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a *Grace Notes* course

## **1 Peter**

### **Lesson 1**

#### **1 Peter 1:1-7**

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# 1 Peter

## Lesson 1

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## 1 Peter

### *Course Outline*

There are ten (10) lessons in the 1 Peter course. Each lesson has a Quiz, to be completed and returned to Grace Notes after studying the lesson. Here is a list of the Philippians portion to be studied in each lesson.

<b>Lesson 1</b>	<b>Introduction; 1 Peter 1:1 to 7</b>
Lesson 2	1 Peter 1:8 to 18
Lesson 3	1 Peter 1:19 to 2:2
Lesson 4	1 Peter 2:3 to 15
Lesson 5	1 Peter 2:16 to 3:4
Lesson 6	1 Peter 3:5 to 14
Lesson 7	1 Peter 3:15 to 4:5
Lesson 8	1 Peter 4:6 to 15
Lesson 9	1 Peter 4:16 to 5:7
Lesson 10	1 Peter 5:8 to 14

### *Instructions for Completing the Lessons*

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Read the whole book of 1 Peter often. It is a short book, and reading it many times will help you understand the story much better.

#### **Instructions**

1. Study each topic carefully. Take particular care to trace all of the discussion through all of the Bible passages which are included. **Review** all of the notes in the all of the topics. **Some Quiz questions will be taken from the Scripture passages which are called out in the lesson.**
2. Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is “open book”. You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.
3. When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to **SAVE your file**. If the file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.
4. To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

## Introduction to 1 Peter

### I AUTHOR

A. Peter (1:1, 8; 5:1)

1. Peter's given name was Simon.
2. Jesus gave him the name Cephas (John 1:42). Cephas means stone or rock. The Greek translation of the Aramaic word Cephas is **petros** which also means stone or rock. Peter is the only man in the New Testament called by this name.
3. Peter occupied a favored place among the apostles.
4. He occupied a central place in the book of Acts (first 12 chapters).
5. He married and lived in Capernaum.
6. He worked in fishing business with his brother Andrew.
7. The Lord came to him in a special appearance after the resurrection (Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:5).
8. God used Peter to win 3,000 souls to Christ on Pentecost.
9. Peter had an important part in the first Church council in Acts 15 (AD 50; Peter is not mentioned after this in the book of Acts).
10. Paul refers to Peter in Galatians 1:18; 2:11; I Cor. 1-4; 9:5.

B Peter was literate but unschooled.

1. Called from his trade as a fisherman.
2. Called to be a fisher of men (Luke 5:1-11).

C Peter's public ministry spanned 30 years and stretched from Jerusalem to Rome.

D Peter employed Silas as his secretary to write the letter (I Pet. 5:12). Silas was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:36-37).

E. Parallels between I Peter and his sermons in Acts: Cf. I Peter 1:20 with Acts 2:23; cf. I Peter 4:5 with Acts 10:42 Cf. I Peter 2:7-8 and Acts 4:10-11 In each passage, Psalm 118:22 is quoted and applied to Christ to refer to his rejection by Jewish leaders.

F I Peter is quoted extensively in early church history. This epistle was quoted extensively in the early church in such writings as the letters of Polycarp, Clement and Irenaeus. Martyred by Nero (Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius; Clement of Rome, Dionysius of Corinth tell us he suffered martyrdom). Origin said he was crucified with his head downwards. He died AD 67-68.

### II DATE

A. AD 64

B. This was shortly before Nero's persecution. Peter warns that persecution is imminent.

### III DESTINATION

A. Peter wrote to the five Roman provinces of Asia Minor in what is modern day northern Turkey.

B. Many Jews lived in these provinces, therefore many quotations from the Old Testament are found in I Peter (1:1). Diaspora" (Jews who lived outside Palestine and yet looked on it as their native land)

C. To Christians everywhere (1:18-19,23; 2:10,24).

D. Peter was especially the apostle to the Jews (Gal. 2:7-8).

E. The epistle was written predominantly to Hebrew Christians but also includes Gentile Christians.

### IV PURPOSE

A. The purpose of I Peter is to enable Christians to face persecution in the grace of God (5:12), to prepare them for suffering.

B. A secondary purpose is to encourage believers to face persecution and suffering (1:6-7; 5:8-9).

C. Peter encourages believers to lift their eyes above present difficulties to God's grace. He shows them the hope ahead (1:3). He points to the example of Christ (2:21-23).

### V OUTLINE

I. Salutation (1:1-2) A. Author (1:1a) B. Addressees (1:1b-2)

II. Perspective in Suffering (1:3-2:10) A. The perspective of hope (1:3-12) B. The perspective of

the Word (1:13-25) C. The perspective of a new position (2:1-10)

### III. The Pressures of Suffering (2:11-4:11)

- A. Pressure of evil desires (2:11-12)
- B. Pressure of the state (2:13-17)
- C. Pressure of employment (2:18-25)
- D. Pressure of the home (3:1-7)
- E. Pressure of social life in the church (3:8-12)
- F. Pressure of the world (3:13-4:6)
- G. Pressure of service (4:7-11)

### IV. Prescriptions for Suffering (4:12-5:11)

- A. Prescriptions for endurance in suffering (4:12-19)
- B. Prescriptions for right attitudes in suffering (5:1-11)
  - 1. Attitudes of elders (5:1-4)
  - 2. Attitudes of all believers (5:5-10)

### V. Conclusion (5:12-14)

## VI CANONICITY (proof of why this book belongs in the Bible)

### A. External Evidence

1. Irenaeus quotes it (175)
2. Tertullian quotes it (190)
3. Clement (Alexandria) quotes it (195)
4. Clement of Rome quotes it (96)
5. Polycarp quotes it (116)
6. Epistle of Diognetus quotes it (117)
7. Testament of the 12 patriarchs uses it (120)
8. Papias uses it (120)
9. Hermas uses it (130)
10. Unanimously cited as authentic

### B. Internal Evidence

1. Calls himself Peter (1:1)
2. Acquainted with the life of Christ and his teachings 5:5 - allusion to Christ girding himself with a towel (John 13:35) 5:2 - feed the flock (John 21:15-17) 4:14; 5:7,8 - sayings of the Lord 5:1 - "witness of the sufferings of

Christ" (3:18; 4:1) Lingers over the person of Christ in his sufferings (2:19-24)

## VII BACKGROUND

- A. Asia Minor was highly heterogeneous.
- B. Asia Minor was prosperous.
- C. Religion was eclectic.
- D. Jews had privileged position in Asia Minor.

## VIII PLACE OF WRITING

A. Babylon ( 5:13), the city on the Euphrates, not Rome. B. Babylon was the center of the Eastern Dispersion.

## IX OCCASION

- A. Ominous shadow of persecution was the occasion for the letter.
- B. After Nero's persecution in Rome, Christians lived in fear for their lives.
- C. The persecution was unofficial, sporadic and social rather than legal (3:17; 4:12-19).
- D. The nature of the persecutions were slanderous attacks (4:14,15; 4:4,5; 2:13-17,11,12,16; 5:2-3) F. Suffering is mentioned 16 times (cf. 1:6; 2:19; 3:14,17; 4:12-16; 5:9)

## X THEMES

- A. Comfort for suffering Christians
- B. Hope in time of trial C. Cf. 1:6,7; 2:12,19,20,21; 3:13,14,16,17; 4:1,4,12,14-16,19; 5:9-10

## XI KEY VERSES

- A. 1:3-7
- B. 4:12,13

## XII KEY WORDS

- A. "Hope" (5 times)
- B. "Glory" (16 times - with cognates)
- C. "Precious" (5 times)
- D. "Grace" (10 times)
- E. "Suffering" (16 times; implied 6 times)

**XIII PECULARITIES**

- A. Parallelisms with other epistles (especially with Romans and Ephesians)
- B. Emphasis on the suffering of Christ (1:11,19-21; 2:21-24; 3:18; 4:13; 5:1)
- C. Many Old Testament allusions and quotes
- D. Excellent Greek
- E. Primarily practical rather than doctrinal epistle

**XIV MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**

- A. Peter's name occurs 210 times in the New Testament, Paul's name 162 times and all other apostles 142 times.
- B. I Peter was copied by Silvanus (5:12). Mark was with Peter.
- C. There are 5 chapters and 105 verses.

**1 Peter 1:1-7****1 Peter 1:1**

**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**

***Peter***

Peter is set forth here by name ("Peter") and by office ("apostle"). He was a pillar of the church (Galatians 2:9).

Peter's name is mentioned 210 times in the New Testament. Paul's name occurs 162 times. Peter is dominate among the persons of the New Testament. We cannot ignore him.

The author of this book was a unique individual. Peter was not celibate. We know this because his mother-in-law lived with him. He was a fisherman by trade and had a partnership with James and John. He did not fish for fun; he fished for money. He was a profane and professional fisherman (John 1:36-44). He was a coarse man.

Sometime later God called him to be a fisher of men (Matthew 4:18,19). He already knew Christ as his Messiah. Now God called Peter to discipleship. And later, Jesus called him to be an apostle (Luke 6:13). This was a promotion.

Peter's training was in his home and synagogue. He received two calls from the Lord:

1. to discipleship (John 1:41-48);
2. to apostleship (Mark 3:13-21).

We do not think of Peter as a scholar or literary person. We think of him as a burly fisherman. Yet this erstwhile fisherman wrote two of the 27 books of the New Testament. We think of him as a loud-mouthed leader of men. We may even think of him as the preacher of Acts 2. But rarely do we think of him as an author.

Acts 4:13 describes him as "unlearned and ignorant." That doesn't mean he was stupid but it means he didn't have a formal education like Paul. Peter's training was at the feet of the Savior.

**Principle**

God will use us in ways beyond our background if we submit to him.

**Application**

Have you put limitations around yourself? Have you put yourself in a box of your own perceptions? Let God stretch you beyond your boundaries. He may use you in a way beyond your imagination. If we step out of our comfort zone, it will demonstrate an act of trust in God's provision for our lives.

***an apostle of Jesus Christ***

Usually a writer of Scripture gives his name and then his credentials. By what authority does Peter have the right to write these Christians in Asia Minor (Turkey)? He claims to be an "apostle" of Jesus Christ. He does not claim to be "the" apostle. There were 12 apostles at the beginning and more came later.

"Apostle" was the official name of those Jesus chose to found his church. One qualification of an apostle is to have seen the resurrected Lord (Acts 1: 22).

The Greek word "apostle" comes from two words meaning "from" and "to send." So an apostle means to send someone from another, to send someone with credentials to carry out a mission.

