



THE EPISTLES OF
SAINT **P**PETER

**Holiness and the
Divine Nature**

Translation and Commentary
by Dr. Mark Spitsbergen Th.D., M.S.

The Epistles of Saint Peter
“Holiness and the Divine Nature”
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The First General Epistle of Saint Peter

1 Peter

Chapter 1

1- Peter an Apostle of Jesus Christ to elect¹ sojourners of the dispersed of Pontus, of Galatia, of Cappadocia, of Asia, and of Bithynia.

2- According to Father God's foreknowledge² by sanctification³ of the Spirit unto obedience⁴ and sprinkling of the blood⁵ of Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace be multiplied.

¹ The Greek word 'eklektois' which is translated 'elect' brings to light the fact that Jesus has chosen us. Peter will highlight how the election took place in the following verses. The first time that 'eklektois' occurs in the New Testament is in Matthew 22:14, where it is translated 'chosen', in the Authorized Version. Of the 23 times that 'eklektois' occurs it is translated elect 16 times and chosen 7 times. It also may be translated, 'picked out', 'appointed', or 'selected'.

² It was the plan or foreknowledge of the Father that we should be chosen by being set apart or sanctified by the Spirit. The foreknowledge of God in every case has to do with God's plan and not the individuals in the plan. That it is God's will that all men be saved is for certain, "He is not willing that anyone perish" and so the grace of God has appeared to all men (1 Corinthians 1 Peter 5; Titus 2:11). The Greek word 'prognosis', was used by the ancients as a medical term which is still in use today; and may be defined as "a prediction about how a given situation will develop". This word, which is derived from the compound word 'pro-ginosko', may be literally translated to "know before". It is only used twice in the New Testament here and in Acts 2:23. The tragedy of the misunderstanding of God's foreknowledge cannot be said better than John Wesley said it so many years ago, "*But the doctrine of predestination is entirely changed from what it formerly was. Now it implies neither faith, peace, nor purity. It is something that will do without them all. Faith is no longer, according to the modern predestinarian scheme, a divine "evidence of things not seen," wrought*

in the soul by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost; not an evidence at all; but a mere notion. Neither is faith made any longer a means of holiness; but something that will do without it. Christ is no more a Savior from sin; but a defense, a countenancer of it. He is no more a fountain of spiritual life in the soul of believers, but leaves his elect inwardly dry, and outwardly unfruitful; and is made little more than a refuge from the image of the heavenly; even from righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

³ Just as Jesus is our righteousness and our redemption, He is also our sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30). Even as men were consecrated by special acts of grace in the old covenant, all men are given the opportunity to be set apart today by the blood of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit that we are sanctified (2 Thessalonians 2:13). The Greek word ‘hagiasmo’ means to be made holy. Therefore, when we were born of the Holy Spirit we received a holy spirit and are those who are referred to as “holy ones” (saints), by God (Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 26:10; Romans 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25,26,31; 16:2,15; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 7:1,2; 14:33; 16:1,15 etc...).

When we were born of the Spirit we were given a new heart and a new spirit and our spirit was made one with the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; 1 Corinthians 6:17; 12:13; John 3:6; Romans 8:9). We are holy because we received a divine nature when we were born of God and made a new creature (2 Peter 1:4; Galatians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Now that we are born of God and filled with His Spirit the ways of God are no longer foreign to us and we are able to both agree with the Lord and walk in His ways. We are renewed in righteousness and true holiness and washed with the water of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; Titus 3:5). God wants us to believe what He has done for us and be renewed in the Spirit of our mind; He wants us to think differently about ourselves (Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2). We are no longer sinners but saints. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and we are endued with Christ (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:13, 19-20; 7:34; Galatians 3:27; Acts 10:15). Thus sanctification is not a process but an event.

⁴ The reason that we have been sanctified or set apart by the Holy Spirit is so that we may be obedient. God set us apart from the control of Satan and the ignorance of the truth so that we may learn His eternal ways and do what is right.

3- Blessed be the God and Father⁶ of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again⁷ into a living expectation through Jesus Christ' resurrection from death.

4- Into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading having been reserved in heaven for you.

5- Who are kept in salvation⁸ by the power of God through faith⁹ ready to be revealed in the last time.

6- In whom you greatly rejoice though now if need be it is a little distressing¹⁰ in a great variety of trials.

⁵ We were not only set apart to be obedient by the Holy Spirit we were also set apart to receive the application of the blood of Jesus Christ which gives us eternal life. During the time of the Law when something was identified to be used for the purposes of God it was set apart and afterwards it would be sprinkled with blood or processed by other ritual purification. When God had set apart the whole congregation of Israel to be His people he had Moses sprinkle both the tablets of stone and the people (Hebrews 9:19). The sprinkling of blood refers to the way in which the blood is applied. The ritual purification of the Sanctuary and the Holies of Holies was accomplished through a combination of sprinkling and daubing of blood (Leviticus 16:14-16; Exodus 29:12-21). Blood protects against the judgment of God and it also protects the priest when he enters the Holies of Holies (Exodus 12; Leviticus 16). Blood also purifies and makes holy (Ezekiel 43:20; Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 14; Exodus 29:9-21; Leviticus 8:24). The blood imparts life as in the example of the leper who was considered dead but when the water and the blood were applied he returned to life (Numbers 12:10-13). The blood was used as a detergent to purify as exemplified by the etymological study of the word 'kipper' (see notes on Leviticus 16). Blood was used to make covenants, which in effect created a family relationship and thus is called the blood of the covenant (Zechariah 9:11; Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:25). One of the ways that we can understand the Hebrew "chatan damim" of Exodus 4:25 is 'blood kinsman', therefore when Zipporah cut the foreskin of her son YHWH became a blood kinsman.

⁶ God the Father is both the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of our Lord Jesus. Jesus also said the same thing when he sent the

message to Peter, “I ascend to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God” (John 20:17).

⁷ Through the scripture we come to know that we were begotten of God by the water, the Spirit, the Word and the resurrection (John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23). In Romans we learn that as many as are baptized into the death of Jesus are also raised up together with Him to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). Paul also tells us that if we are raised up with Christ we are to seek those things, which are above (Colossians 3:1). These passages of scripture refer to the inward resurrection. The inward resurrection of course is equivalent to the new birth the only difference is that it is being communicated in another way. The spirit and soul of man was dead in trespasses and sins but through the resurrection that is in Christ Jesus they have been made alive. In Ephesians 4:21 Paul refers to the inward resurrection as the new man that was created in righteousness and true holiness. Mankind who was spiritual separated from God because of the spiritual death of Adams has been made alive, resurrected through Christ Jesus. For even as we all died in Adam as many as will believe (receive the creative faith of God) are made alive through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 5:12-21).

⁸ The phrase “eis soterian” may be translated as “into salvation” or “in salvation”. The Greek preposition ‘eis’ is commonly translated ‘in’, or ‘into’ throughout the New Testament. Salvation is something that the born again child of God has already received as verse 9 clearly testifies too. As soon as a person calls on the name of the Lord Jesus they are saved (Acts 16:31; John 1:12; 3:5; Acts 2:38).

⁹ Father could have saved us with the strength of his own power absent of anything that we do. However, Father chose to give us His creative faith and has demanded that we participate with that faith through our own will.

¹⁰ All of us hate trials and adversity but there can be nothing more important to the spiritual state of our souls than finding that glorious resting place of trusting the God. We may look at some of the things that we go through and be overwhelmed and somehow think that God was not there or did not care but nothing can be further from the truth. What we must learn to do is to give thanks instead of asking why or in any way doubting His love for us (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Our heavenly Father has called us into an abundant life of joy unspeakable and we must learn to

walk in all of the splendor of that life. The things that are earthly and sensual that would turn our hearts away from the relationship and faith that has been so graciously lavished upon us must be done away with. We may not recognize it but everything that is contrary to the nature and will of God actually steals our joy and robs us of the fullness of all that has been freely given to us. Therefore, in God's lovingkindness and tender mercies He allows us to go through things that are to result in our faith being made perfect so that it might be found unto praise honor and glory at His appearing. We must recognize that any sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 7:4). Our walk with God and our access to Him by the Spirit must be more important to us than all other earthly things. When it is then we will find a realm of glorious fellowship that will move us past all of the things that would turn our affections away from God. It is in this perfect love that we find the operation of perfect faith. Fear and torment cannot access us strife and divisions can no longer dominate us but instead we find a place of communion that captivates our soul and causes all of our affections to be set on things above (Colossians 3:1-4). Let all of our experience result in an abundant confidence in the faithfulness of God who has poured His love into us by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5; Ephesians 1:3).

