

ADULT

Lesson Commentary

Summer Quarter, 2009

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Editor's Note

Our Adult Sunday School study for summer, 2009, will be the Epistles of First and Second Peter. The title for our study is *Joyful Christian Living in a Pagan World*. Through the study of Peter's epistles, it is my prayer that every student will understand how to live a joyful Christian life despite opposition and that all will dedicate themselves to living life full-force for Jesus.

In the first epistle, the apostle Peter gave details of how to begin the Christian life and wrote about the affect Christian living should have on the world. This letter was written to God's people who were undergoing severe persecution in five Roman Provinces that are now in Northern Turkey. As those Christians took their stand for Christ, it caused them to be foreigners and strangers in the same communities in which they lived. Peter went on to describe how to live for Christ in various venues and scenarios. In 1 Peter 2, he revealed how to live for Christ before the lost world. In chapter 3, he shared details of living for Christ in the home, and later, during difficult times of persecution. In chapter 4, Peter wrote about living for Christ in service, then in faith. In 1 Peter 5, he revealed how to live for Christ in humility. Throughout the letter, Peter encouraged those Christians to live faithfully for Christ, to endure suffering and to be living examples of Christ in the midst of their pagan society. Peter gave practical instructions that are totally applicable today, especially for church members whose Christian convictions are at variance with their culture.

In Peter's second epistle, he shared the secrets of living for Christ by God's power. He communicated principles of victorious living when facing problems caused by false teachers, rampant immorality and latter day scoffers. In chapter 1, Peter wrote about how to live for Christ by the Word of God and great Christian character qualities. In chapter 2, he revealed how to live for Christ in purity. Then in chapter 3, Peter wrote about how to live for Christ until He returns. Second Peter ends with the charge for God's people to live holy and godly lives in light of Christ's soon and sudden return. The title of the study, *Joyful Christian Living in a Pagan World*, is the recurring theme of both epistles.

This *Adult Lesson Commentary* is an in-depth study of the Scripture passages in each lesson. Every lesson consists of three elements: the narrative of the Scripture passage; the manna, a discussion of interesting and informative topics related to the Scripture passage; and the word studies, which are based on specific words from the original language used in the Scripture text. The number following each word study identifies the word by the numbering system of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and is provided for the benefit of those who want to examine the Word of God in greater detail.

We appreciate the three contributors to this *Adult Lesson Commentary*: Charles Law, who wrote the lesson narratives; Terry Parrish, who translated interesting Greek vocabulary for the word studies; and Roger Stewart, who prepared the mannas.

Larry E. Clements, Editor in Chief of Publications
Baptist Sunday School Committee

About the Writers

Recognized for their knowledge, wisdom and understanding of the Holy Scriptures, the writers of the *Adult Lesson Commentary* are faithful pastors, teachers and spiritual leaders among the Lord's churches. Following are a few biographical notes about these men.



Charles Law was reared in Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he attended Central Baptist Church from early childhood. He was saved and baptized as a teenager and announced his call to the ministry at age eighteen. A year later he was ordained by his home church.

Brother Law was educated at The College of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. He then earned a Master of Bible Languages degree and a Doctor in Bible Languages degree from the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Brother Law pastored churches in Arkansas for several years, after which he entered the chaplaincy of the United States Air Force. For twenty years he represented the churches of the American Baptist Association as an Air Force chaplain. He has served as a writer of various curricula for many years. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children, a daughter, Paula, and a son, Chancy, and two grandchildren. Brother and Mrs. Law reside in Sherwood, Arkansas, where they faithfully serve the Lord.



Brother Terry Parrish is a writer of the *Adult Lesson Commentary*. He was born and raised in McDougal, Arkansas. He was saved and then baptized at age 11 by Pleasant Grove MBC of Success, Arkansas. He graduated high school at Corning, Arkansas in 1971. He entered the Missionary Baptist Seminary that fall and earned the Bachelor, Master and Doctor in Bible Languages degrees from that school.

Brother Parrish served as pastor of Clearwater in Judsonia, Graceland in Little Rock, Second Baptist in Malvern, Baseline in Little Rock and Springhill in Alexander. He now serves as the Executive Vice President of the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock. He has served as writer for the BSSC for over ten years. He serves now as one of the Recording Secretaries for the American Baptist Association.

He is married to the former Sandra Grable of Little Rock. They have two children, Clay and his wife, Amanda, and Shelly and her husband, Wesley Loftin. They have one grandson, Spencer Parrish.