The English word "apostle" is from the old English word "postel" from which we have derived the word "postal" as in postal service. A postal servant is one who delivers the mail. The

function of an apostle is to deliver the message of the New Testament.

The word “apostle” was used hundreds of years before the New Testament. The earliest reference is in the area of nautical terminology. About 300 years before Christ, apostle described ships that were being readied with cargo or being sent on an expedition. The term “apostle” described a naval squadron before it was dispatched.

Two hundred years before Christ, the term was used for a person who was sent bearing a letter, like an early “Western Union boy.” It also described an ambassador sent by a king to represent him to another country. He was a “sent one.”

This is the highest office in the church (I Cor. 12:28). An apostle was personally chosen by Christ. He had the ability to perform miracles and thereby demonstrate authority as an apostle. His jurisdiction of power was beyond any other gift in the New Testament.

There is no apostle today. The office of the apostle disappeared with the closing of the writing of Scripture (the canon). The apostle had the power to execute miracles to demonstrate his authority over the church. We do have the function of the apostle today. That person is a missionary. However, the office of the apostle does not exist because the canon of Scripture is closed. God has completed writing his revelation. Therefore, there is no need for an apostle.

The mention of his apostleship is the statement of his authority to write a book of the Bible.

### Principle

God wants us to carry the message of the gospel to the world.

### Application

The “sent one” today is the missionary. Everyone is a missionary. Just as all believers are priests so all Christians are “sent ones” (Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:18-20). Every person who has accepted Christ is an ambassador of Christ.

Every heart without Christ is a mission field; every heart with Christ is a missionary.

If we have ever been gripped by an overpowering sense of personal indebtedness to Christ, we cannot rest until we share him with the world. If we have encountered the living Lord, we cannot but share him with others.

Interest in the world-crusade of Christianity stands in direct ratio to the vitality of our personal faith. Our personal missionary impetus depends on our fellowship with Christ. It is a sad reflection on the spiritual climate of the Western world that we do not reflect the reality of Christ with urgency and joy.

If we are going to gird ourselves with the missionary task, our deepest need is not more information or better technique, it is a deeper sense of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Suppose you were a biochemist and found the cure for cancer. Could you hide that remedy? It is against all ethics of humanity to do so. Yet this is precisely what we do when we do not share Christ.

God gives us a message and sends us on a mission. If we have an important message we do not send any Tom, Dick or Harry to carry it. We would be afraid that they would deflect from their destination or that they would tarry too long somewhere along the way. They would get there with the message but it would be too late. Or, they might alter the message and garble it in such a way as to distort the idea we wanted to convey.

God has called us to be ambassadors for Christ (II Cor. 5:20). An ambassador is a representative or replica of the Savior. We are a small-scale model of Christ. We come in “Christ’s stead.” We stand in his shoes. He is not here. He is busy interceding for Christians in heaven. We must represent him here. We may not be a good representative here but we are the best that he has here. We do not have to be brilliant. All God expects us to do is to make ourselves available. He wants us to put ourselves at his disposal.

### *To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*

Peter now pinpoints the physical address to those to whom he is writing. He gives their physical address, then their spiritual address

(1:2). Today we discuss their physical address.

### *To the pilgrims of the Dispersion*

Peter writes to Christians dispersed to the countries noted. These were Christian Jews dispersed in Asia Minor (northwest Turkey today).

The word “pilgrim” comes from three words meaning “alongside,” “upon” and “people.” The word here describes those who settled down alongside those who were not Christian (2:11). The English word “epidemic” is derived from this word. An epidemic is a disease that comes upon a great number of people. Peter does not let us forget that we live among those without Christ. They carefully observe our lives.

The word “dispersion” refers back to the captivity of the Northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC by Assyria. In 586 BC the Southern kingdom (Judah and Benjamin) went into captivity. In AD 70 the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Many in Israel dispersed throughout the Roman world.

The word “dispersion” means to “sow through.” God has sown Christians throughout the world. God providentially sows us where we are in the world to become disseminators of the Gospel. That is why you are where you are. We are pilgrims because we are Christ’s. Our souls cannot satisfy themselves with the trivialities of earth any more than a human can satisfy himself with eating hog slop. Coming to Christ means we have new desires, tastes, aspirations and affinities. God has kindled new life in us.

There is no loneliness like standing for Christ by ourselves. The Christian who draws a line of separate distinction will make an impact on those without Christ. We cannot forget the imperial connection to Christ. Our citizenship is in heaven.

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

These are the names of the provinces to whom Peter wrote in his first book. He addressed Jews who had lived in these parts for about 200 years.

These provinces are bounded on three sides by water. On the south is the Mediterranean, on the west by the Aegean Sea and on the north by the Black Sea.

These provinces were in Asia Minor during the writing of I Peter. Christians in these provinces

were going through great persecutions by Nero. The sixth verse talks about “manifold trials.”

### **Principle**

God has called us to come alongside those without Christ to share our personal testimony.

### **Application**

The nature of the Christian’s life upon this Earth is only temporary. That is why God calls us pilgrims. This world is not our home. We are merely pilgrims passing through this world. We are temporary residents upon earth.

God has given us a deeper attachment than allegiance to our native country. Everything in this life is transitory. Christians are not to look on the things that are seen (II Cor. 4:18). Rather, God wants us to fix our eyes on the eternal (Hebrews 11:13-16). Soon we will pull up stakes and leave for another country (heaven).

### **1 Peter 1:2**

**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**

The previous verse described the addressees of I Peter by their geographical address. This verse describes them according to their spiritual address.

### *Elect*

“Election” is to special privilege. Often, as here, the New Testament uses of the election of salvation. It means election to eternal life. “Election” is a title of dignity, which applies only to the Christian. The preeminent thought in election is privilege, not deliverance from judgment.

The word “elect” means to pick out or choose out of a number. It was used in Greek literature to select a gray hair out of a number of black hairs. In other ancient literature it was used for “picked troops.” Some soldiers were chosen over others because of their unusual gifts in the art of war. They were crack troops. They were hand picked men.



God hand picked the believers scattered over Asia Minor. In an election we chose a candidate from a slate of contenders. God is the one who makes the selection. Both God's selection and our decision are involved in the process. Both election and free will are equally taught in Scripture. They are the corresponding halves of the doctrine of salvation. Election is the God's side and free will is our side.

Election is one of the greatly misunderstood subjects of the Word of God. A great mirage of doubt and pride has arisen around this doctrine. On one side, a perversion of the doctrine of election leads to fatalism. Election does not mean that God chooses some to be saved or others lost. The Scripture clearly teaches that all men are lost and need to be saved.

On the other hand we often hear people say they "found the Savior." The Savior was never lost. We have it backward; he found us. We did not choose him; he chose us first.

It is amazing that God chooses us knowing what he knows about us. Of all the creatures on this earth, he chooses us. He knows everything about us. He knows our sin. We are undeserving, yet he selects us. He watches over us so that we will not die before we come to know Christ. He sends ministering angels to watch over our salvation (Hebrews 1:14). Everyone elect will come to him (John 6:37).

The test of whether we are elect is whether we come to Christ (John 6:37). Just as steel always attracts to a magnet, the elect always attract to Christ.

None of this lessens our responsibility to make a decision for Christ. The Bible also teaches the freedom of the will.

John 1:11-13, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

John 5:40, "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

John 6:37, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."

Rev. 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."

### Principle

Scripture teaches both sovereign election and the free will.

### Application

The Bible teaches both the sovereign election of God and the free agency of man. Man, however, is free only in a relative sense, or else there would be billions of semi-gods and God would no longer be the first cause of all things. Therefore, we are only free to choose within the framework God has set up for us.

Think of an architect who designs a building. The architect draws up the plans but there is latitude. When the carpenter constructs the building, he follows generally the plan of the architect. The architect does not plan how the carpenter should drive each nail, lay each board. He leaves that to the choice of the carpenter.

God has elected some to be saved, but he has given to each person a human will to choose to be saved or not.

### Elect (continued)

"Elect" simply says we are in the plan of God. It anticipates the suffering the believer is to face. I Peter deals with how the Christian relates to suffering from God's viewpoint.

Scripture observes election from a number of viewpoints. God elects us out of the world (John 15:19). He elects us to salvation (I Thess. 1:4, 5). He chooses us to special service (Acts 9:15; I Peter 2:9). He elects us to conform to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29). He does all of this according to his own will (Ephesians 1:11).

Matthew 22:14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

John 15: 16 ,19 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give 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.” God chose us to bear fruit.

Romans 8:33 “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”

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

I Thessalonians 1: 4 “Knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. 5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.”

II Thessalonians 2: 13,14 “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.” Here we have eternity dipping into time and stretching forward unto eternity. Of course there is no such thing as past or future eternity. We use that language to understand it from a finite viewpoint. We use this language to differentiate eternity from time, calendars and clocks.

Colossians 3: 12 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.”

Titus 1:1 “Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness.”

II Peter 1:10 “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble.”

Revelation 17: 14 “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

### Principle

The plan of God fully anticipates all our suffering.

### Application

Nothing will ever touch us that is not in the plan of God. Nothing is too great for the plan of God. God’s plan is greater than any suffering, any heartache, disappointment, difficulty or loss that we might sustain. Nothing is too great for his plan. God has made provision for any disaster that we will ever face. Whether we experience blessing in these disasters or not depends on your appropriation of his provisions. In other words, we understand his promises and lay hold of them.

### *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*

Each person of the trinity has a part in our election. The Father is the source, the Spirit is the sphere and the Son is the sign.

The words “according to” mean norm or standard. What is the norm or standard of God’s provision for us? It is the foreknowledge of God the Father. God has the good sense to know of any problem we might face in life. He knew this billions of years before we were born. This comes out of his omniscience.

People often confuse predestination with foreknowledge. Foreknowledge is simply the knowledge that something will take place. God sees all things at once from the beginning to the end. However, this pre-knowledge does not mean that he is the cause of all things he foresees will come to pass.

The word “foreknowledge” comes from two Greek words: “before” and “know.” So, God knows beforehand that the elect will come to him (Acts 2:23; Romans 8:29, 11:2; I Peter 1:20).

Foreknowledge can mean counsel or appointment as in Acts 2: 23 -- “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.” Jesus’ death was not only foreseen, it was foreordained (I Peter 1:20). This is the meaning here. We are elect according to ordination of God.

The word “foreknowledge” only occurs seven times in the Bible. Two of those seven times occur in this chapter (cf. v. 20, Jesus as the lamb of God

was foreordained before the foundation of the world).