- 7- That the testing of your faith¹¹ being much more precious than gold that perishes even though tried with fire¹² may be found unto praise and glory and honor at Christ Jesus' unveiling.¹⁴
8- Whom having not seen¹³ you love whom though now seeing¹⁴ not yet believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and with glory¹⁵ .
9- Receiving¹⁶ salvation of your souls the event¹⁷ of the faith.
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¹¹ Father gives us a measure of His faith and it must be proved or assayed in our lives (Psalms 66:10; James 1:3-4; Proverbs 17:3). The Greek word 'dokimion' (testing) refers to the testing that is necessary to determine the genuineness of something. If we are willing to go through the refining fires of the Spirit, God will perfect everything concerning our faith. Jeremiah revealed that the word of God was like a fire that burns up the chaff. He revealed that the chaff was the false words that had been spoken by the false prophets (Jeremiah 23:28,29; Matthew 3:12). These

opinions of devils and men were withholding the fruit that the seed of God's word otherwise would have produced. The faith of God that has come to us by the Word of God must be purified from the mixtures of our own opinions, perceptions, and fears. The Word of God teaches us how to walk in absolute love and trust towards the Father yet there are many doubts and fears that we allow to affect our decisions. When God's word enters into the earthen vessels of our life it must be tried within us and those things that we may unknowingly mix with it must be removed. Therefore, Jesus the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls sits over us as a refiner and purifier of silver (Malachi 3:3). God's word is pure like silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times and it must be also tried in us by the situations and circumstances that God allows to come against us (Psalms 12:6; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

¹² We understand from 1 Corinthians 3:13, that every man's work shall be tried or revealed by fire. This examination will also take place in part at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

¹³ There are two Greek words used in this verse 'eidon' and 'horao'. In Classical Greek unlike Koine Greek these are two unique words 'eidon' which refers to the act of seeing, 'appearance, shape, form' and 'horao' which means 'to see', 'to look', 'become visible'. In an attempt to capture what remains of their unique differences in Konie Greek 'eidon' was translated 'see' and 'horao' as "look upon".

¹⁴ The Greek word used here is 'horao' which may simply be translated 'seen' as in 1 Corinthians 15: 6-8.

¹⁵ The dative form of 'doxazo' (glory) is used here. The primary meaning of this Greek word is praise, extol or magnify. It may also be translated 'clothed with splendor'. This word is derived from the Greek word 'doxa' which means 'glory'. Although the form of the verb 'dedoxasmene' is not used in Septuagint Greek it is probably represented by the Hebrew word 'tiferet', which means 'ornament or splendor' (Deuteronomy 26:19). The most important point of all is that this is the witness and description of those who have received the faith and salvation that has been brought to us by our Lord's resurrection from death. God wants our faces to shine with the splendor of His joy. When the people of Israel meet with God they were to rejoice with great joy (1 Kings 1:40; 1 Chronicles 29:9; 30:26; Nehemiah 12:43). We have been so privileged by God that we are allowed to meet with Him all of

the time. His presence and the fellowship that we have with Him will produce this awesome joy. The joy of the Lord is an ornament of splendor and a light of His glory upon our heads (Isaiah 51:11; 60:1). If you lack joy at any time then, simply yield to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to cause the joy of the Lord to flow out of you like rivers of living water.

¹⁶ In Classical Greek the middle voice of ‘komizo’ is, ‘shelter, entertain; to get, gain, procure; to keep, save, preserve; to bring to, to rescue, recover’. However, in the New Testament of the 10 times, 9 times it appears in the middle voice and the most sensible way to translate it is ‘receive’.

¹⁷ This is the first of four times that ‘telos’ is used in 1 Peter. In 1 Peter 3:8 it is translated ‘finally’ and in 4:7 and 4:17 it is translated ‘end’. The primary meaning of ‘telos’ is ‘end or complete’. However, in Langenscheidt Classical Greek Dictionary it is translated ‘end, term, fulfillment, accomplishment, complete state, result, event; highest state, full power, etc...’ Salvation of the soul is the result of calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and being born from above. Soul salvation is the fulfillment of the faith and by the usage of ‘telos’ may be understood as the end or completion of the faith. The first time ‘telos’ is used in the New Testament in Matthew 10:22 it must be translated ‘end’, “...but the one enduring to the end shall be saved”. The event of the faith then is the total regeneration of the soul, which takes place at the moment of salvation.

10- Concerning this salvation prophets inquired and searched out that prophesied of the grace concerning you.

11- Searching into what or what manner or time the Spirit of Christ within them made plain testifying before hand of the sufferings¹⁸ of Christ and the glory that would follow.

12- To whom it was revealed that not unto themselves but to you they minister the gospel, now announced¹⁹ to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven which the angels desire to look²⁰ into.

13- For this reason gird up the loins of your mind being sober completely relying²¹ on the grace being brought²² to you by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14- As obedient children not conforming to the former desires²³ in your ignorance.

18 As we read through the Old Testament, we discover that when the prophets of old spoke by the Holy Spirit they spoke of the sufferings of Christ. Indeed, when Paul ministered, it was the scriptures of the Old Testament that he would turn to when he preached in the synagogues. He was able to present these scriptures proving how that it was necessary that Jesus be put to death and then be raised from the dead (Acts 16:3). In fact, there was not a sacrifice, a Sabbath or a festival that did not proclaim the coming of the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world and through His blood redeem mankind.

19 When men preach it must be the voice and the announcement of the Holy Spirit or it is nothing more than mere religion powered by human ability. The preaching of the gospel cannot be properly done but by the gift of the Holy Spirit speaking through men. The preaching of the gospel has been normalized by the schools and intellect of men but if we are to preach the way that God intended us to minister then one must be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak by the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit. Paul summed it up when he said my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God (1 Corinthians 2:4). When Paul ministered, he ministered by the operation of the gift of the Spirit either by revelation, or by knowledge or by prophecy or by doctrine (1 Corinthians 14:6).

20 The Greek word 'parakupto' means 'to stoop down, to look at'. In John 20:11 in the Authorized Version it is translated "stooped down".

21 The Greek word 'elpizo' is primarily translated 'trust' in the Authorized Version. In Classical Greek it may be translated 'to expect; to hope or think'. It is derived from the root 'elpis' which means 'expectation or hope'. The choice was made to use a synonym of trust in order to capture more of the overall color of this word.

22 Because of the use of the passive present participle 'being brought' this verse is indicative of the continual grace and provision given to the child of God to grow and mature rather than a single future event. It is the business of the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus and certainly this revelation results in an increase in every dimension of faith that has been made available to us.

23 The former desires are those desires that ruled the passions before the new birth. The former desires are inspired by the god of this

world, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience. Satan attacks the children of God and attempts to impose his desires upon them. The Satanic desire is expressed by all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. However, the Holy Calling has not only called us to be totally separate from all these things but has empowered us with the desires of the Father. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, the joy and wellsprings of holiness flows out of us as rivers of living water. We find ourselves having only one desire and that is to please the Father. His ways become our ways and His desires our desires. In this realm of Holy Spirit inspiration, we are called to resist the devil steadfast in the faith and not allow those former desires to have any place in our lives.

15- But according to His holy calling you shall also be Holy in every behavior²⁴.

16- Because it has been written, Be Holy²⁵ because I am Holy.

²⁴ Holiness is our whole way of life in God. Our hearts have been united with the heart of God through the miracle of the new birth. This is not holiness by the law or by human efforts, but true holiness that has come to us by the Holy Spirit. Holiness is the fire of God that fell upon the acceptable sacrifice of a new creation by the spirit of holiness, the Holy Spirit. Holiness is the nature of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the proof of sonship (Romans 1:4; 8:14,16; Galatians 4:6; 5:16,25). The Heavenly Father is the God who has always answered by fire (1 Kings 18:24; Leviticus 9:24; Deuteronomy 4:24; Matthew 3:11; Hebrews 12:29). His presence and His glory are as a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:33; 5:24,26; 9:10; 18:16). When an offering was holy and acceptable to Him, He caused His fire to fall upon it and it was consumed with His presence. The fire of God never fell upon an offering that was unclean or in any way unacceptable. When the fire of God fell on any person who was not acceptable to God, they were destroyed (Leviticus 10:1-3; Numbers 16:35-38; 2 Kings 1:9-10). Through the blood of Jesus we were washed from all our uncleanness, and made an offering acceptable unto God. The Spirit of Holiness fell upon us and brought forth a new creation. The new creation becomes the offering that can instantly and continually be baptized in the Holy Ghost and fire through

the ministry of Jesus.

It is the life and presence of Jesus in our lives that produces the holiness that God requires. It is through living and walking in the Holy Spirit that righteousness and true holiness is realized (Ephesians 4:24; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 3:5; Luke 1:75; Galatians 5:16,25). We have been given all these wonderful riches as a gift: the gift of holiness, righteousness, purity, virtue, love, peace, everything that belongs to life and godliness — they are ours through the Holy Spirit flowing out of our emotions, passions, and appetites like rivers (John 4:14; 7:38-39; 2 Peter 1:3). These things are not earned, nor are they of our own making; they are believed, received, and yielded to. Though the fleshly lust of a demonic world war against the holiness of God, we will not be moved; for we will have our fruits unto holiness, and the end thereof everlasting life (Romans 6:22; 1 John 2:16; 1 Peter 2:11). We have overcome the world because the greater One, the Holy One, lives within. We have come into the riches of God's own goodness and will not capitulate to sin and the demon hordes of a satanic world.

If we fail to believe the good news and accept the gift and identity that God has given, then it will never be realized in our lives. We cannot continue to confess that which the blood removed and our death with Christ destroyed. If we go about trying to establish our own righteousness and holiness by some other means, then we will fail to receive the gift. We must submit to the righteousness and holiness that God has given to us by His Spirit and made known through His word. We cannot live by our own impressions and perceptions; they will lead us into error. Wisdom and insight come to us by the word of God. The faith that produces the miracle of salvation and works overcoming power comes by hearing the word of God (1 John 5:4; Romans 10:9-10,17). When we believe what God has done, the miracle takes place and we are liberated to live the life of the redeemed: the abundant life, the life that is filled with all His fullness (John 1:16; Colossians 2:10). The sounds of heaven will spring forth from those who will yield to His glorious work of grace; the shouts of the heavenly and of the redeemed will fill your heart with joy. Oh, how beautiful are the joyful sounds of the mighty rushing wind when those filled with His Spirit begin to pray and sing. The fire of holiness burns within His joy, His peace, His righteousness. Come worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness and find all your conversation and behavior in Him! All of the holiness of God was revealed in the conduct and character of Jesus; and we must forsake all other things and live in Him!