Brother Roger W. Stewart was born and reared in Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he attended Central Baptist Church throughout his entire childhood. He was saved and baptized at age nine. At age seventeen he announced his call to preach before graduating from Northside High in 1984. He soon found himself a student at the Missionary Baptist Seminary where he earned a Bachelor of Theology degree in 1991.

Meanwhile, Brother Stewart married Gena Ashlock in 1986 and was ordained to the Gospel Ministry by Victory Missionary Baptist Church in Sherwood, Arkansas, later that same year. God blessed the Stewart's with two boys—Brett in 1989 and Hayden in 1991. After pastoring in Michigan for nine years Brother Stewart returned to Southeast Arkansas where he was afforded the opportunity to complete his Master of Theology (2006) and Doctor of Theology (2008) degrees at the Missionary Baptist Seminary.

He is pastor of Olive Branch Missionary Baptist Church (formerly Olive Street MBC) in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He has served ABA churches in Holly Grove, DeWitt, and Star City, Arkansas, as well as in Coloma, Michigan. He is currently a member of the Standing Missionary Committee where he serves as Assistant Clerk. Brother Stewart is Vice President of the Alumni Association for the Missionary Baptist Seminary.

First and Second Peter

Introduction

The Epistles of 1 and 2 Peter are part of what many people consider the general epistles of the New Testament. These epistles are so designated because they were not addressed to a specific congregation or individual as were such letters as Romans, Galatians and Philemon. The books of 1 and 2 Peter were written by the best known of the twelve apostles and are the only known record of any of his writings.

The Apostle Peter

This man was originally known as *Simon*, the Greek form of *Simeon* who was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Jesus gave him the name *Cephas*, which was Aramaic for *Peter*, the name by which he is best known (Mark 3:16; John 1:42). Both *Cephas* and *Peter* mean “rock.” Peter was a native of Bethsaida, a town on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. Later, he evidently moved to Capernaum where he and Andrew his brother, along with James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were fishermen (Luke 5:10). Energetic and enthusiastic, Peter seems to have been a natural born leader. He frequently acted as the spokesman for the apostles. Unfortunately, he was also impulsive and impetuous. During the early years of the New Testament era, Peter’s primary ministry was to the Jews while Paul was called to be the apostle to the Gentiles. (See Galatians 2:8.)

The Epistle of 1 Peter

The Recipients. This epistle was written “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1). The places mentioned were provinces, or regions, in what is generally known today as Asia Minor. Most of the churches in these places either were established by Paul or were begun by men who were strongly influenced by him. While those congregations consisted primarily of Gentile believers, many Jewish Christians also were included in those bodies. Many Bible scholars teach that Peter wrote this epistle primarily to the Jewish believers in those churches; however, it is clear from 1 Peter 2:10 that Gentile Christians certainly loomed large in Peter’s mind.

The Purpose. Peter’s primary purpose in writing this epistle was to encourage his readers in times of testing. The word *suffer*, in some form, appears fifteen times in this letter. In some instances the sufferings of Jesus are the subject, but, even then, Peter often used the Savior’s sufferings as an example for believers. Generally speaking, Christian suffering in Peter’s time was inflicted by one of three sources: (1) unbelieving Jews, (2) pagan Gentiles or (3) the Roman authorities.

The Date. It is widely held that the Epistle of 1 Peter was written sometime during AD 60-65, which was about the time Paul wrote his so-called

prison epistles. Which of those two apostles was executed first cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. However, many Bible scholars believe that both Peter and Paul died during the rule of the infamous Nero, who was the Roman emperor during AD 54-68.

Some Distinctives. This epistle includes many teachings regarding the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, such as divine election and foreknowledge, redemption and atonement, the believers' status in this dispensation, the respective roles of wives and husbands and how to suffer as a Christian. Contrary to what many people have assumed, the apostle Peter mentioned that he witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus (1 Peter 5:1).

An Outline. First Peter can be readily divided into three basic sections: (1) The Believers' Glorious Inheritance (chapter 1), (2) The Believers' Earthly Pilgrimage (chapters 2; 3) and (3) The Believers' Fiery Trial (chapters 4; 5).

The Epistle of 2 Peter

The Recipients. This epistle was written to the same recipients as was 1 Peter, as can be seen by the apostle's designation of this letter as "this second epistle" (2 Peter 3:1). Note that those to whom the Epistles of 1 and 2 Peter were written were not only believers but were members of local churches scattered throughout the provinces and regions mentioned in 1 Peter 1:1.

