort, or acting in a right spirit. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:1619)

Christians need to be intense, earnest and fervent about their feelings toward those who have obeyed the truth. God wants to see them “*stretching themselves*” as far as possible with their current understanding. We walk the same path to heaven with the same obstacles and troubles. To care about these fellow pilgrims, and to want to help them should be one of the highest priorities and most natural affections of our life.

23 having been born again,

This is also a perfect participle, but this time it is passive. Something that was done to us and the results have continued, influencing and changing us. Just as “*having been born*,” into this world as an infant would signify the event of our birth that occurred in the past, and the affects of that birth will continue until the day we die, after which a pluperfect would be used. So also, each Christian is in a state of “*having been born again*,” which also was done at some time in the past. It is also the very heart of our “*new*” family relationship. We were all “*born again*.”

“*ana-gennao... To produce again, beget again, beget anew; ...*” (Thayer, P. 36; 313)

“*anagennao ... ana*, “again, or from above,” with No. 1, is found in 1 Peter 1:3,23. ... In John 3:3,5,7, the adverb *anōthen*, “anew, or from above,” accompanies the simple verb *gennao*. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary, NT:313)

gennao “to beget,” in the passive voice, “to be born,” is chiefly used of men “begetting” children, Matt 1:2-16; more rarely of women “begetting” children, Luke 1:13,57, (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT:1080)

As noted in the definition, this term can be translated with either born again or born from above. It is a concept Jesus, very early in His ministry, while speaking to Nicodemus, revealed that would become a fundamental part of part of entering the kingdom.

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 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?” 5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Jn. 3:3-5

Paul told the Ephesians that this was a major part of their conversion and he made it very clear there was no symbolism here. We truly were spiritually dead and we were truly made alive again.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ... 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph 2:1-3

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, Titus 3:4-7

No matter what a man or woman was before becoming a Christian, when they are baptized into Christ and go through the new birth they are all one in Christ.,

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:26-29

There has been no change in thought, Peter is using this as the reason why we should love one

another fervently. In baptism we were begotten again in a marvelous way.

Born Again of Water and the Spirit

Introduction: Although Nicodemus was *“the teacher in Israel,”* he was not prepared to understand Jesus opening words to him. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* With the solemn repetition of *“amen,” amen,”* Jesus gave special emphasis to His words. Not only for Nicodemus, but since John recorded it, for all mankind. While everyone else only used *amen* to end a prayer or confirm a scripture (Deut. 27:15-26; 1Cor. 14:27), Jesus often prefaced a very important statement with it. Jesus solemnly affirmed the necessity of being born again with these two amens! When Nicodemus expressed his ignorance by asking how, Jesus again repeated the *amen, amen,* adding *“unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”* (Jn. 3:3-7). Obviously Jesus wanted to give him a greater insight about the kingdom of God and the power that would be necessary to “see” and experience it. Today, as we read His words, we must also give it careful thought. Have I been born again? What did I do to be born again? If I have not been born again, I have neither seen or entered the kingdom of heaven.

Even today the words of Jesus are difficult to fully understand. Yet since even our first birth is an amazing example of God’s power that is beyond our ability to understand or explain, it should not surprise us that a new birth is also difficult. How God placed an eternal spirit into our material body is still a great mystery: *“You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb,” “I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.”* While we simply accept an infant slowly growing in the womb and being born, the actual process is beyond our comprehension. (Ps. 139:13-16; Ecc. 11:5).

Hence it is no wonder that the new birth would also be exceedingly complicated. We are fortunate today that the steps of obedience to the gospel conveying us into the kingdom have been revealed. Like our first birth, we can at least understand the means, though the actual events will continue to exceed our comprehension.

The most simple thing Jesus said was that when we see and enter the kingdom of God we have been born again. While throughout both John’s and Jesus’ ministry, they preached *“the kingdom of heaven is at hand,”* Jesus promised to give *“the keys to the kingdom”* to Peter, so when Peter preached his first sermon, the doors were opened and the new birth accomplished. Jesus had warned Israel that *“the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it,”* again revealing the *“kingdom of God”* would begin after they rejected Him. Jesus also told His disciples, *“Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”* This kingdom would begin and the new birth revealed, after the power He described came. (Mt. 16:19; 21:43; Mk. 9:1).