Holiness is the nature and character of God, and God has empowered us to be holy too. Who is like the Lord, so glorious in holiness (Exodus 15:11). He has made all of His ministers round about Him holy, so that they may worship Him in the beauty of holiness and truth (1 Chronicles 16:29; 2 Chronicles 20:21; Psalm 29:2; John 4:23; 14:16-17). The Lord sits upon His throne of Holiness in the mountain of His Holiness, and in His Holiness all of His splendor and the majesty of His ways are revealed (Psalm 47:8; 48:1; Isaiah 63:15).

The gift of God has caused all the people of the Lord to be those who are holy and who are given to holiness (Exodus 28:36; 39:30; Jeremiah 2:3; Luke 1:75; Romans 6:19,22; Ephesians 4:24; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Hebrews 12:10). Just as the Lord said, “Let there be light,” and there was light — He has also created holiness for all who will receive. The call to holiness is absolute in both the New Testament and the Old Testament (Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7,26; Hebrews 12:14). Everything that the Lord redeemed in both covenants became holy, and He demanded then and now that all people and things that belong to Him remain holy. God ordained from the very beginning that men should be holy and without blame before Him in love; and through His redemption He has forever established it (Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Revelation 22:11). Father demands that we remain consecrated to His abundant life of righteousness and purity which he granted to us in the gift of salvation.

The Father has washed away our filthiness with the blood of His only begotten Son Jesus and empowered us by His Holy Spirit to be exactly what He created us to be: holy even as He is Holy. It is important to remember that Holiness is a gift that we have been given through the miracle of the new creation (Ephesians 4:24; Titus 3:5). We have holiness because He has empowered us to have His holiness through His indwelling presence (1 Corinthians 3:16; Romans 13:14; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 13:5; Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:24; 4:4; Colossians 1:27). We have holiness because we have the Holy Spirit — the Spirit of Holiness. As we trust God to establish all that He has ordained, and as we walk in obedience to the Holy Spirit and remain willing to be led and taught by Him, His holiness is ours. The Holy Spirit will teach us, lead us, and guide us into all the ways of the Holiness of God; all we must do is follow.

17- And if you call on Father who without respect of persons judges according to every ones work²⁶ pass the time of your sojourn in fear.

18- Knowing that you were not redeemed from your vain behavior with corruptible things as silver and gold handed down by your fathers.

19- But with precious blood, Christ as a lamb without blemish and spot.

20- Having been predestinated before the overthrow²⁷ of the world but being manifested at this last time for you.

²⁶ The fact that every person is going to be held accountable for the deeds that are done in his body is certain. We are not saved by any works of righteousness, which we have done. However, it is equally true that our deeds are to reflect those of the Father. All of Father's works are Holy and He expects that by the working of the Holy Spirit in us that all of our works are to be Holy too (Ephesians 2:10). The reality that our works are a manifestation of who we are is set forth as a fundamental witness to whether or not we are born of God. The Greek word for work is 'ergon' and it is found 760 times in the New Testament and is used more by Paul as a testimony and proof of salvation more than anyone else.

Judgment Day is coming, and I am afraid that very few people are ready. Some say Jesus has already bore my judgment so that I do not have to give an account, but this is not true (2 Corinthians 5:9-11; Revelation 2:23; Romans 2:5-6; Jeremiah 17:10). Jesus did bear our judgment to free us from all of the sin and death that controlled our lives. However, we are now to live worthy of the calling and recognize that God rules our life not sin (Titus 2:11-12; Ephesians :1; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). If we are obedient subjects under God's rule, then we will walk in righteousness. Yet if we sin and disgrace the name of the Lord and do not turn from our evil we will die (Hebrews 10:29; 2:3; 12:25).

²⁷ In Classical Greek, one of the ways that 'katabole' may be translated is 'attack'. The Greek word 'katabole' is derived from the Greek verb 'kataballo', which means 'cast down'. The verb 'kataballo' is a compound word formed from 'kata' and 'ballo', which may literally be translated "after cast away". There was an event that brought man to ruin and that was the overthrow of man's relationship with God, which was effectively the casting away of man from God and His garden.

When Adam and Eve sinned against God they went from the realms of life and light into the realm of death and darkness. This was the event in which sin entered into the world of men and death by sin this was indeed, a cataclysmic event (Romans 5:12). In Revelation 17:8 this event is put into prospective by the use of katabole which marks the time period that names began to be written in the Lambs book of life. The recording of those who would trust in the Lamb as their redeemer began at the katabole and in Revelation chapter 17 the time period is coming to a conclusion. Those whose names are not written in the Lambs book of life are those who from the beginning of this time period refused to put their faith in the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. Thus, the katabole marks the time point when it became necessary for man to be redeemed. It was at this point that the blood of the prophets began to be spilled of which Jesus included Abel (Luke 11:50, 51). In Revelation 13:8 katabole is used to mark the time point at which the Lamb was slain. We know that Able offered the sacrifice of faith in the coming redeemer when he offered up the firstfruits of his flock (Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:4). We also know through the testimony of Jesus that Abel was actually prophesying of the coming redeemer and thus is numbered among the prophets who have been slain since the katabole (Luke 11:51). We know that Abraham was able to look across time through faith in the offering of the sacrificial lambs and see the day when God would offer His only begotten Son for our sins at Calvary (John 8:56; Genesis 22:2,7,8). Also, Job in the midst of his suffering and rejection was able to see the day when his redeemer would come and suffer and be rejected and said, "I know that my redeemer lives and shall stand upon the earth in the last day" (Job 19:25). The event of Passover was another testimony of the Lamb being slain to deliver man from the dark bondage of sin and imprisonment to death. This is verified by the fact that when Jesus our redeemer and Lamb finally did come it was Passover that exemplified who He was and what he was doing for mankind. Jesus became the whole worlds Passover Lamb when on the night before the Passover He took the bread and the cup and declared that the emblems of Passover would now be the emblems of the New Covenant; for He would be sacrificed for man the next day at the time of the slaying of the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:3,7,13; Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; John 19:14). Once again in both Hebrews 9:26 and 4:3, katabole is used to mark the event in time when it became necessary for the Lamb to be slain for the sin of man. Although many lambs that testified of the Lamb Christ Jesus had been slain since the katabole it was Jesus the True Lamb who was slain once at the end of the world. There

is no doubt that the connection of katabole and the need to be redeemed finds its focal point in Adam and Eve's overthrow. At that very moment in time God promised that He would bring a redeemer when He said that the seed of the woman would come forth to crush the head of the serpent. The seed of the woman would destroy the serpent that had bitten man with the poison of his lie. There would be no other remedy for man but a redeemer. It was at that time that God made coats of skins for them and clothed them with the promise of the Lamb (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; Matthew 1: 18,20,23; Ephesians 1:4). Finally, it must be pointed out emphatically that the katabole does not mark God's beginning nor the beginning of mankind for Jesus existed as the Eternal Word before the katebole. However, at the time of the katebole it became essential that the Lamb be slain for the sin of the world. The fact that Jesus existed before the katabole is certain for when He prayed in John 17:24, He asked Father to glorify Him with the glory that He had before the katebole. It is certain that katebole is a word used to mark the event in time in which it became necessary for man to be redeemed. It is a word that is found 11 times in the New Testament and is used in terms of man's redemption in every case except for one.

21- Who have their faith in God through Him, who raised Him up from death and giving him glory, so that your faith and confidence can be in God.

22- Having purified your souls by the obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love, love one another fervently from a pure heart²⁸.

23- Having been begotten again not from a corruptible seed but an imperishable one through the living and abiding word²⁹ of God.

²⁸ Our Savior and our God has given us the blessed privilege of having relationships that flow from purity and truth (1 Timothy 1:5; Philippians 4:8; Matthew 5:8; 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:22). These relationships are to last forever; and even more, He commands that we have them (John 13:34; John 15:12; 1 John 3:11,23; 1 John 4:21; 2 John 1:5). He gave us purity of soul and heart, so that the purity of His love might flow through us to everyone we touch. Redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ has resulted in our souls and hearts being purified.

It is the soul that represents the whole of a person's life, and it is the heart that represents the source from which all things are created in that life. It is from the heart and the innermost being that the rivers of God's love flow. His love is to then be expressed through every action of our soul.

We learn to enjoy these kinds of relationships with the Father, the Lord Jesus, with the Holy Spirit, and with one another. It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us how to have this kind of relationship. It was Jesus who modeled for us how these kinds of relationships work; and it is our responsibility to commit ourselves now and forever to having them (John 15:13; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:7-8, 1 John 4:11; Ephesians 5:1-2).