The Purpose. If 1 Peter was a warning that believers are subject to suffering because of their Christian identity, this epistle is a call to faithfulness in the face of persecution. Most second epistles are reiterative and exhortative—and sometimes even corrective as well—and so it is with 2 Peter. Peter also wanted to help his readers keep their focus on the second coming of Christ and all that will be associated with His return.

The Date. Most likely, this second epistle was penned fairly soon after the writing of 1 Peter. The indication is that Peter wanted to address the readers of this letter while the contents of his first epistle were still fresh in their minds. Peter mentioned that his death was possibly near (2 Peter 1:14). Whether or not he, like Paul, was in prison and was facing execution when he wrote these words is not known. (Compare 2 Timothy 4:6.)

Some Distinctives. Included in this epistle are the seven qualities which, when added to one's faith, will promote Christian maturity (2 Peter 1:5-8). Peter also mentioned his experience on the mount of transfiguration when he witnessed the majesty of Christ (verses 16-18). The second chapter of this letter is similar in content and character to the Epistle of Jude. Peter referred to the three worlds, the past, present and future worlds—"the world that then was" (2 Peter 3:6), "the heavens and the earth, which are now" (verse 7) and the "new heavens and a new earth" (verse 13).

An Outline. The Epistle of 2 Peter has four essential divisions: (1) The Great Christian Qualities (2 Peter 1:1-11), (2) The Scriptures Exalted (verses 12-21), (3) Some Warnings About False Teachers (2 Peter 2:1-22) and (4) The Second Coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:1-18).

Origin of New Life in Christ

I Peter 1:1-12

In the opening chapter of this epistle Peter, quickly addressed the matter of Christian suffering, which is the most prominent theme in this letter. However, in the first few verses of this chapter, he referred to the new life which believers have in Christ. One who does not have this life will not be able to endure the times of testing which are likely to occur during the earthly life. This new life is the result of the new birth experience, and, after one receives the gift of eternal life, he or she is to follow the Savior in the more abundant life.

PETER'S SALUTATION

1 Peter 1:1, 2

This epistle begins with the identity of the writer and its recipients. The inspired writer also mentioned the divine purpose which was behind all of the people and events that were involved in the issues at hand.

An Apostle of Jesus Christ (verse 1). In keeping with the custom of his time, Peter immediately identified himself as the writer of this epistle. The reason for that practice was because letters were generally written on scrolls which were then rolled up and sent to the intended recipient. The scrolls were rolled in such a manner as to enable the reader to begin reading the contents immediately upon unrolling the message. Thus, it was important for the reader to know from the beginning who wrote the letter. Peter used the name by which he was best known among the early churches. He described himself as an apostle, which is from two Greek terms which essentially mean "one who is sent." Peter's status as an apostle was established by Jesus Christ. He did not choose that position for himself, nor was he put in that office by any individual or group. The apostolic office was among the spiritual gifts given to the early churches until the New Testament was completed. (Compare Ephesians 4:11.)

The Scattered Strangers (verse 1). The recipients of this epistle were "the strangers scattered throughout" (verse 1) what is known today as Turkey or Asia Minor. The Greek word for strangers is the same as in Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11 where it is translated *pilgrim*. (Note: In both of these references a different term is used for *strangers*.) The Epistle of 1 Peter was addressed to people who were not to regard this present world as their home but were to anticipate the eternal home. The word *scattered* is from *diaspora*, which

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The Scattered Strangers (1 Peter 1:1): The believer was merely a stranger, an alien, a foreigner, a sojourner and an exile on this corrupted earth. He was doing nothing more than visiting for a while; he was not a permanent resident. The first century Christian found his home with God; he was a citizen of Heaven. The persecution that scattered the early Christians served only to unite them in the fortress of the perfect will of God—carrying out the Great Commission (Acts 1:8). The oppression was severe but short. The believer knew that he was just passing through this life. The burden of Nero was temporal while the blessing of God was eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Regardless of where journeys of the believer may have taken him, he was never at home until he was in the Father's house (John 14:1-3).

referred to the Jewish people who were living in places other than Judea or Galilee. In James 1:1, the same term is used to refer to “the twelve tribes which are scattered [*diaspora*] abroad.” The scattered strangers who were the primary recipients of 1 Peter were Jewish believers who were living outside of Palestine in places Peter specifically designated.

The Five Regions (verse 1).

Peter particularly mentioned five regions in which those whom he addressed were living: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.