“God the Father” is the first person of the trinity. The Father is the one who plans in the trinity. The Bible attributes the plan of our redemption to the Father. The Word ascribes reconciliation to the Son. Scripture ascribes sanctification to the Holy Spirit. Each person of the trinity has their own role. God chose us on the substructure of his omniscience. Election is in his eternal will and purpose.

God does not call upon us to understand everything in the Bible. When we get to heaven we will have greater capacity to understand these things. Our times are in God’s hands at the present time (Psalm. 31:15).

### **Principle**

God knows everything beforehand that will happen to us.

### **Application**

It is awesome to know that our Father knows everything beforehand. We can leave everything secure in his hands.

Election looks at the place from which God took us – sin and the world. Predestination looks at our future – sanctification and heaven.

Some people are dumb enough to think that God is caught short or flatfooted by something we do or others might do to us. God knew everything that has happened or will happen to us. That may mean millions of things over our lifetime. Yet he knew every one of them before they ever occurred. There never was a time when he did not know. He knew all adversity we would ever face. He made provisions for them in eternity. He makes provision for everything in life.

### ***in sanctification of the Spirit***

Before salvation can occur, every person who receives eternal life must be 1) sanctified by the Spirit and 2) cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Note that we find the concept of the trinity in this verse. There are groups on the fringe of Christendom who deny the deity of Christ. We call them cults or sects. This verse plainly teaches the

trinity. If you reject the trinity, you are caught in a cult.

The sanctification of the Spirit makes us fit for our calling. This is the means whereby God brings us into the family of God. Only those to whom the Holy Spirit ministers will become a child of God.

The word “sanctification” means to “set apart.” It is like a person who shops for a suit and finds one he likes. He asks the clerk to set it aside. The Holy Spirit sets us aside for God. He sets aside every person God elects (Romans 15:16; I Corinthians 6:11; II Thessalonians 2:13). The Holy Spirit convicts them while they do not know Christ (John 16:7-11).

Calvary sets the child of God apart from a sinful life. His new position is in Christ and no longer in the world. The Christian is unable to achieve sanctification in his own strength. God has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness (1:3).

God places us into union with Christ. We fall heir to all that he is before God. God accomplishes this through sanctification which is a grace means of operation. Sanctification is a system of grace. God is the one who sets us apart. It is his act. So sanctification is a grace word.

### **Principle**

The Holy Spirit sets us apart forensically or judicially before God.

### **Application**

Sanctification here is positional sanctification. This is our status in God’s eyes. It is not personal conduct. In the Christian life the divine always precedes the human. God imputes that he might impart. A man is first accounted righteous that he might eventually be made righteous.

### ***for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:***

The end in view is obedience. This obedience is not the effect of our obedience but for (unto) obedience.

Three prepositions carry the three roles of the trinity in our salvation: “according to,” “through” and “unto.” “According to” gives the fact of our salvation; “Through” gives the means of our

salvation; “Unto” gives the purpose of our salvation. The purpose of our salvation is that we might be conformed into the same image of Christ (Romans 8:29).

The meaning of “obedience” here is the exercise of faith for our salvation. The Bible refers to obedience in the context of salvation a number of times (Acts 6:7; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 1:5; 6:17; Galatians 3:1; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7,9).

“Obedience” refers to a standardized way in which a person enters into the plan of God. God has a standard operating procedure for entering into His plan (Acts 16:31; John 20:31).

Obedience here then is the obedience of faith. God calls us to obey the gospel. The Holy Spirit is the initiator of our salvation. He causes us to obey by setting us apart unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.

The “sprinkling” in Peter’s mind is that of the Old Testament offerings (Exodus 24:3-8). This is the blood sprinkled on the altar. The blood of the Old Testament sacrifice pointed to the blood of Christ. The entire basis of our salvation rests on Christ. It is not enough that the blood be shed; it must be sprinkled. The sprinkling shows that God imputes Jesus’ blood to the believer.

Sprinkling then has to do with blood, not water (Hebrews 9:21). The blood of Christ speaks of the reconciling work of Christ on the cross. God knows of no other way of forgiving than through the blood of Christ. Only the blood can wash away our sin. It is the basis by which God forgives us (John 10:11; Colossians 1:20; I Corinthians 11:27; Hebrews 9:11,14; 10:17,19; 13:20; I John 1:7; Revelation 1:5; 5:9,10; 7:14; 12:20).

“Sprinkling” emphasizes propitiation. Propitiation means to satisfy. God is satisfied with the death of Christ for our sin. God is satisfied with the work of God the Son on the cross.

The animal in the Old Testament died by losing his blood. This is what we call a representative analogy. There is an analogy between priest cutting the throat of the bull upon the altar and the death of Christ. Christ bore our sins upon the cross.

### Principle

God has one standard way of delivering us from our sin – the death of Christ.

### Application

Many people today are immune to the gospel message. They acknowledge it from the Adam’s apple up. It is not a matter of the heart to them. They have heard about the blood of Christ all their lives but the gospel has never personally impressed them. They have never obeyed the gospel.

Have you personally received from God the sacrifice of his Son on the cross? Do you believe that God is satisfied with the death of Christ for your sin? Do you believe that you can do nothing for your salvation? If the answer to these questions is “no” then you are not a Christian.

A Christian is one who accepts from God the gift of the death of his Son upon the cross for our sin (Romans 4:5). Will you do that now? If you do, you will become a Christian.

### *Grace to you and peace be multiplied.*

The salutation desires two blessings for the Christians in Asia Minor: 1) grace and 2) peace.

Grace always precedes peace where they appear together. We cannot know the peace of God without first knowing the grace of God.

Peter wants more than addition of grace and peace; he wants multiplication. He wants both grace and peace multiplied in our lives. We never graduate from the grace or peace of God. We never outgrow our need for grace and peace. The Christian needs the grace of God for his financial and domestic problems. Grace is available for those who know God personally. We cannot orient to suffering unless we first orient to the grace of God. Grace correlates peace in the midst of suffering.

Grace is more than unmerited favor. It is something we receive from God that we did not earn or deserve. It is the favor of God with all the effects that come with it: forgiveness, assisting, and providential care. Grace is all that God is free to do for us because of the death of Christ for us.

Grace implies that God’s plan is perfect because God is perfect. The perfect essence of God

produces a perfect plan of grace. If man does anything in God's plan it is no longer perfect. Man cannot participate in providing grace. If he does, he preempts grace.

Grace always excludes human merit, human responsibility and human good. Grace means that God does all of the providing. It is impossible for any believer to get out of the sphere of grace. Once we accept Christ we are never free from grace. No matter how contrary we may act to grace, we cannot get away from it.

In our "do-it-yourself" generation, this is hard for some people to grasp. Someone says, "How can a person do such a thing and still be a Christian?" This shocks some Christians but the believer who did it is still alive! God still has a plan for him. We forget the extent of our sin and sin capacity. We live every moment under God's grace.

Grace is all that God can and will do for the believer in Christ. This is apart from his merit, works or cooperation. It is a matter of believing God has made this provision in Christ. Belief is a non-meritorious system of action. The greatest thing God can do for any member of the human race is to make him like his Son Jesus Christ.

There is a catch to receiving the grace of God – we must humbly accept it by faith (James 4:6; Hebrews 4:16). When things are going well we do not need the grace of God. However when things go wrong, that is a different matter. We can get along on our own wit, on our own ingenuity, on our own schemes and plans. When we come to the end of ourselves, then that is the opportunity for God to help.

God operates with four spheres of grace toward the believer:

1. Salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9)
2. Restoration (I John 1:9)
3. Spirituality (Ephesians 5:18)
4. Maturity (Hebrews 5:6)

God gives **grace in prayer** (Hebrews 4:16), **fruit** (I Corinthians 15:10; II Corinthians 6:11; 9:8), **suffering** (II Corinthians 12:9), **power** (II Timothy 2:1), **growth** (II Peter 3:18), **stability** (I Peter 5:12) and **restoration** (Hebrews 12:15).

### Principle

God is free to bestow his grace on us because Christ satisfied his absolute demands.

### Application

Grace always precedes peace in our lives.

It is not true that God helps those who help themselves. People think that that concept is in the Bible. That is like the phrase "cleanliness is next to godliness." Neither phrase is in the Bible. The Biblical principle is God helps the helpless. When we come to the end of our rope and cry, "I cannot solve this problem. I do not have any solutions" then God will help us. Then we are a candidate for God's help. Then God's grace will gird us. We must come to a place of surrender – "I give up, I am going to stop trying to wiggle out of this thing. I am going to stop resolving this myself by virtue of my brain or brawn." God waits until we view ourselves as bankrupt then he comes to our aid (I Peter 5:10).

Peace is always the result of grace. There are two kinds of peace:

1) peace with God (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14) and the

2) peace of God (Philippians 4:7; Isaiah 26:3,4). Peace with God is our salvation. Peace of God is our personal peace with him day by day.

Peter intends all sorts of peace here: domestic, civil, ecclesiastical peace in the church, and personal, spiritual peace with God.

The Bible does not promise world peace for the present age. Jesus said that there will be wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6,7). There will, however, be peace in the future millennium (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3). That is when the swords will be beat into plowshares. The Bible says that there is no peace for the wicked (Isaiah 48:22).

Many carnal Christians out of fellowship know nothing about the peace of God. They are bitter, critical and cynical. They will always be miserable when they are out of fellowship with the Lord.

"Multiplied" – not added, subtracted or divided. The word "multiplied" implies that the Asia Minor believers already had some measure of grace and

peace. Peter wants these blessings multiplied in their lives.

### Principle

Christians who experience of the grace of God in their lives experience personal peace.

### Application

We cannot enjoy peace in our lives if we have not appropriated the grace of God.

The peace of God always follows the grace of God in introductions to Bible books. We will not know the peace of God until we experience the grace of God.

This is God's personal peace filling the heart of the Christian. It is an internal tranquillity that keeps us from pushing the panic button when something goes wrong. Instead of heading for panic palace, we draw upon the grace of God. There is no reason why we should fret and stew. Why should we be disgruntled and dour about life? All the non Christian can do is go out and get drunk. All he can do is escape and get away from his problems.

### 1 Peter 1:3

**“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.”**

Verse three begins the body of I Peter.

### *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*

The word “blessed” means praised and applies only to God in the New Testament (Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68; Romans 1:25; 9:5; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3). “Blessed” indicates that God is worthy of praise or commendation. Peter breaks out in a doxology of praise at the beginning of his book.

“Blessed” here is not the same word we meet in the beatitudes (Matthew 5; Luke 6). This is the word from which we get our English word “eulogy.” We give a human eulogy when a person dies. We speak in their praise. In this verse we eulogize God who is alive eternally. Do you have

something good to say about God? Do you exalt and extol him? Both Ephesians 1:3 and II Corinthians 1:3 begin with an affirmation of God.