²⁹ The Lord has not only begotten us of the Spirit, but also of the Word. The word of God is living and powerful, it is spirit and life. All things were created by the Word of God, and it is through the same word that we have been created anew. Being begotten of the word of truth has resulted in us becoming children of the truth; God's word is like an incorruptible seed that produces new creatures that are of the truth (1 Peter 1:23). Through the new birth the laws of God are written on our hearts, and out of the new nature the truth of His divine ways are established in our lives (Hebrews 10:16; 2 Corinthians 3:3). The same Word of truth that describes the ways of God produces a nature that manifests His word in our soul and spirit. Through the word of truth, our lives bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The central theme of the glorious gospel is that the Word of life — Christ Jesus — was made flesh, and by His reconciling work He has brought many sons unto glory. Jesus said to His disciples, "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3). The word that declares redemption and produces faith in the hearts of those who will hear brings forth the miracle of cleansing and regeneration. God has sanctified us and cleansed us by the washing of the water of the Word, that we might be a holy community who fully represent everything that He is (Ephesians 1:22-23;5:26).

24- Because all flesh is as grass and all of the glory as the flower of grass; the grass dries up and the flower fades away³⁰.

25- But the word of the Lord remains unto eternity and this is the word³¹ which has been proclaimed to you.

Chapter 2

1- Therefore lay aside all evil and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and evil speaking.

2- As newborn babes long for the genuine milk of the word³² that you may grow³³ by it³⁴.

³⁰ We can live our lives like grass and like the flower if we choose but everything that we are and all that we have done will only decay and die and be remembered no more (Galatians 6:7-8). However, if we are willing to be born of the word of God, we will be a part of that which is incorruptible. The things that we do in obedience to the word of God will last forever and we will reap the benefits of an obedient life now and throughout eternity. We will not be a fading and withering flower but a bright and shining light that grows brighter with each passing day (Daniel 12:3; Matthew 13:43; Psalms 1:3; Jeremiah 7:8; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Even though our outward man perishes yet our inner man will take on new vitality each day (2 Corinthians 4:16). In fact, when we walk in obedience to the Lord, our youth is renewed and our lives become a witness to the blessings and glory of the life of God (Psalms 103:5; Isaiah 40:31). The choice is ours we can walk in the ways of men and live our lives like grass and like the flowers or we can live by the word of God and participate in the ever renewing and eternal word that last forever.

³¹ There are two words used in the Greek language for ‘word’, ‘logos’ and ‘rhema.’ However, these two words are translated by one Hebrew word many times and especially when the word of the Lord is being referred to, the Hebrew word is ‘dabar.’ A classic example of this is in Exodus 19:6-9, where we find ‘dabar’ translated as ‘rhema’ twice and ‘logos’ twice. This synonymous interchange between the Greek word ‘rhema’ and ‘logos’ is further emphasized in 1 Kings 12:24; 1 Samuel 15:23 where the expression “the word of the Lord” is found in each case twice and in both instances, it is translated using ‘rhema’ and then ‘logos.’ This interchange is observed many times throughout the Bible leaving us little doubt that there is any difference between the two. The one interesting thing to note is that the expression the “word of the Lord” in the five books of Moses exclusively uses ‘rhema’ beginning

with Genesis 15:1 through Deuteronomy 34:5. Peter also uses these two words somewhat interchangeably having said that we are born of the ‘logos’ in verse 23 and then describes that ‘logos’ of which we were born to be the ‘rhema’ that endures forever. This same revelation that God’s word is eternal is found in Isaiah 40:8. Jesus said that heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word will not pass away (Mark 13:31). The Psalmist says that God’s word is forever settled in heaven and that He has exalted it above His own name (Psalms 119:89; Psalms 138:2). Jesus said that it was the words that he had spoken that would judge men in the last day (John 12:48). The word of God reveals to us the will of God which is unchanging. The word of God is living, revealing, life giving, faith imparting, supernatural creative power of God at work on the inside of those who will believe.

³² In order to cooperate with God we must know His will. His will is expressed to us by His word. However, if our hearts are hard and callous against God then we cannot be subject to His word. The unredeemed person has a stony and callous heart which is described by the prophet Ezekiel when he announced what God would do to change the heart, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (36:26-27). When a person is born of the Spirit and of the Word, they receive a new heart that is sensitive and yielded to God (Colossians 2:11; Romans 2:2). God writes His word on these fleshly tables of our heart so that we may know them, be inspired by them and sensitive to them (2 Corinthians 3:3). It is His word that builds us up and give us an inheritance among all the saints (Acts 20:32). It is His word that strengthens, quickens, and causes us to grow (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). We must recognize that sin hardens the heart and makes it hard against the word of God. However, through an obedient and submissive heart to the Holy Spirit we are able to lay aside all of those things that oppose us. Through a new and sensitive heart towards God we are able to receive the fresh nourishment of the word that causes us to grow and mature (Hebrews 3:13; Psalms 66:18).

³³ When we were born of the Spirit we were not born as fully matured children of God; but as newborn babies we desired the pure word of God, so that we could grow (1 Peter 2:2). Grow into what? The fullness of the measure of the maturity of the ministry of Christ

Jesus (Ephesians 4:13). To grow and mature then, we must engage in what the word of God commands us to do. We must begin to move in faith, which dictates to us to function in a realm of impossibility (Matthew 17:20; 21:21). We must lay hands on the sick and command devils to go (Mark 16:17; Acts 8:6-7; Matthew 10:8). If we fail to see the results that the word of God describes, we do not back down but press on to higher ground (Hebrews 10:35). There is a realm of the Holy Ghost that we are commanded to function in - which we must contend for (Jude 1:3; 1 Corinthians 14:1; Hebrews 11:6). We must not allow ourselves to be discouraged or faint of heart but move into our inheritance no matter what obstacles or opposing forces we encounter (Joshua 1:6-8; Romans 8:17; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Matthew 16:18). Many stand by and want God to work a miracle, not realizing that this work has been entrusted to the church (1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 1:8; 4:33; 6:8; 19:11). We must lay hold of the authority to do these works and greater works (John 14:12). A little anointing is not enough; we must increase more until the fullness of Jesus is revealed. I watch as so many become discouraged because a prayer that they prayed was not answered, or a miracle that they believed for was not accomplished. Instead, each one of us should be determined to lay hold of those things that God has made available. How can we believe and then back down from our pursuit of all the fullness of God that has been poured out through the Holy Ghost? Did we do that in school when our efforts returned a poor grade? No, we kicked in and stepped up to a greater commitment to understand and do the things required. If we will make the word of life our reason for living, and not back down from those things which God has said, we will mature into everything it describes. We must not alter the word; or we will only have those things which we've made up, instead of the full maturity of the sons of God that Christ Jesus purchased for us at Calvary (Romans 8:29; Galatians 4:7).

³⁴ This is yet another example of the importance of the correct choice of manuscripts used for translation. Among the majority of manuscripts we read “*ina en auto auxethete*” which may be translated “that by it you may grow” or “that in it you may grow”. A few variant texts add “*eis soterian*” which means “into salvation” making this phrase to read, “that by it you may grow into salvation”, thus radically changing the meaning of this verse. These scholars did so for reason other than purely honest investigation there is a demonic influence to lead the reader away from the finished work of salvation.

3- If you have come to know that the Lord is gracious.

4- A living stone to whom we draw near rejected by man but according to God elect precious.

5- We also as living stones³⁵ are built up³⁶ a spiritual house³⁷ into a holy priesthood lifting up spiritual sacrifices³⁸ acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

³⁵ As Christ is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:17; John 17:18). He is a living stone and because we are in Him and live by Him, we also are living stones. He is a lamb, so we are lambs, He is the Son so we are sons, He is the Priest so we are priests, He is the King so we are kings, He is the heir so we are joint heirs.

³⁶ The Greek verb ‘oikodomeo’ is used 40 times in the New Testament. It is the same verb that was used by Jesus when He told Peter in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church on this rock”. Certainly, Peter came to understand the application of this metaphor not in terms of himself but of Christ Jesus the Living Stone first and of all the redeemed in general. Paul also used this same metaphor in Ephesians 2:22 in which he included the Apostles and Prophets as being part of the foundation alongside of Jesus who is the chief corner stone.

³⁷ Peter does not use the word Church in either of his Epistle instead he refers to the Church as ‘a spiritual house’ and ‘the people of God’ (2:10). Peter refers to those in the church as a royal Priesthood and a holy nation. Even as it takes many members to be a body it takes many stones to be a house. God has so ordained that the individual believers go beyond their individualism to find a unity, which will result in a place from which spiritual sacrifices may be offered that are acceptable to God. In the first covenant God established a place of worship, a Priesthood, and the proper protocol for worship. Through Christ Jesus we are made those who worship God in the Spirit, who are empowered to show forth the glory and announce the excellencies of the one who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (Philippians 3:3; 1 Peter 2:10). The Church is the assembly of God’s people who worship in Spirit and fellowship in the unity of the Spirit a spiritual house from where God is praised.

The church must be a spiritual house, otherwise it is not of God. It is to be a house of joy and a house of prayer (Isaiah 56:7). The only way that church can truly exist is through God's people submitting to the operations and administration of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit of Truth is in charge, then a spiritual house will be miraculously created. God's people are to submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to build a spiritual house in the context of each assembly! Each person must submit themselves to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to set them in their proper place in the context of each meeting. The Holy Spirit then divides to each person individually as He chooses, and the spiritual house begins to function. The spiritual house is an assembly of those joying and rejoicing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and having been baptized in the fire of God's presence, begin to outshine the sun as the light of the world! As the body of Christ and the habitation of the Lord, our lives become like living stones to be set into the building of God. The Holy Spirit arranges our lives around Jesus Christ, the cornerstone, and we become something far greater than we can be on an individual basis: we become the church. As the stones serve only that the house may exist — and as such their individualism, while noted, is lost in the splendor of the building itself; so are our lives. The church is entirely a supernatural working of the grace of God, governed by the Holy Spirit with one purpose: to reveal Jesus Christ. Those gatherings which are merely the activities of men and of individual worth cannot claim to be the church, for the church is the activity of Christ, the fullness of God (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11,28-31).