Pontus. This region lay south of the Black Sea on the northern coast of present-day Turkey. At times it was a Roman province, and at other times it was administered as part of another province.

Galatia. This term describes a province in the central part of Turkey. The name Galatia also referred to a

district that was more encompassing than its provincial boundaries. Much of Paul's first missionary tour was in southern Galatia.

Cappadocia. This name also identifies a region as well as a province. Cappadocia was generally east of Galatia and north of Cilicia.

Asia. This was the most influential of the provinces and districts mentioned by Peter. It occupied roughly the western third of present-day Turkey. Among the early churches in Asia were those in Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Pergamos and Smyrna.

Bithynia. This place was north of Asia and west of Pontus. On his second missionary journey Paul attempted to go into Bithynia and preach the gospel, but the Holy Spirit would not permit him to do so (Acts 16:7).

Divine Election and Foreknowledge (verse 2). In the opening statement of this verse, Peter associated divine election with the foreknowledge of God. Those who are the “elect” (verse 2) are those who have trusted Jesus as Savior. Through His omniscience God certainly knows who will be saved and who will not accept Jesus. Humanly speaking, foreknowledge generally affects our decisions. However, this is not so with God. He is not affected by human emotions or motivations. He can know something without acting on such knowledge. Even though God knows who will become one of the elect, no one becomes part of that number unless he or she trusts Jesus as Savior. God

has determined that all those who trust Jesus will be saved, but He does not force anyone to accept Jesus, nor does He keep anyone from doing so. Divine election and foreknowledge are related, but they are not the same.

Sanctification of the Spirit (verse 2). The election which Peter mentioned is “through sanctification of the Spirit.” (verse 2). The word *sanctification* is from a Greek term which denotes a setting apart. Through salvation believers are set apart, or sanctified, to serve God. This sanctification is not the means of salvation but the result of it. The Holy Spirit is involved with one’s sanctification in that He is responsible for the new birth, as it is a birth of the Spirit (John 3:5-8). Moreover, He is responsible for the believer’s new life, as it is life in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11). The Holy Spirit also aids in the progressive aspect of a believer’s sanctification. He provides guidance and assistance as one seeks increasingly and steadily to become conformed more to the image of his or her Savior (See Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18.)

The Sprinkling of the Blood (verse 2). Following his reference to *sanctification*, Peter mentioned the matters of obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. Christian obedience should be the result of one’s realization of the sanctification he or she has through salvation. Peter’s reference to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is an allusion to the manner in which the Tabernacle was consecrated, or sanctified, upon its completion, and how the people were consecrated, or sanctified in their use of the Tabernacle as the acceptable manner of worshiping God. When Moses sprinkled the blood on the altar and on the people, they responded, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.” (Ex. 24:7; Compare Hebrews 9:18-20.)

Grace and Peace Multiplied (verse 2). In the final statement in this verse Peter declared, “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (verse 2). The grace to which Peter referred in this instance is not saving grace. Instead, it is sustaining grace. (Compare 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.) The recipients of this epistle were likely to experience many adversities, including persecution. They needed divine grace to sustain them in the face of such difficulties. Likewise, the peace which Peter mentioned is not the peace with God that is established through faith in Jesus as Savior. It is, rather, the peace of God “which passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). This peace helps one keep his or her focus on Jesus and His work and not on the circumstances with which believers might have to contend. Peter wished for his readers such grace and peace in great abundance.

PETER’S DOXOLOGY

1 Peter 1:3, 4

After addressing the recipients of his letter, Peter immediately gave praise to God. He mentioned particularly who God is, what He has done for believers and what those who belong to Him can anticipate in eternity.

Blessed Be God (verse 3). The first thing Peter mentioned in what could be considered the body of his letter was praise for God. This is reminiscent of the first thing Zacharias, the elderly father of John the Baptist, declared when God removed his temporary muteness (Luke 1:68). The Greek word for *blessed*

is a term which essentially means “to speak well of.” The word *eulogy*, which literally means “a good word,” is from the same word family. (Note: In many instances, such as in the Beatitudes, the word *blessed* is from a different term which basically means “happy.”) Peter acknowledged God as the Father of Jesus Christ. This is a reminder that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. God is the Father of every individual through creation. He is the Father of each believer through regeneration. But He is the Father of Jesus Christ in a specific and special sense.