On the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Jesus was rejected and crucified, the power Jesus promised for the kingdom to come was revealed by the coming of the Holy Spirit. Peter then revealed that Jesus had been *“exalted to the right hand of God,”* as both *“Lord and Christ”* (Acts 2:22-39). This is the direct fulfillment of the words of Daniel: *“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.”* and *“I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”* (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; Dan. 2:44; Ps. 2:6).

As the sermon reached it’s conclusion of “let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Those who believed stopped Peter to ask him what they could do. Peter’s answer revealed the mystery of Jesus’ words to Nicodemus. *“Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:36-39).

How is baptism being born of water and the Spirit? First, Peter was preaching words inspired by the Holy Spirit and was quoting the Holy Spirit’s prophecies. Nothing done on that day was done by Peter. Everything spoken and done was the power that came with the Holy Spirit. When Peter commanded baptism wherein is the water, it was clearly *“of the Spirit.”* The simplicity of this is amazing. When *“those who received his word were baptized,”* everything

Jesus described to Nicodemus was fulfilled and they were born again. At that moment they were “*delivered from the power of darkness: and “conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”* (Col. 1:13-14), Hence “*there were added that day about three thousand souls.* (Acts 2:41). **So the same water in which we die with Him, are buried with Him and are raised with Him is the same water of the new birth.** The same water that saved Noah and his house through the ark, and saves us through baptism, is also the water allowing us to be born again of water and the Spirit. The same water that delivered Israel from the slavery of Egypt, and delivered us from the slavery of sin in baptism is also the water to be born again. Lastly, the same water that created the circumcision of Christ by being baptized is also the water allowing us to be born again of water and the Spirit. Everyone of these things was accomplished when we submitted to the commands of the Holy Spirit to be baptized in water.

Can we prove these conclusions with other evidence? First, when the Eunuch heard Philip preaching these things and he saw water he said, “*Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?*” Why would he ask that question? The Holy Spirit had inspired Philip to preach Jesus to him and clearly baptism was part of that preaching. **Second**, instead of correcting the Eunuch, he agreed with him, saying “*if you believe you may.*” Then, “*both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.*” **Third**, as soon as “*they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more*” (Acts 8:38-39). Why would the Spirit do that unless the Eunuch had been born again of water and the Spirit? Philip was finished. As soon as the Eunuch was baptized, the gospel had been obeyed and the eunuch was saved and born again! He was born of the Spirit because he obeyed the words inspired of the Holy Spirit and he was born of water when he went down into the water, was buried, and came out.

As Peter described his use of the keys for the Gentiles, he said: “God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.” (Acts 15:7). He was sent by the Holy Spirit to preach “*words by which you and all your household will be saved.*” These “*words*” ended with abruptly when the Spirit fell upon them. Since they were clearly candidates for the new birth, Peter said: “*Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized*” and he “*commanded them to be baptized*” (Acts 11:14; 10:47-48). Thus just like Israel, the Gentiles were also born again of water and the Spirit when they were baptized.

Conclusion: There can be no doubt that being born again is another amazing thing that baptism confers upon us. Jesus knew that this would be the case and to describe what actually occurred when we are buried with Him in baptism, He said, “*amen, amen, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” and “*amen, amen, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*” He solemnly assured each of us that after we were baptized into Christ, we were born again of both water and the Spirit. So only after baptism have we entered the kingdom of God.

Born Again of Water and the Spirit The New Birth

Introduction: When Jesus revealed to Nicodemus the necessity of being born again of water and the Spirit it was incomprehensible to him (Jn. 3:3-6). But now that the Holy Spirit guided us into all truth (Jn 16 :12-13), we are able to fully understand it. It is just like many of the things recorded in the creation. They would be inexplicable if we did not see them every day. Imagine speaking of birds, beasts and herbs yielding seed if they were not among us to see. Since every sinner under the New Covenant must be born again to enter the kingdom, all we have to do is look at the conversions in Acts to find the information. Added to that are the passages the Holy Spirit used to "teach us all things."

The Holy Spirit revealed His own role in our new birth when He said, "you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." Since the Holy Spirit is the author of all truth, anything that has to do with truth must be done by Him. Hence those who obey that truth can only purify their souls through the agency and means of the Holy Spirit. Without Him no one could obey the gospel, since *"no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit."*

(1Cor. 12:3). Once that truth has been obeyed, Peter used a perfect participle to reveal that the action had been completed but the affects of the new birth have continued: *"having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God."* The *"living and abiding word of God"* is now called the *"incorruptible seed"* that led us to be *"born again,"* for *"the seed is the word of God."* (Lk. 8:11).