Our greatest concern should be that we do not participate in a carnal house and call it church. The contrast between a spiritual house and a carnal house would be the same as Paul gave in Romans 8:6. The people in such a house would act with the same carnality as those whom Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3. Such a house would not be governed by the Holy Spirit, but by man. Instead of signs, wonders, and miracles — there would be manmade programs and human abilities. The Holy Spirit would not be at work revealing Jesus, but men would be at work revealing man. There would be no real representation of a resurrected Jesus or of the kingdom of God. Our hearts must be stirred that our faith not be in men, but a work of grace produced by the demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). We must share in God's holy zeal for His church. We can be certain as to how Jesus feels about His church when we look back on His zeal for His Father's house of prayer. He was filled with a holy indignation and made a whip and drove out those who had turned His

Father's house into a place of merchandise.

Within the spiritual house, spiritual sacrifices are offered up through us by the Holy Spirit. The Father desires us to worship in Spirit and truth, so He filled us with His Spirit and caused His fire to fall upon our lives. He made each one of us the carriers of His glory and presence. Each of us became the temple of the Holy Spirit, in whom God now lives and walks. God takes His temples and makes them living stones — to be set into place around Jesus in His glorious house of praise (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). The offerings that we bring to God are not of human origin, but of His Spirit who dwells in us. A carnal offering will not do. Carnal services are a thing of the past and belong to those under the law, who were void of such a glorious administration (Hebrews 9:9-10). Spiritual sacrifices are defined by everything that the Holy Spirit inspires us to do. He gives us a true heart and a river of life to offer the sacrifices of praise (Psalm 27:6; 54:6; Jeremiah 33:11; Hebrews 13:15). Our prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit are as incense rising before Him (Revelation 5:8; 8:4). A broken spirit, and a broken and contrite heart is not a sorrowful and grieving heart, but rather a yielded and submitted disposition before the Lord, united with the Holy Ghost (Psalm 51:17; Matthew 5:5; 11:19; Philippians 2:5-8; Galatians 5:23; Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:2). A sacrifice is an offering of praise, not a sorrowful heart of regret. We joyfully offer up the fruits of the Spirit in the house of the Lord (Romans 14:17; Ephesians 5:9; Galatians 5:22-23). God's house of joy is full of thankfulness, joyfulness, and abundant life. Our place of joy and rejoicing cannot be overstated. It is the demand of the Father and the work of the Spirit, emphasized by the frequency that these things are referred to in the Bible: "thanks" 415 times, "rejoice" 706 times, "joy" 719 times, "happy" 193 times, "bless the Lord" 1,453 times, "singing" 538 times, "shout" 546 times, "praise" 1,203 times: for a total 5,845 times. A spiritual house is a house governed and functioning by the Holy Spirit, and spiritual sacrifices are those things which the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of the redeemed.

6- For this reason it is underscored in the scriptures³⁹, Behold I lay in Zion a corner stone chosen precious and those who believe on Him shall not be ashamed.

7- Therefore for those who believe He is priceless but to the unbelieving the stone rejected by the builders the same has

become the head of the corner⁴⁰ .

8- And a stumbling stone and a rock of scandal⁴¹ for those who because of unbelief stumble at the word even as they were set⁴² .

9- But you are an elect family⁴³ a royal priesthood a holy nation⁴⁴ a people for a possession⁴⁵ that you may announce the excellencies⁴⁶ of the One who called you from darkness into His marvelous light.

³⁹ This quote is from Isaiah 28:16, “Therefore this is what my Lord YHWH says, behold I have laid in Zion a foundation stone: a proven stone, a precious cornerstone, a secure foundation, the believing shall not panic.” The fragment of this verse that is quoted serves to point to Jesus Christ as the one who came to fulfill that which Father promised by His prophet Isaiah. The context in Isaiah 28 is that everyone shall be measured by the cornerstone if they fail to line up with this chosen and proven cornerstone then they shall be thrown away. The measuring line shall be justice and the leveling rod or plummet line shall be righteousness. The spiritual house is built by living stones that are placed into the building by the Holy Spirit because they meet the standards and qualifications of the cornerstone. We were made these living stones through the miracle of the new birth in Christ Jesus and there is no one that God will reject if they come to Him by Christ Jesus. Now through the grace of God in Christ Jesus we grow and mature in every attribute of His Holy Nature (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18; Ephesians 2:21; 4:15). Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith perfects everything that concerns us (Hebrews 12:2; Philippians 1:6; 2:13; 1 Corinthians 1:8). All we must do is stay yielded to Him and the Holy Spirit will train us in all of the ways of the divine nature (John 16:13; 14:26; Romans 6:19). If we trust Him no matter what the short comings, we will discover that we will never be ashamed for He is always there to show His love and mercy. As we walk out a relationship of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, we will find ourselves prepared by the Master unto every good work (2 Timothy 2:21; Hebrews 13:21; Matthew 5:6). God’s standard is high, but His mercy is great!

⁴⁰ This is a quote from Psalms 118:22. Jesus also applies this same scripture to Himself in Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17. Peter also quotes this in his defense against the rulers and elders of Israel (Acts 4:11).

⁴¹ This is quoted in part from Isaiah 8:16 which declares that YHWH will be “a sanctuary and a stumbling stone and rock of stumbling...” He is a sanctuary for the believing and a stumbling stone for the unbelieving.

⁴² A.T Robertson points to the same idiom used in 1 Timothy 2:7. He also quotes Bigg’s comment regarding this passage, “ Their disobedience is not ordained; the penalty of their disobedience is.” Thus, the penalty for unbelief is being confused and stumbling through the word. The intellectual stumbles at the word because he cannot except that the creation of man was about 5767 years ago. The Jews stumble at the Word, Christ Jesus because they cannot accept the idea of the plurality of One God. The idea that YHWH had a Son who eternally existed as the Word causes their rabbis to rend their cloths and scream blasphemy. The Greek word ‘tithemi’ is primarily translated ‘lay’ by the Authorized Version. However, it primarily means ‘put, place or lay’.

⁴³ Peter is referring to that family of God that is born of the Spirit described in 1 Peter 1:23. The Greek phrase is ‘genos eklekton’, which literally means ‘elect family’ or ‘chosen family’, referring to the descendants of a common ancestry. The idea of the redeemed child of God being made part of the family of God is highlighted by the fact that Jesus refers to us as His brothers and that His Father is also our Father (Hebrews 2:12,12,17; Ephesians 3:15; John 20:17). Paul used the word ‘genos’ in Acts 17:28-29 describing all of mankind as the offspring of God.

⁴⁴ God had made this promise to Israel as a nation in Exodus 19:6. As Peter reports, the promise is now fulfilled in those belonging to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. As those who are in Christ Jesus having been born of the Spirit, we find all our inheritance and identity in Jesus Christ, and He has made us kings and priest unto God and His Father (Rev 1:6).

⁴⁵ The Greek word ‘peripoiesis’ is defined as ‘saving, acquiring, possession’ in Langenscheidt’s Classical Greek Dictionary. Jamieson Fausset and Brown also argue that the literal rendering of this word would be ‘acquired’. A.T. Robertson understands this phrase as a possession in a special sense, “over and above the others.” This fact is also emphasized by Paul who says that we are “bought with a price” in 1 Corinthians 6:20 and describes the ransom payment for the purchase in

Ephesians 1:14. This passage recalls the promise God made to Israel in Exodus 19:5-6. In Exodus 9:5 the Hebrew word used is ‘segullah’ which means ‘treasured possession’ referring to a valued special property to which the owner holds special affection and value.

⁴⁶ The Greek word ‘arete’ may be translated ‘goodness, excellence, perfection, merit, fitness, bravery, valor, virtue’, A.T Robertson made the choice to translate ‘arete’ as ‘excellencies’.

10- Who once were not a people⁴⁷ but now God’s people who had no mercy but now have mercy⁴⁸ .

11- Beloved I exhort you as strangers and sojourners stay away from the lust of the flesh⁴⁹ , which war against the soul⁵⁰ .

12- Having your behavior virtuous⁵¹ among the nations that even though they speak evil of you as evil doers, seeing these virtuous works they may glorify God in the day of visitation.

13- Submit to ever human ordinance⁵² because of the Lord; whether to a king as supreme,

14- or to governors as those sent by him to punish evildoers but to approve uprightness.

15- Because this is the will of God, doing good silences the ignorance of foolish men.

16- As free, and not having freedom as a covering of wickedness but as the servants of God,

⁴⁷ This rendering of Hosea 2:23 is a direct address to the gentiles who have been purchased by Jesus Christ. Paul also quoted Hosea 2:23 in a similar address in Romans 9:25.