Begotten by a Living Hope (verse 3). Not only is God the Father of Jesus Christ, but He is also the Father of all believers, a reality made possible through the new birth experience. Those who trust Jesus as Savior are begotten again. Jesus spoke of the same phenomenon when He told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again (John 3:3). The new birth occurs when one accepts Jesus as Savior. While faith makes it possible for one to be born—or begotten—again, there is also “a lively [or living] hope” (1 Peter 1:3) involved. As used in the Scriptures, the word *hope* refers to more than a mere wish. It denotes an unshakable expectation that what is promised in the Bible will come to pass. In this sense, faith and hope are closely related. Faith sees what lies ahead, and hope accepts it as a reality or an accomplished fact. The believer’s hope is living because it is given by an eternal, all-powerful God.

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The Incorruptible Inheritance (1 Peter 1:4): An inheritance often came with conditions attached—that has not changed. The will had to be read, the children had to be present, the lawyers had to sign the documentation and adopted children had to be included. These were some of the prerequisites. While there was that similarity, there was also a notable dissimilarity. Peter acknowledged the inheritance of those Christians was neither subject to passing away nor liable to decay. The incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of the Christian stood in direct contrast to that of an earthly inheritance which would have faded away like a flower that withered and wilted. All earthly inheritances—because they were tangible—eventually faded away, but the eternal inheritance of the Christian possessed no tangible, sensual elements that might have been subject to decay and defilement. It was forever—that had not changed.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (verse 3). Spiritual life for believers is possible because Jesus Christ lives. He died on the cross but was raised from the dead after three days. In a sense the resurrection of Jesus was the crowning point of His redemptive work because if it were not for His resurrection no believer would remain in a saved condition. Because He is alive forevermore, He can make intercession for believers, thus assuring them that their salvation is firm and secure (Heb. 7:25). If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, one would immediately lose his or her salvation with the commission of the first sin after being saved. We live because He lives, and if He were not alive we would not be spiritually alive. The living hope that believers have would never be

realized because their hope would not extend beyond this earthly existence. (Compare 1 Corinthians 15:19.)

An Enduring Inheritance (verse 4). The “lively hope” (1 Peter 1:3) which believers have because of their faith in Jesus Christ will be realized in an enduring inheritance, one that is “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” (verse 4). The word *inheritance* denotes something that is bequeathed to someone by a benefactor. The basic Greek term refers to something that is received by drawing a lot. An inheritance is not earned nor can it be demanded as a right. Instead, it is given. The believer’s inheritance from God is “incorruptible” (verse 4) in that it cannot be marred or diminished by any destructive agent or force. It is “undefiled” (verse 4) in that it is without any stain or blemish. It “fadeth not away” (verse 4) because it will never become old, worn out or outmoded. The inheritance that believers can anticipate is indeed glorious because we are “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). We will share in all that He has.

Fadeth Not Away: this word is used to name a flower in the Greek world. The inheritance is permanent. A flower that is a perennial never goes away. The promise of God in this verse is that Heaven will be forever. Word Study #263.

A Heavenly Inheritance (verse 4). The enduring inheritance which is promised to those who have been begotten again by a living hope is a certainty because it is “reserved in heaven” (verse 4). The Greek word for *reserved* primarily means “kept,” “protected,” “guarded,” and so forth. The One who keeps, protects and guards the believer’s inheritance is the Omnipotent God Himself. No being or force in the universe is wise enough or powerful enough to destroy or diminish what is in store for those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. The inheritance is “in heaven” (verse 4) in the sense that it is associated with God whose dwelling is in Heaven and it is characterized by heavenly qualities—incorruptible, undefiled and enduring. However, the actual realization of the inheritance will likely start for believers on earth during the millennial reign of Christ and then continue into eternity following the conclusion of the Millennium.

SAINTS PRESERVED

1 Peter 1:5, 6

Not only does God guard the believers’ inheritance, but He also protects them. Some people claim to believe that Christians will persevere into the eternal age. The truth is, however, that believers will be preserved into the eternal age. We do not have to persevere—in fact, we cannot do so—but God preserves us.

Kept by the Power of God (verse 5). An individual’s salvation is the gift of God in every respect. (Compare Ephesians 2:8, 9.) The grace that makes salvation available is from God as is the faith through which one receives salvation. The keeping by which salvation is made secure is also from God. Believers do not have to depend upon themselves to remain saved, but they are kept saved by the power of God. The Greek term for *power* in the first part of verse 5 is *dunamis*, which denotes “ability,” “strength” or “force.” The words

dynamite, *dynamic* and *dynamo* are derived from *dunamis*. The Omnipotent God is the most powerful Being in the universe. No angel or human can wrest a believer from His hand. (Compare John 10:28-30.) Satan is certainly a powerful creature, but he is no match for the One who created the universe and sustains all things by His mighty power.