When we obey the truth, the living and abiding word of God is the seed to bring about the new birth. So everyone who *purified their souls in obeying the truth,* is *"born again"* *"of water and the Spirit."* In order to understand *"born again of incorruptible seed,"* we must see the real nature of this *"living and abiding Word of God."* It is also called the *"sword of the Spirit,"* *"is living and powerful,"* is *"effectively working (energeo - energizing) in you who believe"* and it is also *"the power (dunamis - dynamite) of God for salvation to everyone who believes."* (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; 1Th. 2:13; Rom. 1:16).

Because the Holy Spirit is the author and does His work through it, and the Holy Spirit is eternal and omnipotent, so is His word. It not only holds the power of the seed to bring forth life, but also the power of the rain. *"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven ... giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."* (Isa. 55:10-11). This is why when we *"receive with meekness the implanted word,"* it *"is able to save your souls."* When we take that word into our hearts and believe it, the power that exists to bring about new birth is now residing within our heart, waiting for the water to bring complete it.

The water in baptism is the additional element used by the Holy Spirit to complete the new birth. *"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"* (1Cor. 12:13). The moment everything is completed, the new birth occurs while we are under the water of baptism. Just as Naman was cleansed of his leprosy when he dipped the seventh time, so also we who are *"baptized into Christ"* and *"put on Christ"* become *"a new creation"* the moment we are *"baptized into Christ."* (Gal 3:27; 2Cor. 5:17). When we believed the gospel to the point where we *"received Him,"* *"He gave the right to become children of God, and through the new birth of baptism we were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* then at that moment, *"that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (Jn. 1:12-13; 3:6-7). More simply put, but saying exactly the same thing, *"For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."* (1Cor. 4:15).

Jesus' death on the cross was accomplished so that "He might sanctify and cleanse her (the church) with the washing of water by the word". The washing of water is done in baptism and the word brings the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the means God used to save us. It was *"through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,"* that the new birth was accomplished. Peter praised God that He made this possible: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope."* (Eph. 5:25-26 Titus 3:5-6; 1Pet. 1:3).

It is during the "washing or regeneration" (born of water) and "renewing of the Holy Spirit" (and born of the Spirit) that the power of the new birth is initiated and completed. It is in these two terms that the new birth is revealed. That baptism is the washing of water and the washing of regeneration is testified multitudes of times. Yet none more clearly than Ananias' words to Paul *"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins,*

calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts. 22:16). The word “regeneration” takes in many of the concepts. It is defined: “a new birth, reproduction, renewal, re-creation, the word denotes, the restoration of a thing to its pristine state, its renovation.” (Thayer NT:3824).

This is exactly how Paul described baptism, first, we were “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Before we were baptized, we were still “being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh,” but after baptism, “He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” (Col. 2:11-12) and “even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2:10). This is the power and affect of being born again of water and the Spirit.

While we are in that water and the new birth is occurring, we are told, it is the “renewing of the Holy Spirit.” The word “renew,” also has a very important meaning, “to cause something to become new and different, with the implication of becoming superior - ‘to make new, renewal.’” (Lou & Nida NT:342). What went down into the water and what came up out of the water are entirely different. Now we are “a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2Cor. 5:17). Thus, “of his own will he brought us forth (gave birth to us) by the word of truth” (Jas. 1:18). We are then in the condition described by Peter, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God. (1 Pet 1:23).

Conclusion: In our “first” and natural birth, power beyond our comprehension was exerted when an eternal spirit was placed into “an earthen vessel,” “formed out of clay,” and “formed by God.” (2Cor. 4:7; Job 33:6; Isa 45:9). At the end of our life, “the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.” (Eccl. 12:7). As Peter, we also know that, I too “must put off my tent.” (2Pet. 1:14). The spirit that will return to God is dead and lifeless without the new birth. As with Adam and Eve, and as Paul, so also each of us: “was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” (Rom. 7:9-10). At the moment we heard the gospel, we were given the right to the power to be made alive again, through a complete renovation for the better. Then, “we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” and “even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.” (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:5). What a amazing thing we have in the living and abiding word of God, and in the amazing power of baptism.

not of corruptible seed but incorruptible,

God is the Creator of all seed and all living things have some form of seed. The first living things God created was the vegetation on the third day and He made it very clear that each would produce it’s own seed.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 So the evening and the morning were the third day. Gen. 1:11-13

Yet as Peter points out in the next verse, this is corruptible. It withers and the flowers fall. Whether this is only a result of the curse or something intended in the original creation is nowhere revealed. Since all flesh is as grass, our flesh is also begotten of corruptible seed. But in the new birth from above, the seed itself is also incorruptible. It is not of this creation and does not share in the affects of the curse. He places the terms corruptible and incorruptible side by side.