⁴⁸ Mercy is a word that may also be understood as an expression of deep love or tender affection by its Hebrew equivalent (racham). God’s compassion and deep affection that we have obtained through His Great Salvation has caused us to come into a relationship position with Him that is best expressed by the Psalmist when he says, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all of the days of my life and I shall dwell in

the house of the Lord forever (Psalms 23:6). The blessing and favor of God that is giving to us through God's abundant mercy is a guarantee that we will always find ourselves going from strength to strength. Living in God's abundant mercy that is new every morning is an assurance that everything about our lives will be stamped with the blessing of God. We can be certain that if we trust and rely upon God our seed will be mighty upon the earth and whatever we do will prosper. Our children will walk in a greater anointing and have a greater influence than we have had. Because we have obtained mercy we will find ourselves walking in all of the covenant blessings and more that God promised Abraham and the nation of Israel (Galatians 3:14; Genesis 22:17; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Hebrews 8:6).

⁴⁹ The lust of the flesh are listed in Galatians 5:19. The lust of the flesh are those things, which are of the world and not of the Father (1 John 2:16).

⁵⁰ The lust of the flesh wars against the soul of the redeemed it does not rule it. To believe that the lust of the flesh rules the soul is to be defeated before the battle begins. The lust of the flesh, which is the realm of the spirit of disobedience wars against the soul of the redeemed to subvert and ultimately overthrow the faith of God's people (Ephesians 2:2-3). Satan and demon spirits lost their right to control and rule the appetites of the redeemed child of God. Yet, they seek to regain control by tempting the sons and daughters of God even as they did Adam and Eve in the beginning (Genesis 3:1-6). The noted scholars Jamieson, Fausset and Brown explains this war as follows "As Samson in the lap of Delilah, the believer, the moment that he gives way to fleshly lusts, has the locks of his strength shorn, and ceases to maintain that spiritual separation from the world and the flesh of which the Nazarite vow was the type." The believer must not allow himself to be lured into any form of subjugation to those things which we have been completely delivered from.

⁵¹ Although the Greek word 'kalos' is commonly translated 'good' it may also be translated many other ways. In classical Greek it is translated 'beautiful, fair, charming, lovely, pretty, honest, noble, good, right, virtuous, agreeable, auspicious, favorable, dear'. It may also be translated 'blameless, excellent, pleasant, desirable'.

⁵² Peter is underscoring the necessity to maintain law and order just

as Paul did in Romans 13:1-8. However, when human ordinances run contrary to the ordinances of God then Peter is also the first to say that we must obey God and not man (Acts 4:19-20).

17- Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

18- House servants be subject with all fear to the masters, not only to the good and equitable but also to the crooked.

19- For this is grace if on account of God conscious one endures pain suffering wrongfully.

20- For what sort of credit if you endure a beating for having sinned but if you do good and endure suffering, you have God's approval⁵³.

21- For you are called to this because also Christ suffered on your behalf leaving you an example⁵⁴ that you should follow after His footsteps.

22- Who did not sin neither was guile found in His mouth.

23- Who being insulted⁵⁵ did not insult in return, suffering did not threaten but handed it over⁵⁶ to righteous judgment.

24- Who Himself carried our sins⁵⁷ in his own body upon the tree so that the sins being removed⁵⁸ we might live righteously,⁵⁹ by whose wound⁶⁰ you were healed⁶¹.

⁵³ There was a time when the people of God were treated so severally by the religious community and by the world. It is a terrible thing to be publicly beaten as were Peter and the other apostles, Paul, and Silas (Acts 5:41; 16:25). Their response was one of joy and rejoicing in the Lord that they were counted worthy to suffer for His namesake. Their response brought glory to the name of Jesus and to the church. They did not take up arms and in revenge fight back they instead committed themselves to the Lord and to His protection.

There are many who suffer daily for the gospel of Jesus Christ around the world and endure it without complaint. Yet in American and other countries that enjoy the freedom of religion we seem to find ourselves so preoccupied with our own self-interest that if someone says something that we don't like we immediately take offense and enter into

some sort of strife. As a pastor I have discovered that very few people take anything patiently even when they can be proven wrong in their conduct. Rather they rise up in self-defense and make war. At what time will we all begin to value above all other things the approval of God and cease to be so impacted by the approval of men. When will we value humility and servitude the way that God values it? God says that if we suffer wrongfully and take it patiently then we have God's approval (John 5:44). We can be certain that if we do not take it patiently we will not have Father's approval. We are called to lay down our lives for the brethren and for the church (1 John 3:16; John 13:35; Ephesians 5:2; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 Corinthians 14:20). If we are truly willing to walk the love of Christ Jesus, then we would be willing to die for the household of faith. Now if we are willing to die for each other then surely, we can stop fighting and squabbling with each other. I never cease to be amazed at how many people sit around the church nurturing a wounded spirit and a spiteful disposition. It is the job of every pastor to get all of those who are wounded healed and to a place spiritually where they can flow in the love of God. Let's be the light of the world, the example to all mankind of what relationships are supposed to look like. The community of saints who have perfect peace never allowing anything to offend us (Psalms 119:165; Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:7; Ephesians 4:3).

⁵⁴ Jesus made it very clear that those who would be His disciples had to do what He did. If they were to follow Him, then they would have to take up their cross and deny themselves even as He denied himself. They would have to love one another and be dedicated to doing the will of the Father just as He was. Jesus made it clear to the church that they were to overcome even as He overcame (Revelation 3:21). John said, we are as He is in this present world (1 John 4:17). Jesus became our example and modeled what a son of God was supposed to be like. He not only modeled sonship but also gave us the power to be the sons of God (John 1:12). What Jesus demanded of his disciples 2000 years ago is still the same for us today, "If anyone serve me let him follow me and where I am there my servant will also be and my Father will prize him" (John 12:26).

⁵⁵ The Greek word 'loidoreo' may be translated 'revile, abuse, insult, slander, reproach'. The idea conveyed by this word is to have all manner of evil spoken against you. Likewise, when we are insulted, we are to bless (1 Corinthians 4:12).

⁵⁶ The word ‘paradidomi’ is the word that is translated in the four Gospels, ‘betrayed’. It means to ‘hand over’ or ‘deliver up’. Jesus’ response to every insult of man was to turn to the Father with it and let the Almighty be the judge. It was as though every reproach and insult that Jesus received, He turned to the Father with it and delivered it up to Him as an offering.

⁵⁷ There was a hand leaning rite in the Old Testament, which would in effect transfer the sins of the people unto the sin offering. The Day of Atonement exemplifies this transference of sin by the hand leaning rite. Aaron the high priest would place his two hands upon the goat and confess the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:21). The sins of the people would be in this way transferred to the goat and the goat was sent to a desolate place to Azazel (Leviticus 16:8, 22). The hand leaning rite was also used for the sin offering of any individual who would bring their sin offering lay their hand upon that offering to which the sin would be transferred (Leviticus 4:4, 24,29,33). The sins of all mankind were transferred to Jesus as Father laid upon Him all our sins and not only ours but the sins of the whole world thus making him the sin offering (1 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:26, 28; 10:10). If we sin, we are to confess our sins and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus removes those sins (1 John 1:9). Yet Jesus is much more than a vicarious or substitute offering on our behalf for as Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ” (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:6). In fact, the New Covenant is the Covenant of the life of Christ therefore in communion we eat his flesh and drink his blood thus declaring that we live by him (John 6:51-57; Galatians 2:20; 6:14).

⁵⁸ The Greek word used here is ‘apogenomenos’ a compound word meaning “to be removed from” or “to cease”. It is only used one time in the whole Bible and therefore its unique usage demands as literal a translation as possible. There is no doubt that the sacrifice that God made for us with his own Son indeed removed our sins (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:4,12; 1:3; John 1:29; Revelation 1:5).

⁵⁹ The Bible is focused on God’s desire to walk with man. The only way possible for man to walk with God is in righteousness for two cannot walk together unless they agree. Father will not have any fellowship with unrighteousness and therefore God has made a provision for whosoever will to be made righteous. John said in his first Epistle, “If you know that He is righteous you know that everyone that is born of

Him does righteousness” (1John 2:28). Paul said that Jesus, “who knew no sin was made a sin offering for us so that we might be the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). The crown and glory of righteousness was lost when Adam turned his back on God through disobedience. Now through Father’s love the crown and glory of righteousness has been restored through the new creation. Jesus laid down His life at the cross so that we might take it up. He gave us His life of righteousness and holiness as a gift when we were created in Him through His resurrection (Eph 4:24; Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 1:3) .

⁶⁰ The best way to understand the meaning of this Greek word ‘molops’ is to view it in light of the passage in Isaiah 53:5 which it reflects. The Hebrew word is ‘chaburah’ and may be translated wound, bruise, hurt, welt, injury, or stripe. It refers to a severe blow to the body resulting in a wound. It appears in the singular form both here in this verse and in the Hebrew language in Isaiah 53:5. Therefore, the singular nature of this word helps us to decide which word makes the most sense. In that this obviously refers to the singular event of the death of Jesus as opposed to the multiple wounds inflicted by the stripes, blows to the head and body with sticks, whips, and the human fist, it was thought best to translate this Greek word ‘ molopi’ as wound. Although, ‘molopi’ may be translated ‘stripe, wound or bruise’ the singular form of the word lends itself to wound in reference to the temporary death of Jesus our Savior. Furthermore, the word ‘wound’ affords the broader meaning, which would include both stripe and pierce. The argument for the choice of this word is further supported by the first reference to the death of the Messiah in Genesis 3:15. The Hebrew word used in verse 15 is ‘shuf’ which may mean both the striking piercing bit of a serpent or crush, bruise, or injury.