Peter advances this exaltation of praise in the recognition of God's mercy.

### Principle

God wants us to celebrate God's resources.

### Application

It is wonderful for a parent to hear children speak well of them. We often hear of parents praising their children but we do not often hear a child praising his parents. God deserves our praise.

God wants us to be more than a sponge that simply absorbs the benefits of Christianity. He wants to hear of our appreciation for his provisions. We speak well of God when we proclaim his attributes and works. There is too little praise of God today and too little speaking well of him to others.

How easy is it for you to break forth in praise to God? If we understood what he has done for us, our lives would explode with glory to God.

### *who according to His abundant mercy*

“According to” means according to the standard. Commensurate with God's mercy, he has given us a living hope.

“Mercy” is the outward manifestation of pity. It assumes a need on the part of the person who receives mercy. It also assumes that the person who gives mercy has the resources to adequately meet the need.

Mercy is God's action toward us while we are in a hopeless condition. It is grace in action. Grace depends on the character of God. Peter himself received the grace of God. He vacillated hot one day and cold another. His spiritual roof fell on him a number of times yet God demonstrated grace to him over and over.

The New Testament uses the mercy of God in the sense that He is rich in it (Ephesians 2:4) and has provided salvation for all men (Titus 3:5; for Jews--Luke 1:72, and Gentiles--Romans 15:9).

He is merciful to all who fear Him (Luke 1:50). We find mercy when we pray (Hebrews 4:16).

When Christ comes back, Christians will receive mercy at that time (II Timothy 1:16; Jude 21).

There is a distinction between grace and mercy. Grace describes God's attitude toward the law-breaker; mercy is His attitude toward those in distress.

### Principle

Mercy is God's grace in action toward us.

### Application

Do you view yourself as unworthy of God's mercy? Worth has nothing to do with receiving God's mercy. We receive God's mercy by his grace. Grace is what we receive without merit.

Maybe the reason it is so hard for you to accept God's mercy is that it is hard for you to accept God's grace. We have nothing to offer God. He has everything to offer us.

### *who according to His abundant mercy*

"Abundant" means that God's mercy increases geometrically with our need.

II Samuel 24:14, "And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Micah 7:18, "Who is a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in mercy.

Ephesians 2:4, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us."

Lamentations 3:22, 23, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."

Romans 12:1, "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."

Titus 3:5, "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."

I Timothy 1:13, "Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

I Timothy 1:16, "However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life."

Jude 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

God is rich in mercy. The multiplied mercy of God is great toward us. God's mercy is "abundant." His mercy has inexhaustible resources to extend to the needy.

The Father has the capital to invest in our lives. It takes money to make money. God is in the business of investing his capital daily into our lives. God's plan for us demands that he relinquish his capital. Some of his people are risky ventures yet he gives his resources without any strings attached. He must risk his capital to gain profit in the lives of believers. Grace is his capital. Grace in action is his "abundant mercy." He bestows mercy constantly to the Christian. He also bestows mercy to the non Christian in offering his Son as a substitute in exchange for sin.

No matter how far off the tack we get, God has the resources of mercy to bring us back. His operating capital of mercy is infinite. No matter what sin we commit or how many times we do it, he has mercy for us.

It is amazing how many Christians do not realize how much capital God has in his company. That capital is available with no strings attached. All we need to do is draw on the unlimited resources of the bank of heaven.

God gives his mercy not according to our merit, ability, morality, talent or human experience. His mercy does not depend on us. It depends on his character.

### Principle

God's mercy is great enough to meet us no matter how guilty we may be.

### Application

Mercy implies guilt. Abundant mercy implies abundant guilt. God shows his abundant mercy in the death of Christ for our sins.

Any blessing we have from God is due to his mercy, not our merit. As sinful people we have reason to mourn. We also have reason to rejoice because of God's mercy toward us in Christ. We owe every blessing to the mercy of God.

**"Begotten us again"** means born again. The word means literally "beget again" or "cause to be born again." The only other time the New Testament uses this term is in verse 23 -- "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever."

Peter may recall here Jesus' story of Nicodemus (John 3:1-21). Jesus said that we "must" be born again.

Peter is blessing God because we are born again. We may be blind, but we are born again. We may be poor, but we are born again. We have troubles, but we know Christ as our Savior. Just think of the future of those who do not know Christ. God calls upon us to bless God because we are born again.

"Begotten again" means regeneration. "Re" is new and "generation" is life. Regeneration is new life. Regeneration is an act of God. He effects it by Christ's resurrection and the Word of God (1:23). We are born again when we accept the death of Christ to forgive our sins. At that point we are born into the family of God. God changes our eternal future in one moment.

The born again experience results in a living hope. The living hope is based on the resurrection of Christ (I Peter 1:21). The assurance of our salvation is as sure as the resurrection of Christ.

### Principle

Our salvation is a reason to extol God.

### Application

We are to "bless" (extol) God because he caused us to become born again. This is reason enough to praise him for all eternity.

Jesus said to the disciples who were rejoicing in their new-found power. Jesus rebuked them by

these words, "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven," (Luke 10:20). That took the wind out of their sails.

It is one thing to rejoice in our Christian work, it is another to rejoice in our salvation. We are on our way to glory. The time will come when our service on earth will finish. We will still have eternity ahead. There will be a time when we can no longer preach, sing or serve. If service is the basis of our personhood, then our joy will flee. We will die a bitter old man or woman. We rejoice in our work rather than our future.

There never will be a time when we will not have Christ. There never will be a time when our names are not written in the Lamb's book of life.

We become so accustomed to our new birth that we take it for granted. Some of us have been born again so long that we have forgotten what it was like before we became a Christian. We assume that everyone is a Christian. When we get into this condition we are in bad shape spiritually. If a husband takes his wife for granted the relationship will begin to break down. All of us are guilty of this at varying degrees. If we take God for granted it is a reflection of our spiritual condition.

Job asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14). The subject of eternity holds universal interest to every human being.

Sophocles wrote, "Not to be born at all – that is by far the best fortune; the second best is as soon as one is born, with all speed to return thither whence one has come." There is not much hope in that statement! Christianity offers hope, hope that goes beyond temporal optimism.

### *to a living hope*

Hope in the Bible means confident expectation. It means to be confident about the future (Romans 8:24,25). It means to anticipate the good (Titus 1:2; I Peter 1:21).

The New Testament uses hope with the concept of resurrection:

Acts 23:6, "the hope and resurrection of the dead." The two ideas are regarded as one. The resurrection defines our hope.

Hope is also used with the idea of promise:



Acts 26:6,7, "the hope of the promise." This means we expect God to fulfill his promises.

Galatians 5:5, uses hope with righteousness: "the hope of righteousness."

This hope (confidence) is our assurance that we will stand in the righteousness of Christ at his coming. We will stand in complete conformity to God's will at that time because of Christ.

Colossians 1:23, "the hope of the Gospel"

This is the hope of the fulfillment of all the promises presented in the Gospel.

Romans 5:2, "(the) hope of the glory of God"

This is the confidence that we will be in the presence of God.

Titus 2:13, "the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Colossians 1:27).

I Thessalonians 5:8, "the hope of salvation"

This is the hope of the rapture of believers when Christ comes back to earth.

Ephesians 1:18, "the hope of His (God's) calling"

This is the prospect of those who respond to His call in the Gospel

Ephesians 4:4, "the hope of your calling"

Our hope here is regarded from the point of view of the called

Titus 1:2; 3:7, "the hope of eternal life"

This is the full manifestation and realization of that life that is already the believer's possession.

Acts 28:20, "the hope of Israel"

This is the expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

Romans 15:13, "the God of hope"

God is the Author, not the subject, of hope.

### Principle

The Christian has a hope beyond the grave.

### Application

Do you have confidence in your eternal future? If you are a Christian you should anticipate eternity with confidence.

### *a living hope*

Not only do we have hope; we have a "living" hope. The New Testament uses the word "living" for life in the absolute sense – life as God as it (John 5:26; I John 1:2).

Man became alienated from this life as a result of the fall of Adam (Ephesians 4:18). We become partakers of God's life through faith in Christ (John 3:15) His life becomes our life (Colossians 3:4). We possess present eternal life (John 5:24; I John 3:14). This life will one day extend to the domain of our physical body (II Corinthians 5:4; II Timothy 1:10).

In the New Testament, death is not natural. It is due to sin. Death came through sin (Romans 5:12) which is rebellion against God. Sin thus involved the forfeiting of the life.

Peter uses the word "living" six times (1:3, 23; 2:4-5; 4:5-6). Living means that our hope is real. It is not an empty hope.

True life, God's life, is not destructible. The life that is subject to death is only provisional (I Corinthians 15:19). Those bound to it are "dead." True life is future (I Timothy 4:8) and indestructible. It is eternal (Mark 10:17; Romans 2:7; Galatians 6:8), and linked with salvation. As natural life is given by creation, God's life is given by resurrection.

The giving of life to the one who violates God must be by death of Christ's life - "It is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life." Sin separates us from God. Separation from God forfeits spiritual life. God removes spiritual death by a sacrifice in which the victim and the offerer become identified. God identified us with the substitutionary death of Christ giving us eternal life.

Since Christ had no sins of his own for which to die, his death was voluntary and vicarious (John 10:15; Isaiah 53:5, 10, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:21). In Jesus' sacrifice he suffered God's judgment due to our sin. By this means we become identified with Jesus in his deathless life, through his resurrection, and we enjoy conscious and eternal fellowship with God. He took our hell that we might have his heaven.

**Principle**

God has given us life as he has it - eternal life.

**Application**

No other group of people on earth have a hope beyond the grave except Christians. All of the founders of religion are dead except the Lord Jesus. He is the only one alive today. We cannot say that about Mohammed or Buddha or any other religious leader of history. They are dead and gone! Not the Christ of God. That is what makes Christianity unique. We have a living hope.

The Christian is not temporally optimistic or hopeful. He has confidence that he will one day live eternally with the Lord Jesus.

We have a hope that is actively alive. The Christian presently looks to eternity with expectancy. Why should we look on the dark side of things? The Christian's future is immortal - not subject to death. Therefore, nothing can extinguish the Christian's hope. Probably one of the worst "pests" around is the pessimist! Why should a Christian be pessimistic about life?

***through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead***

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the foundation for the Christian's hope. It is the assurance of our own resurrection. Jesus resurrection and our resurrection are inseparably connected (Colossians 3:1).