“*phthartos* “corruptible,” akin to A, No. 2, is used (a) of man as being mortal, liable to decay (in contrast to God), Rom. 1:23; (b) of man’s body as death-doomed, 1 Cor. 15:53-54; © of a crown of reward at the Greek games, 1Cor. 9:25; (d) of silver and gold, as specimens or “corruptible” things, 1 Peter 1:18; (e) of natural seed, 1 Peter 1:23. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, NT:5349),

aphartos “not liable to corruption or decay, incorruptible” (a, negative, and *phthartos* - “corruptible” is used of (a) God, Rom. 1:23; 1 Tim. 1:17 (KJV, “immortal”); (b) the raised dead, 1 Cor. 15:52; © rewards given to the saints hereafter, metaphorically described as a “crown,” 1 Cor. 9:25; (d) the eternal inheritance of the saints, 1 Peter 1:4; (e) the Word of God, as incorruptible” seed, 1 Peter 1:23; (f) a meek and quiet spirit, metaphorically spoken of as “incorruptible” apparel, 1 Peter 3:4. (Vine’s Expository Dictionary, NT:862),

While in heaven, incorruption has continued unbroken, after God was forced to curse the earth, everything is now corruptible. Since the curse, there is no life on earth that is not brought into

being by a corruptible seed and ultimately goes through the process of corruption. Because plants do it much more quickly than man, God used it to illustrate what also happens to all men. Corruption and incorruption are placed side by side when speaking of the resurrection.

*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised **incorruptible, (aphthartos)** and we shall be changed. 53 For this **corruptible (phthartos)** must put on **incorruption, (aphtharsia)** and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this **corruptible (phthartos)** has put on **incorruption, (aphtharsia)**, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 1Cor. 15:52-54*

In order to give man the way back to becoming incorruptible again, God had to create a special seed. A seed that is itself incorruptible and will lead us back to incorruption. This seed is not liable to corruption or decay. It is imperishable. It remains exactly the same as the years pass and turn into centuries and millennia. It can never change, never corrupt, never decay. It is eternal.

through the word of God

Just as everything else produces after its kind, the eternal seed of the word of God can produce after its kind. The word of God is the incorruptible seed and it is "*through – the means or Instrument by which anything is effected*" this seed that we have been born again.

Only the word of God can be the means and instrument through which we can be begotten again into eternal incorruption. In the parable of the sower, Jesus stated that the word of God is the seed that is sown in the hearts of men.

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Lk. 8:11

which lives and abides forever,

Now we have a deeper and richer understanding of God's word. It has been moved into a position so high that it cannot be comprehended by man. It can only be accepted by faith because we can see nothing in this life to illustrate it. All living seed is corruptible, and that which is inanimate has no life to instill into others. All other books are just man's writings, and no matter how profound has no life within itself. They are just like rocks and metal. There is no life in them and they can give no life to anything else. But this is not true of the Word of God. It is alive! We may not understand or have the ability to explain it, but it is truth. God's word lives, and God's word abides forever. These are two separate points. First, God's word lives.

*For the word of God is **living and powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12*

God has given life to His Word just as He has given life to man. When God gathered the dust of the earth He breathed into it the breath of life and then that dust, entrusted with an eternal spirit became alive. It now moves and has being, with an eternal soul within it.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Gen. 2:7

At that time, God has proved that He can take something that would otherwise remain lifeless (dust) and form it into something that had life. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. If God can do this to dust, He can certainly do this to His Word.

*All Scripture is **inspired (breathed out)** by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17*

The Word of God has life and gives life. Just as all the seeds of this creation have life and can bring new life, so also can the word of God. It imparts life to those who obey and believe it. It is a seed. God put the life-giving power in the word. Power that can bring the new birth and power that instills growth.