The Revelation of Salvation (verse 5). In the last part of this verse Peter referred to “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” The Greek word for *revealed* essentially means “uncovered” or “unveiled.” The expression *last time*, as used here, denotes the time that shall begin with the coming of Christ in power and glory. That is when the full realization of salvation will be experienced by believers. By that time all the saved—except for those who will be saved during the Millennium—will have been resurrected, judged and rewarded. The moment one trusts Jesus as Savior he or she is saved as much as he or she will ever be. However, one’s salvation will not be complete until all that God has promised for believers has come to pass. The glorification of believers, which includes their resurrection and recognition for faithful service, will be the final aspect of their salvation.

Rejoicing in Salvation (verse 6). Salvation is a joyous experience. Practically everyone who has experienced salvation can recall the joy that was felt at the realization that he or she had been saved. Joy is an integral component of salvation. When the people of Samaria were saved as a result of the preaching of Philip, the Scripture states “there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:8). However, a believer can lose or forfeit the joy of salvation because of sin. King David is a classic example of this, as can be seen by one of the petitions he made in his prayer of confession following his sin with Bath-sheba, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation” (Psalm 51:12). David did not pray for his salvation to be restored. He did not lose his salvation, but he had lost the joy of his salvation. The readers of Peter’s epistle would have their faith tested, but they could rejoice in their salvation nonetheless.

Rejoicing Despite Trials (verse 6). Even though salvation brings great joy into one’s heart, the believer’s rejoicing is mixed frequently with the adversities with which we often are faced during our earthly existence. Peter told his readers that “for a season” (verse 6) they would be “in heaviness” (verse 6) because of the “manifold temptations” (verse 6) they would have to endure. The Greek word for *season* primarily means “little,” “short” or “brief.” As used here it indicates a brief period of time. *Heaviness* is from a term which basically denotes “grief” or “sorrow.” The term *manifold* essentially means “of many and various forms or sorts.” The Greek word for *temptations* speaks of tests or trials. Satan tempts people so that they will commit sin. God does not tempt anyone to do evil, but sometimes He does allow tests or trials to befall believers (James 1:12-14), and that was what Peter meant by this reference to temptations.

THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS CHRIST

1 Peter 1:7, 8

Previously, Peter referred to the revelation of the believer’s salvation which will occur in connection the events of the last time (verse 5). Associated with

the final revelation of our salvation will be the appearance of Jesus Christ, at which time He and all His saints will receive praise, honor and glory.

The Believer's Trial of Faith (verse 7). In the first part of this verse, Peter mentioned the likelihood of trials for his readers which would test their faith. The Greek word for trial is an entirely different term from that for temptations in verse 6. The words are similar in meaning but have no relationship in their origin. The test mentioned in this verse is like an assayer's examination by which metal is checked to determine its value. Peter's example of gold that is subjected to fire illustrates this truth. Fire separates the gold from any impurities that might be in the ore. The more intense the fire, the purer the gold becomes. A believer's faith is said to be even more precious than the finest gold. The faith to which Peter referred is not saving faith, but the faith by which one lives each day and maintains a consistent testimony for the Lord. Serving faith is valuable because of what it shows to others.

Tried: our faith is tested, proved and examined to see whether it is genuine. This word means "to assay to find the purity of metals so the buyer will not be cheated." Procedures are followed to determine the value, and our faith often is tested to prove its value. Word Study #1381.

Manna

The Precious Trial of Faith (1 Peter 1:7): The early Christian understood the trials of being a true disciple of Jesus Christ. He also knew the benefits of that life. As the Christian encountered adversity, the trial proved his faith either true or false before God. His calling was to carry God's Word to his world in spite of those difficult days. These hardships created genuineness in the faith that would not be easily subverted. God has always used troublesome times to test the faith of His children as was seen in the case of Job (Job 1:20-22). If the faith of the early Christian was worth keeping (2 Tim. 4:7) and contending for (Jude 3), and, if it was at that present time keeping them (verse 5), then, surely, it was worth giving away as the Pentecostal prescription "and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8) had challenged. This faith was more precious than the most precious metal known.