⁶¹ Sin is an incurable disease that is passed from generation to generation. The only cure for this terrible plague is the blood of Jesus. It was through the bloody wound that Jesus received on the cross that our sins were put to death and the sicknesses and diseases, which are a consequence of sin were cured. When a cure for sin was provided in Christ Jesus the cure for all sickness and disease was also revealed. For in Christ Jesus, we have forgiveness for all our iniquities and healing for all our diseases (Psalms 103:3). It is God’s will that every man find freedom from sin through the power of the blood of Jesus and healing for all their diseases through the wound which he bore. When men are healed from their diseases and sicknesses it is revealed that the Lord

Jesus has power to forgive sin (Matthew 9:6). It is through the prayer of faith in what Jesus has already accomplished for us that the sick are saved and sins are forgiven (James 5:15). In both the Hebrew Bible (Leningrad Text/Cairo Text) and the Septuagint this verse simply reads, “by his wound we were healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Peter who was speaking for God in the first person did not include himself and therefore used the word ‘you’ in an address by God to all mankind.

25- For you were as wondering sheep but now are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Chapter 3

1- Likewise, wives be submitted to your own husbands so that even if any disobey the word they will be won without the word through the conduct of the wives.

2- Observing your pure behavior in fear

3- Whom is not the outward braiding of hair and putting on gold or worldly garments.

4- But the hidden man of the heart⁶² in the incorruptible even a gentle and quite spirit, which is of great value before God.

5- For in this way also the holy woman, whose expectation was in God once conducted their selves being subject to their own husbands.

6- As Sarah listened to Abraham calling him lord to whom you have become children doing good and not being terrified at any threatening thing.

7- The husbands likewise dwelling together according to knowledge as with a weaker vessel giving honor to the female as also heirs together into life’s grace not cutting off your prayers.

8- And finally everyone be: of one understanding, sympathetic, kind, tenderhearted, friendly.

9- Not returning evil for evil or abuse for abuse but on the contrary blessing because you are called unto so that you might inherit a blessing.

10- For he who would love life and see good days shall restrain his

tongue from evil, his lips from speaking deceit.

11- And turn away from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it⁶³!

⁶² The heart of man is the “hidden man” or the inner man. It is that immortal dimension of ourselves that now exists in this mortal body. When our bodies die, our inner man departs either to be with the Lord or into the punishment of eternal death. The heart is that hidden dimension of man where God desires His truth and wisdom to dwell (Psalms 51:6). Those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus have had their heart’s liberated from the darkness of sin by the circumcision of Christ which removed its foreskin (Colossians 2:13). The hard and calloused heart of man has been softened by redemptions transformation, which created a new heart and a new man (Ezekiel 36:26; Ephesians 4:24). God has made our hearts His dwelling place and because He dwells there our inward man grows and is strengthened everyday (2 Corinthians 4:16). In that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ dwells in our hearts, His word also dwells there, and it is from our hearts that His peace rules our lives (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 3:16; 3:15; Philippians 4:7). It is from our heart that the Spirit of God cries out unto the Father (Galatians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 1:22). It is with our heart that we believe unto righteousness (Romans 10:10). God in His loving kindness and tender mercies has caused the light of His glorious gospel to shine into our hearts and as a result His nature and ways are inscribed there (2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23-24; Romans 8:4). It is our responsibility to treasure what God has done for us and adorn our hearts with the beauty of holiness. God has brought His Glory into our heart and all we must do is yield to Him and let Him reign.

⁶³ If we will walk in obedience to the Lord and allow God’s divine principles to govern our life, then we will be the beneficiaries of God’s continual blessings and provision in every dimension of our lives. One of the most important things that we must take hold of is our responsibility before God to govern the things that we say. The preacher revealed that a fool is swallowed up by his own lips (Ecclesiastes 10:12). We must learn that we are snared, and even destroyed, by the words of our mouth (Proverbs 18:21; Proverbs 13:3; Proverbs 12:13,19; Proverbs 10:21). The person who is right before the Lord will not speak evil with his mouth

and will not utter deceit (Job 27:4). God will cut off the person who allows their tongue to speak proud things (Psalm 12:3).

Yet on the other hand if you will speak according to the word of God and be a person who blesses and does not curse, then the words of your lips will be a health to you; and will keep you from the path of the destroyer (Romans 12:14; Luke 6:28; Psalm 17:4; Proverbs 13:3). The wise person who puts their trust in the Lord will understand the importance and the responsibility of the things that are said, and will call out to God for help, and ask Him to set a watch upon the lips, and to keep the door of his or her mouth (Psalm 141:3). If we want to abide in the presence of the Lord and stand in the heavenly realm of authority, then we must both be willing to understand the appropriate conduct, and also be willing to be obedient to what God expects of us. We are to speak truth in our heart; we cannot backbite with our tongues, nor do evil to our neighbor, nor take up a reproach against him (Psalm 15:1-3). If we will do these things - not rendering curses for cursing, or evil speaking or slandering with our tongue but will faithfully speak the words of life and blessing - we will live long and healthy lives (1 Peter 3:9; Isaiah 58:9-11).

12- Because the Lord's eyes are upon the righteous⁶⁴ and his ears unto their petitions, but the Lord's face opposes evil doers.

13- And who can harm you if you become imitators of the good.

14- But blessed if you also suffer because of righteousness but do not fear their terror nor be troubled.

15- But sanctify the Lord God in your heart and be always prepared to give a defense to anyone who ask you a word concerning the expectation in you with meekness and fear.

16- Having a good conscience that if they speak against you as evildoers, they may be ashamed who revile your good behavior in Christ.

17- For it is higher if the will of God wills that you suffer for doing good rather than doing evil.

18- Because also Christ once suffered for sin, the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous so that he might bring us to God; indeed, put to death in the flesh⁶⁵ but being alive in the Spirit.

⁶⁴ Peter quoted this exhortation from Psalms 34:14, underscoring the relevance of this Old Testament scripture in the New Testament. Peter leads into quoting this verse of scripture by talking about one of the chief attributes of righteousness, love. The love of God compels us to bless no matter what the disposition of others may be towards us. As those who possess the righteousness of God, we are to bless so that we might inherit a blessing. We are commanded to bless and to curse not. Our tongues are to speak no evil against another person. Just as the whole Law is summed up in love the righteousness of God is also summed up in love, for God is love (1 John 4:7-8; 1 John 3:10-11). God's eyes are upon the righteous and His ears are open to hear their prayers. God not only hears us when we pray, He also will do whatever we ask because we obey His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight (1 John 3:22; 5:14; John 14:13-14). Whenever we turn away from the evil that would tempt us, we will discover that God is looking at us with a heart of gratitude and thanksgiving that we were willing to choose His way of life. He loves us and wants us to have the good life that is full of blessings (1 Peter 3:10). He gave us His gift of abundant and eternal life so that we could enjoy the blessedness of His way of life, righteousness.

We are inundated on every side with things that are both wicked and opposed to God. Our society is gripped with the most vile offenses against God. The Christian community has become a community of unending compromises. If we are not careful, we will be carried away with these influences. We must allow God to define for us how we are to behave and be committed to that way of life. We will not have to rely upon our on failing and wavering human strength for we will find the strength of the Lord and the power of His might.

There are only two choices, we are either righteous and doing that which is good and pleasing to the Lord or we are doing evil. If we are doing evil, then the Lord has set his face against us. If a person boasts of being an evil doer and still attempts to profess a relationship with God such a one is deceived (1 John 1:6; 2:9; 3:10, 14-15). God has filled our hearts with that which is good (Matthew 12:35; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 3:3; 4:6; Galatians 4:6; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; Ezekiel 36:26). He has poured His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). All we need to do is hunger and thirst for the things of righteousness and we will be filled to overflowing with every expression of God's love.

⁶⁵ Earlier in chapter two Peter reports that "Jesus bore our sins in his own body (soma)" now he describes Jesus being put to death in the flesh (sarx), (1 Peter 2:24). There was nothing sinful about the flesh of

Jesus, yet it was important to the Holy Spirit to exemplify the fact that Jesus was put to death in the flesh; perhaps only to contrast the temporal realm of the flesh to the eternal realm of the Spirit. Paul reveals the same contrast in Romans 8:5-9, wherein he describes the realm of the flesh as the “fleshly thinking” (sarx phronousin), to be death but the spiritual thinking as life and peace. Later in chapter 4 Peter will take up the message of the necessity of suffering in the flesh or temporal realm.

- 19- By which also⁶⁶ going in he preached to those spirits in prison.
20- Those once disobeying when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, prepared an ark into which a few, that is eight souls were saved by water.
21- Which also corresponds⁶⁷ now to our salvation; baptism not the putting away of a filthy flesh but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection⁶⁸ of Jesus Christ.
22- Who has gone into heaven at the right hand of God angels and authorities and powers being subject to him⁶⁹.
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⁶⁶ The relative pronoun ‘oi’ in the phrase “en oi kai” refers to the ‘Spirit’. To this fact noted scholars such as AT Robertson agree. The Greek preposition ‘en’ may be translated ‘in, by, at, with’, thus “By which also; In which also; With which also” are all equivalent.