"From the dead" means "out from" the dead. Jesus was the first to come out from among the dead. Those who believe in him will come later. Daniel 12 and John 5 speak of resurrection of believers from the dead. At that point God inducts the Christian into the eternal state.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead sets apart Christianity from all the religions of the earth. The sequel to the death of Christ is his resurrection. He died but rose again. He would be better than no other religious leader had he come and gone. Acts 1: 3, "To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

Jesus predicted that he would rise again (John 2:9, 21; 10:17,18). The New Testament emphasizes the resurrection as the sequel to his death (Acts 2:23, 24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 17:30, 31; 26:22, 23; Romans 6:4; 7:4; 8:11,34; 10:9; 14:9; I Corinthians 6:14; 15:20; 15:3-5). This is what gives us hope.

The grave is not the bleak, barren terminus of all human existence for the Christian. Death is not a leap into the dark. For the Christian, death is a servant that leads us into the presence of the Lord of Glory. People may place our bodies into caskets and graves. We are in neither (II Corinthians 5:8). Our soul goes instantaneously, automatically, as soon as death strikes our body, into the presence of the Lord. That is why we do not sorrow as those who are not Christians (I Thessalonians 4:13).

God grounds our future life with him in the resurrection of Christ (Luke 24:9; Romans 6:10; 14:9; II Corinthians 13:4). Jesus brought life and immortality to light (II Timothy 1:10). He is the author of life Acts 3:15. We are saved by his life (Romans 5:10). He is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). He is the true and eternal life (I John 5:20).

God's gift of eternal life is by an act of grace (Romans 5:15). Our hope rests on this (Romans 1:17). When we believe in Jesus Christ we have eternal life (John 3:15-16). The gospel destroys death and gives immortality (II Timothy 1:10). The gospel is God's power to salvation (Romans 1:16).

Our future life has already been effected by Christ's substitution for our sin. Our resurrection from the dead is simply the consummation of that work. It is grounded in a completed act and therefore living and sure (I Peter 1:3).

**Principle**

We do not worship a dead man.

**Application**

Because Jesus rose from the dead, we will rise from the dead as well. Because Christ was raised from the dead, so will we. His resurrection guarantees our resurrection. The personal significance of the resurrection of Christ for us is that we have hope. He will usher us into his

presence one day. This is the crown of the Christian experience

### 1 Peter 1:4

**“to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”**

God gives generously from his grace in time. That, however, is nothing in comparison with eternity. There his generous giving will never stop. We will receive from his unlimited resources at that time.

### *to an inheritance*

Peter describes our inheritance of heaven as future yet secure. Heirs to present estates have no assurance that they will receive their inheritance. They may die before they fall heir to their possessions. It is a different story for Christians. Christ falls heir to all things (Hebrews 1:2). God has one Son. He is heir to God's possessions. We are born into the family of God through Jesus Christ. God bases our heirship on sonship (Romans 8:16, 17). God wants us to have an appreciation in time for the provisions he gives us. He wants us to appreciate in time what will become his unlimited resources in eternity. This orients us to eternal values.

Heirship demands that we enjoy eternal life (Titus 3:7). If we fall heirs to the resources of the eternal God, we must have eternal life to enjoy it. God bases our heirship on election as well as sonship (Hebrews 9:15). In eternity we will have an unlimited charge account for the elect. As heirs we share the destiny of Christ (Ephesians 1:11).

God has already given us the down payment on our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14). The indwelling Holy Spirit is the earnest of our salvation.

The Word of Grace gives us an inheritance among those whom God sets apart. Acts 20: 32, "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

We receive an inheritance at the point of salvation. Acts 26:18, "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."

### Principle

Our inheritance is our title to future eternal fellowship with God.

### Application

An inheritance is what gives title to spiritual possessions. It is that which we receive by virtue of birth – spiritual birth. It is the acquisition of property by succession. We pass earthly inheritances from family to family through birth. Spiritual inheritance is the same process. God places us into his family when we put our trust in the death of Christ to forgive our sins. A member of the family of God inherits heaven.

Have you placed your personal trust in the death of Christ for your sins? Why not enter into the family of God now?

### *to an inheritance*

God gives the Christian a joint account in Christ's inheritance (Romans 8:16,17). When people get married, they go to a bank and open a joint account. It is always a happy little excursion as they trot down to the bank with their money. They think that a joint account means, "Half is yours and half is mine." A man is not married long when he finds out that it doesn't mean that at all. A joint account means whoever gets there first gets the money and somehow she beats him there every time!! A joint-heir with Christ is not a 50/50 deal. It means everything he has belongs to me (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

### Principle

The Christian falls heir to all of Christ's inheritance in heaven.

### Application

The Christian possesses great privileges because of Christ. He holds these privileges solely because of his status with Christ.

The corollary truth is that everything we have belongs to him. We cannot hold to our possessions if we love him. He gave us health, physical strength, mental ability, position, power, money and fame. He gave them. He can take them away.

He adds and he knows how to subtract. He is great at math. Our health belongs to him. Our children and grandchildren belong to him. There may be a time when he takes these away, then we will know he is God (Job 1:21; 9:12).

We need to learn with Job that everything we have belongs to God. Once we settle that with God conclusively, then our lives will get on track. "Lord, we had that out when I was 24 years of age. No problem, Lord. You do all things well. You are too good to do wrong, too wise to make a mistake. It is all right, Lord."

This is the Lordship of Christ. He will not be satisfied until we come to the place of total capitulation. If God should be pleased to subtract from us, he is simply taking of his own. We gave it to him – remember? Did we mean it? This is not something we should debate. He is Lord. If we fudge on that, we trifle with the Lord.

Peter describes our eternal inheritance with three adjectives.

### ***incorruptible***

"Incorruptible" means not liable to corruption or subject to decay. The New Testament uses this term of God (Romans 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:17). He is not subject to decay. "Incorruptible" is used when speaking of the raised dead (I Corinthians 15:52), rewards given to the saints hereafter ("crown," I Corinthians 9:25), the eternal inheritance of the saints (here), the Word of God, as incorruptible seed (I Peter 1:23), and a meek and quiet spirit (incorruptible apparel, I Peter 3:4).

Incorruptibleness is deathlessness. Death cannot destroy our inheritance. I Corinthians 15:53, 54 renders this term "immortality." The glorified body of the believer is immortal. The nature of God is immortal (I Timothy 6:16). Immortality is freedom from death. Our inheritance is not liable to corruption or decay.

Fruit rots, spoils and decays. No grave is ever dug on the estate of heaven. Our inheritance cannot be destroyed by death.

Secular Greek used the term "incorruptible" for a state unravaged by an invading army. Many times alien armies invaded Palestine. That land was fought over, blasted and destroyed. The Christian

possesses an inheritance that no invading army can ravage or destroy. It is beyond the reach of eternal death.

### ***and undefiled***

"Undefiled" means free from contamination, pure. Whatever is "undefiled" is without flaw or defect. Jesus Christ is undefiled (Hebrews 7:26). James 1:27 uses this term of the eternal inheritance of believers (here). Hebrews 13:4 uses "undefiled" of the marriage bed. We can defile the marriage bed by adultery.

Our inheritance is untainted by sin. We cannot pollute God's inheritance. No sin can taint it. It is unstained by evil. We cannot destroy our inheritance by our sinful nature.

It is beyond the blight of change. It lasts forever.

### ***and that does not fade away***

"Fade away" means our inheritance is everlasting. It never becomes old. It never wears out. It is imperishable. Its beauty never fades. It never dries up. It is everlasting and forever undiminished. Our inheritance is perennially fresh. It never becomes old and worn. Time does not impair it.

Extra-biblical Greek uses this term for a flower that does not fade. Some flowers are beautiful, but then they wilt after a very short time. Eternal life will not lose its wonderful, pristine character. It does not fade or lose its brightness. Our inheritance retains its wonderful character.

Peter uses an associated term in I Peter 5:4 where he says "you will receive a glorious crown which will not lose its brightness." It is unimpaired by time.

The Bible often describes heaven in negatives. Human language is not adequate to describe the reality of heaven. The book of Revelation describes heaven in term of negatives as well, Revelation 21:4, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Because heaven transcends human language the Bible has to resort to what it is not rather than what it is. Therefore our place in heaven is

untouched by death, unstained by evil and unimpaired by time.

### Principle

Our inheritance is untouched by death, unstained by evil and unimpaired by time.

### Application

Many earthly inheritances wither away before being received. Our inheritance maintains its fragrance forever. God keeps our garden forever. Why should we worry about our eternal future? The grave is not a blind alley but a thoroughfare, an expressway leading to a much richer life beyond.

Our inheritance is a perpetual, imperishable, preservation in eternity. Heaven is far more than a happy hunting ground. It is a place preserved by God for fellowship with him.

### *reserved in heaven for you*

The New Testament uses "reserved" 60 times. It may mean to guard (Matthew 27:36; Acts 12:6), to keep (John 2:10; I Peter 1:4), to protect (I Corinthians 7:37).

God lays up and keeps our inheritance for us. The tense indicates that God reserved our inheritance in the past with the result continuing into the future. We can translate this phrase "which has been reserved" for us. God laid up our inheritance at the point of our salvation and personally keeps it for us into the future.

The word "reserved" means keeping as a result of guarding (John 17:11). The voice (passive) indicates that God put the inheritance in the reservation for us. The idea is he preserves it for us.

"Reserved" is a military term. It means to keep safe with a garrison. God is guarding our inheritance. His guard never changes. No one will ever take our inheritance away from God (John 17:11,12; John 5:24). This is God's protection of the believer's eternal destiny. He is on duty 24 hours a day. God places a perimeter around the Christian (John 10:27-29). No one or no thing will defeat or disrupt God in providing salvation for us. Our salvation centers on God's purpose (Romans 8:28-30) not on human merit.

### Principle

God promises to preserve our inheritance.

### Application

Children are sometimes cut off from their inheritance. God guarantees in the Bible that none of his children will be cut off from inheriting eternity.

Legislation protects those who have died and want their inheritance to go in a given direction. Very few people succeed in contesting a will through litigation. The courts have a high regard for the wishes of those who have died. God is no less committed to his promises. No force is able to sever the believer from God's love (Romans 8:35, 38,39). This is an indissoluble bond.

God promises to preserve our inheritance. Our inheritance is salvation. No matter what may come our way, God himself will preserve our salvation. This is the effect of the power of God.

Many people who expect to inherit something, die before they receive it. God keeps the believer for his or her inheritance! Many Christians fear that they will lose their salvation. It is a matter of God's promise (II Timothy 1:12).