Praise, Honor and Glory for Believers (verse 7). Like gold tried in the fire and purged of all dross, believers will be "found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (verse 7). The terms *praise*, *honor* and *glory* indicates recognition and reward. The determination regarding rewards for Christians will be made at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (See Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10.) The recognition of the faithful service performed by a believer will occur at the millennial reign of Christ, which will be when He appears in great power and glory (Matt. 16:27). In the eyes of this present world Christians are often ridiculed, sometimes despised and occasionally pitied. But in the kingdom age believers will be regarded with the utmost respect and accorded the praise, honor and glory

they are due because of who they are and what they have done through Christ.

The Appearing: this is our English word *apocalypse*. It means “laying bare or to disclose the truth.” It is not speaking of impending disaster. Instead, it reveals the coming of Jesus. It is translated *revelation*. Word Study #602.

The Appearing of Jesus Christ (verse 7). In the closing phrase of this verse, Peter referred to the appearing of Jesus Christ, an event that shall occur when He returns in power and glory to defeat the anti-Christ and his forces and establish His kingdom on earth. (See Revelation 19:11—20:6.) The word *appearing* is a term that essentially denotes a sud-

den manifestation or appearance. The time when believers will be acknowledged for their faithful service will be at the appearing of Jesus Christ. There is also an aspect of Jesus’ second coming that will be characterized by stealth and silence. This will be when He returns to catch away all believers, those who will still be living and those who have died in the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Following the Tribulation Period, Jesus will come in such splendor that every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7).

Unseen but Beloved (verse 8). Since the recipients of this epistle lived a considerable distance from Judea and Galilee, none of them had the opportunity to see Jesus during His time on earth at His first coming. Even though they had not seen Him with their physical eyes, they could see Him with eyes of faith. Those believers were among the great multitude of people whom Jesus said would be blessed because they would believe without having actually seen Him (John 20:29). Peter commended his readers not only for their faith, but for their love as well. Even though they had never seen Jesus, they loved Him. Their love was *agape* love, which is love that is based on principle. One reason those early Christians loved the One whom they had not seen, was because they had seen Him exemplified in the lives and messages of men such as Paul, Peter and other faithful servants of Christ.

Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory (verse 8). True faith leads to great rejoicing. Peter reminded those to whom he wrote of their “unspeakable” (verse 8) joy. The Greek word for *unspeakable* indicates something which cannot be repressed. Even though many of Peter’s readers would be subjected to severe trials of their faith, their joy would not be diminished by their adversities. Christian joy is in a person and is not dependent upon one’s situation or circumstances. The expression *full of glory* also describes the word *joy*. The term *glory* suggests the joy to which Peter referred is associated with the glory of Christ. Thus, true Christian joy is irrepressible because it looks beyond the experiences of one’s earthly life and anticipates what will be received and experienced in the life to come.

THE END OF FAITH

1 Peter 1:9, 10

One does not have to understand all that is involved in salvation to be saved. All the Old Testament believers were saved and the prophets in that

time foretold of the time when salvation shall be realized in its completion despite the fact that they did not always understand fully all that they taught through the Holy Spirit.

The End of Faith (verse 9). Despite the ordeals which the recipients of this epistle would have to endure, they could be certain of “receiving the end of your faith” (verse 9). The Greek word for *end* denotes a goal or a conclusion. The final realization of salvation for believers is when they receive “the salvation of your souls” (verse 9). The word *soul* refers to a person’s entire being, or that which makes an individual who he or she is in distinction from everyone else. The soul is the entire being—body, mind and spirit. One’s spirit is saved the moment he or she trusts Jesus as Savior. The salvation of the mind is a progressive matter that occurs in the believer’s daily life on earth, ending in victory when he or she goes to be with the Lord. The body is saved when it is resurrected from the grave. When the body is resurrected, it is reunited with the believer’s spirit and mind which will have been with the Lord while the body remained in the grave awaiting the resurrection (1 Thess. 4:14). When the believer’s body, mind and spirit are reunited, he or she will realize the consummation or goal of his or her faith.

The Prophets’ Inquiry (verse 10). The salvation of the soul which Peter mentioned in verse 9 was a matter about which the Old Testament prophets wondered. They had some understanding of the resurrection, as can be seen in Martha’s remarks to Jesus regarding Lazarus (John 11:24). (*Note:* Martha’s grasp of the resurrection was based on the teachings of the Old Testament concerning this matter.) What those people did not realize was how a believer’s body, mind and spirit will all be reunited in the resurrection. They had some understanding of the events associated with the end time, but people of this dispensation can have a greater realization of such matters than did those who lived prior to the first coming of Jesus. That was what Peter meant