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 1Th. 2:13

Not only is the word living, but it also abides forever and is eternal. God has put a power in His word that is beyond anything else in this life. Nothing else here "*abides*" forever except our souls.

meno ... appears 118 times in the NT ... 2. to Time; to continue to be, i. e. not to perish, to last, to endure: of persons, to survive, live ... The basic meaning of meno as an intransitive verb is remain, continue, stand firm; as a transitive verb to wait on, expect ... In the NT one finds also the derivative meanings dwell (John 1:38 f.), remain alive (21:22 f.), continue to live (1 Cor 15:6), be permanent (3:14), remain in a situation (7:8,11,20,24,40). ... When God is the subject of meno in significant passages, the linguistic prehistory of this usage is in the LXX, where menein ton aiona is

characteristic of God or God's plan, righteousness, or word, esp. in the Psalms. "As distinct from the mutability and transitoriness of everything earthly and human, God is characterized by the fact that he endures" (Hauck 575). However, the significance is not primarily the idea of a suprahistorical nature of God, but rather that one can rely on him within history. Thus in the NT *menei eis ton aiona* is cited from Ps 111:9 LXX (2 Cor 9:9) and Isa 40:8 (1 Peter 1:25): God's righteousness or word "has unshakable permanence into eternity" (Exegetical Dictionary of the NT 3306).

One cannot kill that which is eternal. God's word is alive and is eternal. It cannot be destroyed, it cannot be marred, it cannot be corrupted. It will always exist to give life and faith to all who will hear it.

Can we comprehend what has happened to our souls and all of our brethren when this great change occurs. We are so different from everyone else that there is simply no way to compare it. The rest of humanity is still in the flesh. God's people look like them because we still have fleshly bodies, but that is where the comparison ends. Each Christian has been born again by the living and abiding word of God. Like it, they will live and abide also. Thus the word of God is the closest thing to the tree of life that we have access to today. We should see it as the life giving elixir that strengthens the spirit and the soul.

24 because "All flesh is as grass,

The term "because" is a conjunction that builds from the previous thought and leads to a conclusion. It joins these two verses together revealing the account or the reason why all of the above is true.

"*dioti*, conjunction, equiv to *dia touto, hoti*; 1. *on this account that, because...*" (Thayer, p. 162; 1360)

"*dioti*, conjunction for *dia touto hoti* for the reason that, since, 2. indirect, *wherefore, for what reason,*" (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon.NT:1360) It can be translated "on this account that" "through which things" or "because." It will reveal the difference between all other seeds and the word of God.

This is direct quote from Isaiah, part of the commission of John the Baptist.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; 5 The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." 6

The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass, And all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." Isa 40:3-8

It was part of John the Baptist's role to bring this into the minds of those to whom he preached. Peter had heard that preaching and had been a disciple of John before he met Jesus and later become an apostle. By inspiration he now makes application to all who are in Christ. All human existence and all that the human race can produce has a sad but true parallel with grass. While grass in the English language is one specific plant, in Greek, it has several different meanings. It can be used of different crops and also of grass.

chórtos; ... masc. noun. The grass or herbage of the field in general (Matt 14:19; Mark 6:39; John 6:10; James 1:10,11; 1 Peter 1:24; Rev 8:7; 9:4). In Matt 6:30; Luke 12:28, *chórtos* includes the lilies of the field of which the Lord had just been speaking. Hay or grass cut down and dried (1 Cor. 3:12, applied figuratively to deficient works). The stalk or blade of corn as distinguished from the ear (Matt 13:26; Mark 4:28; Sept.: Gen 2:5; Ps 37:2; Prov 19:12; Isa 40:7,8). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:5528)

Every year in the spring the fields are green with new growth and every year as the fall moves into winter, those same fields are brown. So also the hills and meadows that are so green at the beginning of the year, but as summer comes and the moisture ends, these same fields turn to brown and gold because they have already corrupted. All that is human as well as what humans can do is just like that grass. This is how God sees the generations coming and going. He sees them green in their youth, ripe in their middle age and cut down in their old age. It never varies and it never changes. All flesh is just exactly like this grass.

and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.

Continuing the comparison of man and the grass on the hills, God also expressed the truth that every beautiful thing of splendor and magnificence that man can accomplish in his life under the sun is just like a beautiful wild flower that grows on the hills. The seven wonders of the world, the legacies of man's great wisdom and understanding are just like pretty flowers on the mountain side. All the splendor, the glory, the magnificence and brightness of that what man has produced, all the greatness of present day technology, and all the beauty and sleekness of new

products are just like little flowers to our Eternal God. Everything man produces, not matter how beautiful and glorious it might be is just like the flower of the grass. Peter will explain the end of all things in his second book is to be burned and dissolved.