### 1 Peter 1:5

**"Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."**

Now we come to God's lay-away plan. God lays our inheritance of heaven away with his guarantee that we will receive it. I Peter

1:5 is one of the greatest verses in the Bible on the full assurance of faith.

### *Who are kept*

The word "guard" is a military term meaning to keep by guarding, to guard with a garrison.

Plutarch, in his *Plutarch Lives*, tells the story of an insurrection of gladiators. These gladiators devastated Italy in the war of Spartacus. Lentulus Batiatus had a school of gladiators at Capua (most were Gauls and Thracians). He kept them in confinement reserved for gladiatorial combat. Seventy-eight gladiators escaped. On the road they seized a wagon carrying gladiators' weapons to

another city. They elected three leaders one of whom was Spartacus.

At the beginning, the gladiators repelled the soldiers and took their weapons. Then the Roman government sent General Clodius against them with 3000 soldiers. He laid siege to them on a hill which had but one descent, and that a narrow and difficult one. Plutarch says Clodius closely "watched" the descent. This is our term in this verse. It means to throw a military garrison around. God throws the military garrison of his power around our salvation.

The tense indicates that God continuously guards the Christian's salvation. We can never lose our salvation because God keeps it under guard. God throws the garrison of his person around the believer. God guards us throughout our earthly pilgrimage. There is never a moment when God does not guard our inheritance. God always keeps those he saves. We can never lose our salvation. If we are a Christian, we are eternally secure.

### **Principle**

The onus for keeping our salvation is upon God.

### **Application**

To many Christians, the Christian life has no solid foundation. It is like a man sitting at his desk on the 70th floor of a recently constructed building. After moving into the building a short time, a light falls upon his desk. He does not call the architect to examine the foundation of the building. He examines the fixture to find if there is a flaw. Unfortunately, many Christians do not examine the immediate cause when they sin. They examine the foundation of their faith. "Am I saved? Has God forsaken me?"

The issue is not the foundation (salvation) but the immediate cause (our sin). If we have violated God's holiness, then God expects confession of that sin (I John 1:9).

What about the foundation? How can a person know he is eternally secure with God? The next studies on this verse will answer those questions.

### ***by the power of God***

God guards us by nothing less than his omnipotent power. It is God's power that guards the believer's

eternal security. This is the power that raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 1:18; 5:4; 6:14; 13:4; Philippians 3:10). This work is strictly God's work.

Our salvation is not maintained by our personal power but by the power of God, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek," (Romans 1:16). The same power that delivered us from the penalty of sin delivers us from the power of sin and ultimately from the presence of sin.

### **Principle**

God's omnipotent power is operative in our salvation.

### **Application**

Our eternal foe is bent on robbing us of our salvation. However, God throws the military garrison of his omnipotent power around our salvation. This is an impregnable ring of defense. God posts the sentinel of his all-powerful being around us. The enemy cannot possibly break through this kind of defense. God never changes his guard. He is on duty until we arrive in heaven.

There is an inconsistency in believing that God can save us originally but not keep us saved. It is an insidious form of unbelief on the part of a Christian.

### ***through faith***

The human qualification for our salvation is faith. Faith trusts the guarding garrison of God's omnipotent power for our salvation. Omnipotence does not operate on our faith. Faith operates upon its object – God's power in our salvation.

Faith is a non-meritorious system of perception. Faith is the one thing that every member of the human race possesses. We have different IQ's but we all have faith. The idiot has faith; the genius has faith. There is no particular value in faith. It is the object of our faith--Jesus' death on the cross--that saves us. Only He has the power to forgive our sin and give us eternal life.

Salvation is through faith, not feeling. It is through faith, not through fiction.

Ephesians 2:8,9 says God saves us through faith, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

Romans 5:1 God declares us righteous as he is righteous by faith, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Galatians 2:16 argues that our status quo before God is by faith, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Galatians 3:26 declares that we enter the family of God through faith, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

### **Principle**

The means of our salvation is the faith that we place in the death of Christ to pay for our sins.

### **Application**

When we are falling, we reach out to grasp the hand of someone who has their balance. It is not the faith in their hand that keeps us steady, it is their hand. It is God who saves and it is God who guards us.

Have you personally placed your faith in the death of Christ for your sins? Why not allow God to save you from eternal separation from him?

### ***for salvation***

Our salvation is the aim ("for") of God's omnipotent protection. We will certainly possess the inheritance of our salvation. Not only does God keep our inheritance for us, we are kept for it!

God guards our "salvation." The word salvation conveys the double idea of being safe and being made sound. Before we became Christians we were sick unto death, eternal death. The poison of self-will ran hot through our veins. Now that we have come to Christ, God makes us whole before him.

Salvation means negatively, the deliverance from all evil, whether evils of sorrow or evils of sin. However, it means far more than that. God's salvation is more than saving us from hell.

Positively, it is deliverance from the power of sin in our lives.

There are three tenses in the word "salvation" in the Bible: past, present and future.

Past: Jesus, by his blood, paid for all the sins we ever committed and washed them away (Titus 3:5). Present: We are in the state of being saved from the control of sin in our daily life (I Corinthians 1:18). Future: We will one day be ultimately saved from all moral and physical evil (Romans 8:23,24).

### **Principle**

God's power saves us from the penalty, power and presence of sin.

### **Application**

God's power completely saves us.

If you are not a Christian, God will save you from the penalty of sin (eternal separation from God). If you trust in the death of Christ on the cross to forgive your sins, God will forgive you eternally from the penalty of your sin.

If you are a Christian dominated by sin, God will give you the grace to overcome that sin (Romans 6:14).

If you are a Christian, God will deliver you from the very presence of sin. He will eradicate your sin nature completely so that you will not be tempted with sin again.

### ***ready to be revealed in the last time***

God will protect or salvation until the Lord comes back. Then he will completely destroy the siege of Satan upon our lives. God will save our soul no matter what trial may come our way.

The word "ready" means prepared. Are you prepared to be revealed? Or, is your old nature showing? One way or another we are going to leave this world, either through the rapture or physical death. The Christian has nothing to fear in death. There will be no more tears, no more death in eternity (Revelation 21:4). Death to the believer is a very exciting experience.

"Revealed" means unveiled. Clothes cover a lot of defects. When we take them off, we reveal a lot of problems! At the coming of Christ, a lot of defects

would be unveiled if it were not for Christ himself. At that time we will have a resurrected body minus the sin nature.

The wraps will be taken off at the rapture (I Thessalonians 3:13; Jude 14; Revelation 19:14). Jesus will say to the world, "May I present my bride – no flaws, no defects."

### Principle

It is God's purpose to show off his bride (the church) who is pure because of Christ.

### Application

It is God's purpose to show off his bride. God cannot show off his bride now. Did you ever see a groom who did not want to show off his bride? Most grooms do. Jesus says, "I want you to meet my wife." He is very happy to introduce us as his bride. One day we will go to the eternal party completely dressed for the occasion.

In heaven there will be no need for Aspirin, Anacin or Alka-Seltzer. We will no longer need dentures, toupees, glasses or artificial limbs. We will be free from pain in that day.

The point is that we cannot become lost between the first and the last coming of Christ. God will not lose us in the shuffle. He will not lose one of us. He does not fail. We are the ones who fail. God cannot change his character just because we blow it. People actually think that just because they blow it, God will fail us. We superimpose our distortions on God. God's love remains the same.

God keeps us right to the end. He will not lose us.

### Summary of the doctrine of eternal security (vv. 4-5):

Who is responsible for our salvation? It is the work of three persons:

1. The Father: The Father is able to keep us. He is sovereign and supreme. No power can rise against him: Romans 8:31-34, 38-39 (God lists every spiritual and natural enemy here; no enemy has enough power to attack our salvation).

2. Jesus Christ: John 10:27-28 (nothing [neuter] can pluck us out of his hand); Romans 4:25; 8:1; Ephesians 2:6; Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1,2.

3. The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit seals our salvation: I Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30. God seals us unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). No one can break that seal. The seal is a person – the Holy Spirit.

Note the declarations of Scripture about the guarantee of our salvation:

John 6:47, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life." God gives eternal life, not spasmodic life or intermittent life.

Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." God keeps our salvation until he comes back again.

II Timothy 4:18, "And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" No question, no doubt, no equivocation but absolute assurance that God will preserve us for eternity.

Hebrews 5:9, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." God gives eternal salvation, not temporal.

Hebrews 7:25, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." The finished work of Christ saves us from the penalty of sin but the unfinished work of Christ at the right hand of God is saving us from the power of sin.

Hebrews 12:2, "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." Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. He will complete what he starts.

Jude 1, "To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ." God preserves us because of our association with Christ.

Jude 24-25, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen."



One day we will be faultless and sinless; now we are blameless (free from censure by God because of Christ's death for our sin).

### Principle

We can have the assurance of our salvation.

### Application

Have you come to the place of full assurance of your salvation? You should be able to say, "For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day," (II Timothy 1:12). That is assurance.

Do you have doubts about your eternal salvation that bedevil you? Do you wonder whether you are a Christian? You have slipped off the rails and you do not know whether you are on foot or horse-back spiritually. You can gain assurance of your salvation by claiming God's promises such as the verse we are studying.

Many people have never accepted Christ in the first place. This is another issue. Examine yourself as to whether you ever truly came to know Christ.

### 1 Peter 1:6

**"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials."**

### *In this you greatly rejoice*

"In this" -- the living hope (vv. 3-5) produces present joy. The joy of the believer rests in God's grace. Joy is independent of circumstances because the Christian life transcends circumstances. The Christian has an eternal future. He will never lose this joy no matter what comes his way. True joy comes from eternal possessions. Peter rejoices in his possession in Christ Jesus.

"Rejoice" means to experience a state of great joy and gladness. The term often expresses exceeding verbal joy, to exult, rejoice greatly. It conveys the idea of jubilant exultation, spiritual gladness.

This is joy, often carrying the idea of being overjoyed.. In Mary's song she says, "My soul rejoices greatly because of God my Savior" (Lk 1:47). The Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to

"be exceeding glad." The Philippian jailer "rejoiced greatly" (Acts 16:34) after he came to Christ.

"Rejoice is mainly used to mean exulting in God's acts (Rev. 19:7). We can anticipate exalting joy here and now by faith (Mt. 5:12). We will exalt with joy at the return of Christ (I Pet. 4:13; Jude 24).

Christ's shares this joy (Heb. 1:9; Lk 10:21).

Most people experience grief and joy consecutively. It is one or the other, not both. If they experience joy they cannot endure trial. If they endure trial they cannot experience joy. A godly Christian can have both trials and joy simultaneously:

"...I am exceedingly joyful in all my tribulation" (II Cor. 7:4) "...in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy" (II Cor. 8:1,2).