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The Inquiring Prophets (1 Peter 1:10): Two legitimate questions of the prophets were, Who would be the Messiah? and When would the Messiah appear? Isaiah spoke of the suffering of the Messiah (Isa. 53) but described His glory in later chapters. Psalm 22 is a horrific description of the Lord’s death, while Psalm 24 is a demonstrative picture of His glory. The time had come for the Messiah to show himself to an ungrateful and unrelenting people (John 1:11). Paul confirmed that “the fulness of the time was come” (Gal. 4:4). Many factors converged to make first century Palestine the right time and the right place for the advent of the Messiah: (1) Roman roads made travel possible; (2) A postal system facilitated the spread of the gospel; (3) Relative peace and tolerance canvassed the Roman empire; (4) Koine Greek was the universal language; (5) The legalistic Pharisees had sufficiently demonstrated the futility in keeping the Law; (6) Civilized cities were fast becoming pagan. Any further delay would have served only to confuse an already concerned Israel.

by his reference to “the grace that should come unto you” (1 Peter 1:10). It is entirely due to the grace of God that we are living on this side of the cross, and, because of that, we have the benefit of the full Bible by which we can know more about the divine purposes. The matters of the resurrection and rapture of all believers, the first and second resurrections and the intervening millennial reign of Christ were only dimly understood by the old prophets.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Peter 1:11, 12

Between the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of believers is a period of time that is called by various designations by several Bible scholars. Some people have called it the church dispensation because of the prominent role played by the Lord’s churches in fulfilling the Great Commission. Others have designated this period as the dispensation of the Spirit because of all the activities of the Holy Spirit during this time.

The Inspiration of the Prophets (verse 11). The Old Testament prophets were men who were used by God to proclaim His message to the people. There were two classes of prophets, those whose prophecies were recorded in a specific book of the Bible, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and others, and those such as Elijah, Elisha and others whose prophecies were not recorded in a designated book. Whether or not the prophets had a book in the Bible named for them, they all spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In this verse Peter designated the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ because in so many instances the Old Testament prophets spoke of Him in their messages. “To him [Jesus] give all the [Old Testament] prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

The Testimony of the Prophets (verse 11). The Old Testament prophets testified of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (verse 11). The prophecies regarding the sufferings of Christ foretold His crucifixion and all the agonies associated with it. (Compare Psalm 22:1-18; Isaiah 53:1-12.) The glory that followed the sufferings of Christ began with His resurrection and will culminate in His coronation at the establishment of His millennial reign. Note that in the Greek language the word *glory* is plural. As Christ experienced many sufferings, so shall He receive many glories, including His victory over death and the grave, His ascension to the Father’s right hand, His coming in great power to defeat the anti-Christ and his forces, His judgment of the nations and His assumption of the throne of David. In addition, there is the glory Christ receives from the faithful service of believers.

The Ministry of the Prophets (verse 12). In the first part of this verse Peter noted that the revelations received by the Old Testament prophets not only were for themselves and the people to whom they ministered, but for people of this dispensation as well. The Scriptures are a unit. They are to be interpreted and applied in the light of that reality. Critics of the Bible try to set the Old Testament against the New Testament, the Pentateuch against the Prophets, the writings of Paul against the four gospels and the book of Acts and so forth. This is an improper use of the Scriptures, however. When

the Bible is interpreted correctly, one will see that there are no contradictions. Each book or section of the Scriptures is in exact harmony with one another. Thus, the Old Testament speaks to us even today.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit (verse 12). Whether one considers the words of the prophets or the gospel proclaimed by the apostles and others, the message is about Jesus Christ and the One who inspires and illuminates is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent from Heaven on the day of Pentecost. The apostle Peter mentioned that “the angels desire to look into” (verse 12) the things which he had mentioned in this passage. Even though the angels are highly intelligent creatures, they cannot comprehend all that is involved with the salvation of believers because they cannot be the recipients of such a gracious gift. The angels can understand divine power, but divine mercy is beyond their ability to grasp. They cannot fathom how the Almighty, sovereign God uses such weak sinful humans in accomplishing His purposes.

ORIGIN OF NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

1 Peter 1:1-12

Jesus declared in John 10:10, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” By nature each person is dead in trespasses and sins, but through faith in Jesus one receives spiritual life (Eph. 2:1, 5). As one demonstrates in his or her daily walk in the life that has been received from Christ, he or she enjoys the more abundant life. When Christ returns in power and glory, believers will receive the consummation of their faith, which is salvation of the soul, that is, the individual in his or her entirety.