The grass withers, and its flower falls away,

In the spring all is green, vibrant, beautiful. It contains its life force. It is lovely beyond description, but when summer waxes hot and fall waxes cold, all becomes barren. The grass withers away the flowers fall off, fade and blow away. It happens so fast that it is the perfect example of that which Peter seeks to illustrate here. All that man has done and ever might do is just like the flower and that grass. It will wither and fall. The seven wonders of the ancient world are even now crumbling and though our present day technology still waxes greater and greater it too will fade. Only things that are eternal can abide for more than a few generations of man.

25 But the word of the Lord endures forever.”

In contrast to the above, the word of God is eternal. It will never wax old, never decay, never wither and fall. Generations will, civilizations will, beautiful creations of man will, and each of us reading this letter will, But never the word of God. It abides and remains forever. What a glorious tribute to that which begets us again. It abides, endures and remains. The word endure is repeated from 1:23. The definition there deserves to be summarized and repeated.

“in the NT *menai eis ton aiona* is cited from Ps 111:9 LXX (2 Cor 9:9) and Isa 40:8 (1 Peter 1:25):
God’s righteousness or word ‘has unshakable permanence into eternity’”

All His precepts are sure. 8 They stand fast forever and ever, And are done in truth and uprightness. Ps. 111:7-8

The word of God abides and remains into the eternal ages. It transcends everything in this world and life.

“*aion... 1. age ... a human lifetime ... life itself... 2. an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity...*

Hence, in the N. T. used 1. *for ever ... 3. ... most of the New Testament writers distinguish... this age...* the time before the appointed return or truly Messianic advent of Christ... the period of instability, weakness, impiety, wickedness, calamity, misery, — and *aion mellon*, the future age ... the age after the return of Christ in majesty, the period of the consummate establishment of the divine kingdom and all its blessings. (Thayer, p. 18; 165).

The awe, reverence and respect that we ought to hold toward this word is here established. It is the only thing that will transcend this world and by obeying it and following it, it can bring us to the same eternity.

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

Peter now makes application to Isaiah’s prophecy. The same Spirit that inspired Isaiah now revealed to Peter that it is exactly the same word that was then being proclaimed in the gospel. The phrase “by the gospel was preached” is a single Greek term that sums up the proclamation of God’s truth as the bringing of good news to the lost. It is a broad term with several different ways to translate as illustrated by the difference in the translations:

*Now this is **the word which by the gospel** was preached to you. (KJV/NKJV)*

*And this is **the word of good tidings** which was preached unto you. (ASV)*

*And this is **the word which was preached** to you. (NASU/NIV)*

*And **this word is the good news** that was preached to you. (ESV)*

These are all possible ways to translated the single term “*euangelizo*”

“*euangelizo... to bring good news, to announce glad tidings... used in the O. T. of any kind of good news... of the joyful tidings of God’s kindnesses,... in particular of the Messianic blessings... in the N. T. used esp of the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God, and of the salvation to be obtained in it through Christ, and of what relates to this salvation... I in the Active(rare in Grk. Auth....) ... II Passive... of persons, glad tidings are brought to one, one has glad tidings proclaimed to him... III as deponent Middle... to proclaim glad tidings; spec. To instruct (men) concerning the things that pertain to Christian salvation... “ (Thayer, p. 256-257; 2097)*

Even the KJV translates it “*preach the gospel*” only 22 times out of the 54 times it is used in the NT. It also translates this word with “*preach,*” and “*preach the good news.*” On the other hand all the translations also use “*preach the gospel*” from time to time.

*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, **preach any other gospel (euangelizo)** to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone **preaches any other gospel (euangelizo)** to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. Gal 1:8-9*

So it can be understood in either sense. The point Peter is making is that the word he and all the other apostles had preached to them is the word that is described in Isaiah 40: above. It seems more logical and spiritual to translated it preached the gospel here since it is clearly what Peter is describing and the word is the gospel. One final proof must also be considered. All the

translations used “preach the gospel” in its previous use in this chapter.

*To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have **preached the gospel (euangelizo)** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:12*