"...longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1:11).

"...in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit" (I Thess 1:6)

### Principle

The Christian can rejoice in the midst of suffering.

### Application

We all feel our problems are unique. Many people experience the very same problem but they face it with a different attitude. It is possible to have joy and grief at the same time. What a blessed attitude to have toward pain!

It is possible to stand at the freshly grave of a Christian with a sense of joy.

When we lose the joy of our salvation, we also lose the thrill of the Christian life. Without the thrill, the enjoyment of our salvation grows more dim as the years go by. That is what makes a nominal Christian.

Nothing stirs a nominal Christian. They have heard it all. They know it all. Their favorite hymn is "I shall not be moved!" They deem themselves spiritually sophisticated yet they are not burdened for anyone. Compassion rolls off them like water off a duck's back.

We forget what the Lord did for us at salvation. Do you remember your life before Christ? Have

you lost the luster you first had when you received Christ?

Are you out of harmony with heaven? Have you stepped out of fellowship with the Lord? Did you used to lead the pack? Stage a spiritual come-back.

God's design is not that suffering hurt us but that it bless us with joy. God can take any trial and turn it into blessing. There is no catastrophe too great for God. We will never face any suffering that is too great for us to bear or is too great for the plan of God.

### *though now for a little while*

Sorrows last only for a season. Peter presents a perspective on suffering. It is an eternal perspective. Even if we suffered for our entire life, in the light of eternity it would be but a little while.

Suffering lasts for a short season. It is only for a "little while"

Romans 8:18 "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."

II Corinthians 4:17 "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Some of us have more trouble than others. The more we suffer here, the greater the reward hereafter.

I Peter 5:10 "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you." Seasons of suffering will pass. Winter is here; spring will come; we will enjoy summer.

If we suffer from loneliness, we are in our late 40s and it does not appear that we will marry, it still is only for a little while. If our bodies are racked with disease and pain, it is for a little while. Time is little in comparison to eternity.

### **Principle**

God designs suffering with time parameters.

### **Application**

Winter is here but spring is coming. God knows how much we are able to suffer. Although, we

may face deep waters now, they will eventually recede.

God knows when suffering is necessary. He knows when we need encouragement. He knows when we need pressure. He knows exactly what we need and when we need it.

Some people say, "Why does this have to happen to me?" We think that we get more than our fair share of pain. Yet it could be worse. Look at the pain of some others. They face far greater difficulty than we do. Evidently God knows they have the character to take it. On the other hand, they may be too rebellious for him to take off the pressure.

Trouble will not continue without end. The difficulty we presently face will look different a year from now. You may face slander or gossip. This will pass. You may be in deep financial waters. It will eventually pass. You may fear the future. We fear what we cannot see. God's sustaining grace can meet any situation.

God measures out a certain amount of trial to each of us (I Thessalonians 3:3; I Peter 2:21). We each will get our share. Trial will do us good. Medicine does not usually taste good. Bitter experiences taste bad. We cannot always have things our own way. God has a purpose for everything.

Most of us react to trouble as if trouble was not in God's design for us. We sing the blues. We get out the crying towel. We push the panic button. From our reaction you'd think God was dead. Our spiritual reflexes are not very good.

Our children watch us and wonder. They can detect inconsistency in us. In the process we mark them indelibly when they are young and impressionable. They cannot see what our faith does for us. When they grow up, they drop out of church. We gave the impression that God is dead. You did not mean to do it but you did it anyway.

God is training us for eternity. This is boot training down here. Some of the lessons are hard to learn. Some lessons are bitter. At times we flunk the course and God makes us take it again.

God wants us to view trial from his vantage point. When we look at our problems from his viewpoint, they look insignificant. If we stand at the mouth of the Grand Canyon from the south rim

it looks immense. We cannot see it all. However, if we fly over the canyon, from 30,000 feet it looks like a hole in the ground. The difference is the perspective from which we view it. Like viewing the Grand Canyon from the south rim, our problems look vast. When we look at those problems from God's viewpoint, we put them in perspective.

### *if need be*

Sorrow is necessary for the Christian's development. It is a must for spiritual growth. God appoints us to sorrow (1 Thessalonians 3:3). These sorrows never stay longer than they must.

The word "need" signifies that which is needful, due, proper. It is what must take place, and it often implies inevitability (Mark 13:7). The events of our lives are part of God's plan and purpose for us.

"Need" connotes the element of necessity in an event. Under God's economy it is logically necessary that we face suffering. Suffering is God's personal will for us, not neutral fate.

Jesus uses "need" for the imperative to do God's will. It is the "need" of God's sovereignty that governs his work and leads him to suffering and glory. Luke 4:43 But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." Luke 9:22 Saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." Luke 17:25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." This is God's will as laid down in Scripture.

The followers of Christ stand under the same necessity Acts 9:6 "So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'" Acts 9:16 "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 14:22 "Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'" It is a demand for obedient faith in every situation of life.

The New Testament uses "must" when referring to the coming of Christ. It is impossible to evade the reality of it happening. The necessity of it happening comes from the very nature of the God who has committed himself to this plan. Jesus in Matthew 24: 6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." Mark 13: 10 "And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations." Revelation 1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place."

Luke uses this term for the necessity of prayer in the Christian life. Luke 18: 1 "Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart." Romans 8: 26 "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

### **Principle**

Suffering is necessary.

### **Application**

Suffering should never surprise us. The Christian should expect suffering. Everything that God sends our way is necessary. Every sickness is necessary. Every trial is necessary. Our trouble is part of the plan of God.

Some people say, "I never have trouble." Just wait, it will come. If you do have trouble, join the club, we all face it.

God never sends one unnecessary tear drop. Suffering is a must. God does all things for a purpose.

This same word "must" appears when Jesus introduced the term "born again." John 3: 7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"

Acts uses "must" for salvation as well. Acts 4: 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 uses "must" of the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation. Acts 16: 30-31 "And he brought

them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Will you respond to the imperative to receive Christ?

### *you have been grieved by various trials*

The word "various" means variegated or multicolored. The trials we face have many hues and colors. Some are small but others are king-size.

In the New Testament, the word "various" in "various trials" is used only one other time and that is in reference to trials as well – "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials," (James 1:2).

The Christian will face many kinds of trials. Peter again indicates that God's grace manifests itself in various ways. "Various" is translated "manifold." "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," (1 Peter 4:10).

God mixes the bitter and sweet. He is training us for glory. This is boot camp down here. We all face personal and family sorrow. We see sorrow in our community and nation and world. Paul carried sorrow for the lost (Romans 9:2,4).

#### **Principle**

God mixes the bitter and the sweet to train us for glory.

#### **Application**

Every Christian will face all sorts of trials--trials of faith, persistence, patience, loyalty. These trials will not necessarily come separately or successively. They can come all at once. They come from all angles. The piling up of these trials results in grief – personal heaviness.

This is the plan of God for our personal maturity.

### *grieved by various trials*

"Grieved" means to cause pain, or grief, to distress. It is a state of sadness. Mentally, grief is the anguish of misfortune, death, annoyance, insult, or outrage. The main idea of "grief" is sorrow (John 16:6; Romans 9:2; Philippians 2:27).

Grief leads to empathy. Jesus entered into grief in Gethsemane. We identify with the sufferings of Christ better when we suffer.

Grief is an integral part of the Christian life. It affords an opportunity to grow in the power of Christ's death and resurrection. Acceptance of grief is acceptance of the cross (Galatians 6:14; Philippians 3:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

Christ's death on the cross plunged the disciples into grief. The very isolation from Jesus brought out the significance of fellowship with him (John 16:33). The pain of unjust suffering carries a rich reward when accepted in commitment to God (1 Peter 4:21).

Trial means to try, to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting them to thorough and extensive testing -- "to test, to examine, to put to the test, examination, testing."

God permits or sends trials for character development: 1 Peter 4:12 "Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 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. 14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified."

Suffering always causes grief to our souls.

#### **Principle**

God does not test our faith as much in prosperity as in adversity.

#### **Application**

Though we live in hope we still grieve. Hope rises above grief but it does not eradicate it. Christians need the process of sorrow. We need to deal with it, not deny it. We need occasion to hurt and weep. We sorrow, but not as others who have no hope. Glib answers do not help the sorrowing process. We need to learn the value of grief. It will lead us to a fuller fellowship with God.

No one is free from trouble. These are the many colored trials of those who are in the family of God. Trouble comes in all forms: financial,

marital, family. A great variety of trouble will come our way over a lifetime. Christians are not immune from trouble. God weaves a certain amount of hurt into our lives to develop our value of eternal things.

God does not enjoy putting us through pain. He does not glee in watching us flinch. Everything that comes into our life, including pain, comes by divine design. God has a reason for everything he does. We may understand it by and by.

Jesus faced trouble – "For if they do these things in the green wood (Jesus), what will be done in the dry? (Christians)" (Luke 23:31). Jesus was the green tree and the fire consumed him. What will happen to us who are dry twigs?

What kind of trouble do you presently face? The problems you face may not seem severe to someone else but they are intense to you.

Has trouble come to you in the large economy-size package? How are you handling your problems? Do you take God's viewpoint on pain?

### 1 Peter 1:7

**"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."**

This verse informs us as to the purpose of trials. Once a person becomes a Christian, does that mean he/she is free from problems?

No, the Christian is not exempt from pain and problems. We all experience trouble and setbacks in this life.

### *That the genuineness of your faith*

The word "that" indicates purpose. God's purpose in trial is our tryout, not our ruin. Two results come from "many colored trials": 1) they refine our faith and 2) they test for approval the reality of our faith.

The word "genuineness" means to test for approval. It means to test to find if something is genuine. This is the act of putting someone to the test to determine whether he/she is worthy of being approved or not. The test aims at approval if possible. Note these New Testament uses of the

word "genuineness": "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 Corinthians 11:28. "Being tested severely by the troubles," 2 Corinthians 8:2. "The testing of your faith produces endurance," James 1:3. "When your fathers tested and tried (me)," Hebrews 3:9.

Greek literature used the word "test" for examining candidates for a medical doctorate. Candidates for a medical doctorate must be tested. It is crucial to find out if they are the genuine thing. We do not want an incompetent surgeon operating on us. When doctors prove genuine by examining, they meet the attestation.

It is obvious that God wants to discover what constitutes our character. Character is best ascertained when we are placed under duress. God will detect our weakness and strength by giving us an exam. It will be a difficult exam. Get out your blue books. God is about to find out the genuineness of your faith!

### Principle

God refines our faith by trial.

### Application

When it comes to trials, everyone is in one of these three stages: They are experiencing a trial, coming out of a trial or about to go into a trial!

In the Detroit, Mich., area there are proving grounds for automobiles. The purpose of these proving grounds is to test the mechanical soundness of cars before they are out on the market. Test drivers run these cars for days without turning off the motor. The cars are put through bumps, curves, water, hills and many more obstacles for long periods of time. The manufacturing companies want to know whether the shocks and brakes are going to hold up under punishment. In the same way, God wants to develop our faith so that we will stand up to the bumps of life.

Have you assayed your life? Have you found it genuine? Will you pass the exam?

Will God regard you as appropriate for His service? God makes His assessment after He puts us to the test. He will judge us to ensure we are

real and genuine, and if we are He will approve us for service.

### ***That the genuineness of your faith***

The New Testament uses the word "genuineness" in the context of purifying and strengthening metals by passing them through fire. The fire melts the ore and brings the dross to the surface, where it can be skimmed off. After the metal cools, it is much stronger.

If a gold mining company wishes to develop a new site, it sends someone to assay the metal to see whether the gold is genuine and of sufficient quantity to warrant investment in the mine. The assayer takes a sample of the gold to the laboratory and examines it. He then sends his report about the quality of the ore to the company. The report is more valuable than the gold sent with the report. On the basis of the report the company will make a decision as to whether it will proceed with the project. In the same way, God wants a faith that can take the test. God is looking for people He can trust. If God finds our faith one He can approve, then He knows that we stand the tests of life. He wants to know the quality of our faith.

Something is genuine if it is without alloy. An alloy is a mixture of more than one metal. Lesser metals mixed with stronger metals weaken the stronger metals. God does not want the metal (character) of our lives mixed with lesser things.

The fiery tests of our faith bring greater strength to our spiritual lives. They remove the impurities in our lives. We may say that we trust God but we often mix that trust with dependence upon self. Our faith then needs purifying. We need tests to cleanse these impurities.

### **Principle**

A purpose of trials is to test our faith.

### **Application**

Do you have a heavy heart? Every Christian faces disappointments and discouragement. Some people get the idea that a Christian should be immune from trouble. But trouble and trouble will come to all of us, in different shapes and sizes.

What does your faith prove? When God sends an ordeal into your life, how do you react? When

God gives you a bitter pill, do you swallow it as God's will? Many wounds make up our lives. It is not enough to simply endure them.

We increase our faith by the assimilation of God's Word (Romans 10:17) and by the application of what we know (Hebrews 4:1-3). The approval of our faith is more important than the approval of gold.

### ***being much more precious than gold that perishes***

Gold is a precious metal, but the test of our faith is much more precious than the test for gold.

This phrase describes our faith, not the trial of our faith: "being much more precious." Similar uses of the phrase "much more" also occur in: Romans 5:9 "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Romans 5:10 "For if when 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." Romans 5:15 "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many." Romans 5:20 "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more."

Our faith is much more precious than anything else we possess. We have nothing more valuable than our faith. The closer we get to death, the more we realize how precious it is.

Peter uses the word "precious" seven times in 1 and 2 Peter. We use "precious" for just about anything. We say, "Isn't that a precious necklace." The Bible, however, uses this term for that which is of ultimate value. Acts 20:24 says "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

The word "worth" is the same as the word "precious" in our passage. Paul's testimony is the value here. Hebrews 13:4 says marriage is precious. "Marriage should be honored by all, and

the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."

The contrast between gold and our faith in 1 Peter 1:7 is between material and spiritual wealth. Material wealth perishes; spiritual wealth does not (Psalm 119:127; Proverbs 8:11).

After gold liquefies in fire, the impurities rise to the surface, where they can be skimmed away. When the goldsmith sees his face in the gold, he knows he can turn down the heat. He knows that the gold is purified. God compares our faith with gold because He deems it a precious commodity. Yet gold is of only temporal value. The Christian's faith is of eternal value.

### Principle

God deems a faith tested by fire as being of eternal value.

### Application

One day gold will perish. Our faith will never perish. This passage says if your faith is real, it cannot perish. If you lost your faith you never had a true faith in the beginning.

### *though it is tested by fire*

The word "tested" means--test to approve, to prove with a view to approving, test for approval. The trials test for proof that our faith is genuine. God wants to certify the worth of our faith. Our faith is the foundation of all other character qualities we possess. If our faith falters, everything falters.

We put metal into a crucible to determine whether it is genuine (Proverbs 8:10; 17:3). God tests, proves and scrutinizes us by fire to show that we are worthy for His service.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, the apostle and his fellow missionaries were "approved of God to be entrusted with the Gospel." God gives approval for us to preach after He puts us to the test.

The Corinthians did not find in Paul the proof of the power that they sought (2 Corinthians 13:3). However, Paul reminds them that what ultimately counts is not what men think but what God thinks. God's commendation at the end of the day is what matters. 2 Corinthians 10: 18 says, "For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends."

God proves our attestation in affliction. The pressure put on us when we are under strain will either produce endurance or failure. Suffering produces endurance (Romans 5:3-4). The Macedonians remained both joyous and generous under duress (2 Corinthians 8:2). Testing sifts out authentic believers (2 Corinthians 9:13; 11:19). It attests to our love for God (2 Corinthians 8:8).

God sets the believer under His searching eye. We learn the will of God by testing (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:9-10; Philippians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). Testing protects Christians from caprice and brings them into the sphere of God's will.

When Jesus prayed for Peter, He asked God to strengthen his faith: "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," (Luke 22:31-32). Now in 1 Peter, Peter writes about the importance of faith holding up under fire. Our faith improves by trial.

The nature of our test is a fire-test. The trial of faith is more precious than the test for gold already refined.

Here is a double comparison of the trial of gold with the trial of faith. Gold at the time of writing of 1 Peter was the most valuable of all the metals. Faith is the greatest among Christian values. The trial of faith is of greater value than the trial for gold. Both trials purify. The purification of gold separates the dross from the precious metal. The purification of faith separates the garbage from the Christian life.

### Principle

God uses extreme adversity ("fire") to force out the impurities and the things that are unimportant in our lives.

### Application

Peter compares our faith to gold that is precious from the human viewpoint. Suffering brings the impurities out of our lives and makes us useful to God. This kind of faith is more valuable than gold. God takes the slag out of our lives.

God does not test our faith in prosperity but in adversity. God kicks out the crutches from our lives. He skims off the slag of dependence on other people, upon our social life, upon health, beauty, sex or material possessions. Trouble will come that can wipe out these things. These things will not sustain us in times of duress. Good times do not sustain us; only God can sustain us by his promises.

How many times have we prayed, "Lord, take it away." God put it there. He wants it there. He wants us to learn to trust Him in adversity. Some people quote 2 Corinthians 10:13, "but with the temptation will also make the way of escape" with the interpretation that they will "escape" from problems. They want to get out from under the trouble so that it does not hurt anymore. Escape does not prove a thing.

For some people, the only time they think seriously about God is when they are in a jam. If they were honest they would say, "Now God, I'm in this terrible jam. It hurts terribly. Make it stop hurting. Wave your divine wand to make it stop." That is why they want a God. They want a divine pacifier. As soon as the trouble passes, they forget all about God again.

God's way of escape is IN suffering. He allows suffering so that we can know joy while going through trouble. We will get out of the trial sooner or later. But that is not the answer. The answer is what we do while under pressure.

***may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ***

God is the one who does the finding here, not us. God will find whether our faith glorifies Him or not. Long after gold is gone our faith will remain. If our faith meets the test, it will redound to the glory of God.

The word "found" means to find after a search. God puts our faith to the test to approve us for the glory of God. Trials put our faith to the test. If we trust Him to meet us in our need, it glorifies Him. It is not the testing of our faith that glorifies God. It is whether our faith meets the test.

The trial of our faith will produce three results: praise, honor and glory. These results are all in the future.

If we reduce 1 Peter 1:7 down to its least common denominator it would read like this, "That the genuineness of your faith...be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Our faith produces something for the future.

2 Corinthians 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Trials will not last forever. And God furnishes the equipment to support us while we are in them.

Material wealth perishes; spiritual wealth is imperishable. The person who places spiritual values above temporal values operates on genuine, eternal priorities.

**Principle**

The trial of faith is producing something for us in the future.

**Application**

Jesus is coming again. When we meet Him, the character of our faith will be manifest. The greater the refining process, the brighter it will appear. Trials will disappear but the luster of the trial will proceed into eternity. This should reconcile us to our present afflictions.

Christians do not judge their life based solely on time but on eternity as well.

***to praise, honor, and glory***

"Praise" is the expression of honor. Jesus will express His approval at that day. The word "praise" is a compound of two words "upon" and "a tale." It meant to tell a tale about someone. It came to mean "praise" with the idea of commendation or approbation.

"Honor" is the esteem that someone has for someone else. God will honor our faith when we meet the Lord Jesus.

Proverbs 18: 12 says "But humility comes before honor." We know little about humility. The station this side of honor is humility. We cannot get to the second station without stopping at the first station. If we receive honor without humility, it might go



to our head. We would inflate with our own importance.

One day we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We will get our grades then. Some of us will receive more honor than others. Some will have crowns. Some will have none.

"Glory" means to manifest the attributes of a person. This is the glory that results from a good opinion. Does God have a good opinion of us? The New Testament uses "glory" to refer to the blessed estate of the children of God when they are brought into the glorification of the likeness of Christ.

God will make a big deal of the quality of our faith on Earth. In the marketplace of eternity, gold will be of little value. The quality of our faith will be of much greater worth.

Very few of us receive glory here on Earth. The reason faith is more valuable than gold is that when we meet God, He will find it to have honor, praise and glory.

**Principle God has established a day when we will get our due.**

#### **Application**

We do not get much praise here on Earth. That's life. If you are inclined to praise someone down here, don't hesitate to do so. If you fear that they will think it is flattery, do it anyway.

One day we will receive praise from the most important person of the universe.

1 Corinthians 4:5 says, "Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God."

When the Lord comes back and we stand before Him, we will receive our due then.

#### ***at the revelation of Jesus Christ***

The word "revelation" means unveiling. This refers to the return of the Lord Jesus. 1 Peter 5:4 says "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." 1 John 2:28: "And now, little children,

abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." 1 John 3:2: "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. 3And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

#### **Principle**

God will manifest the eternal value of the life of faith when Jesus returns

#### **Application**

Do you anticipate His return? He may come today.

The three results of the glorification of the believer: praise, honor and glory will take place at the coming of Christ. God honors those who prove their faith.