⁶⁷ The Greek word used here for ‘corresponds’ is ‘antitupon’ which may be understood to literally mean ‘anti-type’. However, its usage in Classical Greek is defined as ‘echoing, representing, prototype’. This Greek word is only found here and in Hebrews 9:24, “For Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, corresponding to the true, but into heaven...” The Greek word ‘tupos’ from which the second part of this compound word is derived is found about 16 times in the New Testament. One example of its usage is in Hebrew 8:5, where it may be translated ‘image or pattern’. The first occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in John 20:25 where it is translated ‘print’, “...unless I see in his hands the print of the nails...” The disobedient during the time of Noah were all destroyed through water baptism, whereas now the antitype or the anti-pattern of water baptism saves us. Paul causes

us to understand that we were buried with Christ by baptism into His death a miracle event of salvation wherein we are crucified with Christ. The blood of Jesus and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, “puts away the filth of the flesh” not baptism in water. However, Peter equates this antitype of baptism to the inquiry of a good conscience towards God. In that water baptism is symbolic of resurrection as brought out by Paul in Romans 6:2-6, we are able to discern that Peter is bringing together several types. However, he is definitely denying remission of sins (filth of the flesh) by water baptism.

⁶⁸ The antitype of water baptism to which Peter now makes reference refers more to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead than it does specifically to water baptism. Paul helps us to understand this simile in Romans 6:2-6. The baptism to which Paul refers is the baptism into the body and death of Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27).

⁶⁹ Jesus is the absolute supreme authority in heaven and on earth at this moment (Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-11). Even though we must continue to wait before we will visibly see Him reigning supremely upon the earth, we may be certain that all spiritual powers and authorities are presently subject to Him (Ephesians 1:21; John 13:3; 17:5; Colossians 1:16-19). The one place that we must see the absolute and sovereign reign of Jesus as the supreme authority is in His church. The church belongs to Jesus (Matthew 16:18; Revelation 1:20; Acts 12:5; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:16; 15:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:1; 1 Timothy 3:5). He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23-27). The church is so intimately connected with His person and with His authority that it is described as His own body (Colossians 1:18,24; 1 Corinthians 12:12,27). His church is the fulness of His power and glory (Ephesians 1:23). Secondly, Jesus is supposed to reign as the absolute power and authority over the life of those that are born of the Spirit. Yet even though many seem to be unwilling to give Jesus this place of absolute dominion, if we are willing, He reigns in His mercy until everything in our lives are brought into submission to Him.

There is no power in heaven and earth that can defy the authority of Jesus. He is the one who sets the limits and the bounds. Satan and men, even as the proud waves of the sea, can only go so far. For this reason, all who will walk with the Kings of Kings live far above the powers of darkness (Ephesians 2:6; Romans 8:17; Luke 10:19). When we think that God is not that involved in what is going on in the

everyday affairs of this life we must think again. The arrogance and pride of King Nebuchadnezzar was brought down when he finally came to realize that God reigned in the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:17, 25, 32; 5:21; 6:26). There will come a time in the future when the prophecy of Daniel and of the angel Gabriel will be completely fulfilled,”And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14). “He will be great and will be called the Sons of the Most High and the Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end (Luke 1:32-33). At the second coming of Jesus, which much of the Old Testament prophecies are devoted to when referring to the Messiah, we will see Jesus seated upon the throne of absolute power and reigning over the earth. He will rule until every kingdom and dominion is submitted to His authority (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 20:4; Psalms 2:8). Will you let Jesus be the absolute authority over your life now? All angels, authorities and powers are subject to Him will you be submitted? Will you honor Him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Will you bow your knee to Him as the Almighty God and give place to no other powers or authorities?

A song written in the last great revival - Forever and ever God's Kingdom will stand baptized in one body not divided by man. It came from heaven at His command forever and ever God's Kingdom will stand!

Chapter 4

1- Seeing that Christ suffered⁷⁰ for us in the flesh also equip your thinking⁷¹ for he who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin.

⁷⁰ Are you willing to suffer rather than sin? Does your purpose in God mean more to you than the pleasures of this world which only last for a season? Jesus suffered the loss of all things so that He might do the will of the Father. He left behind all of His riches in glory and became poor for our sakes, so that He might become a servant and take on the form of sinful flesh. He suffered the humiliation and rejection of men,

doing the will of the Father. He suffered being tempted — and then was ultimately killed for His confession.

We are called by God to give ourselves completely over to the identity of Christ. If we are going to be victorious in all things, then just as a soldier arms himself to go into battle - we must arm ourselves with the identity of Christ. Whatever He did we are to do; His cause must become our cause even as His inheritance has become our inheritance. We cannot live our lives for ourselves any more than He did if we are to truly follow Jesus. If we surrender ourselves to the will of the Father and the purposes of the Kingdom of God, then we will discover that the attraction to the world and its sin will not be so irresistible. An identity with the world will make one a participant with it, but an identity with Christ will empower us to live free from sin — as those who are not of this world. We cannot live our lives according to our own will (or according to the strong desires of men) if we are going to please the Father and hear, “Well done my good and faithful servant.”

Jesus defeated every power of darkness hostile to the kingdom of God and the will of the Father, and has liberated us to live consecrated lives devoted to God’s ways and His eternal kingdom (1 Peter 3:18-22; Romans 6:12). We are not called to a life of self-imposed affliction; we are simply called to a life void of demonic influence, in which we are consecrated to holiness and the kingdom of God (1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 6:22; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:7; Matthew 6:33). The godly will suffer persecution and in this devotion to holiness and purity; we are going to run up against a great deal of opposition from both devils and men. Therefore, if we are going to follow Jesus, we will endure many of the things that He suffered. He suffered being tempted and therefore we will suffer in the temptation; but as He overcame so will we (Hebrews 2:18; James 1:12; Revelation 3:21).

One of the radical points of the sufferings of Christ was that He learned obedience by the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). Even though we fail, it is God’s will that we learn to walk in the overcoming power of the life of Jesus — being committing to perfect obedience (Hebrews 13:18,21). If we are going to please God and be obedient to that for which we have been redeemed, then we must have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. The whole meaning of His life was to participate with the plan of God: He made Himself of no reputation, but so committed Himself to obedience and carrying out the will of the Father that He humbled Himself unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8). Jesus lived every day with the commitment: “to do your will oh God” (Hebrews 10:7; Psalm 40:7-8). For our sakes, Jesus

was tempted in every way that we are tempted, so that we might be guaranteed the same overcoming power and authority when we are tempted (James 1:12). What a terrible tragedy for such a price to be paid and authority to be given — only to find so few willing to measure its value.

Many have suffered great persecution over the past 2000 years; and as Paul said, we have a great cloud of witnesses who have fought the fight and kept the faith (Hebrews 12:1-2). What a shame if in our generation we refuse to step up and partake of the sufferings of Christ. Paul, who was an Apostle and Teacher, frequently endured these sufferings, and found in them the power and glory of the resurrection power of Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:23-30; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 3:12; Philippians 3:10). If we are willing to follow Jesus, we may also remain confident that these present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

⁷¹ The way we think is very important to God. It makes the difference in our spiritual life. We have been given mighty spiritual weapons in order to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4). Paul commands the church at Ephesus to change the way that they think (Ephesians 2:23). In view of their calling to the measure of the maturity of the fullness of Christ unto a perfect man, they are to think of themselves in a new way (Ephesians 4:12; 23). They are to view themselves as those that are new creatures raised up together with Christ. In Ephesians Paul uses the idea of the spirit of the mind when he addresses the way that we are to think. In this verse Peter tells the church to be armed with the same thinking of Christ using a unique compound word ‘ennoia’. We are to view ourselves as the Bible describes us to be. We are to understand God’s purpose for our life through viewing the life of Christ. Ennoia is a compound word of ‘en’ (in, by, with) and ‘nous’ (mind). This word only occurs twice in the New Testament, here and in Hebrews 4:12 where it is translated ‘intent’ in the Authorized Version. The Classical Greek definition for this word is ‘thought, consideration, notion, intent, mind’. J.P. Green Sr. translated ‘ennoia’ in this verse as ‘thought’ whereas A.T Robertson translates it as ‘thinking’, ‘putting in mind’, or ‘will’.

2- So as to live the rest of your life in the flesh no longer in the desires of men but the will of God ⁷².

3- For the time of life has adequately passed away for us to work the will of the Gentiles having walked in licentiousness⁷³, lust, drunkenness, partying, drinking bout's and lawless idolatries⁷⁴.

⁷² We have been given an opportunity to live our lives according to the will of God. Every day we are confronted with the possibility of living our earthly lives according to the will or desires of men. What we must understand is that we will never experience the greatness that God has planned for our lives if we choose to walk in our own way. We have been born of the Holy Spirit to be filled, taught, and led by the Holy Spirit; and it is through yielding to the Spirit of truth that we live out the life that is according to the will of the Father.

Jesus lived a fleshly human existence — but not according to the desires of men, but rather the will of the Father. Jesus was manifested in the flesh and lived a fleshly human existence to condemn sin in the flesh: proving that it did not belong in the life of men (Romans 8:3). He did this by being God-taught and Holy Spirit-directed. He lived for His heavenly purpose and not for an earthly existence. The desires of men are based on their own insights and their understanding of the world around them. Men's desires are fashioned by self-interest and self-preservation, and not by truth. God's will for our life moves us past all of the deception and darkness into the light of life. God's plan for our lives is to be taught by Him how to walk in all of His ways. What we must understand is that our own understanding interferes with what God desires to teach us. The things of heaven are very different from the earthly, the miraculous different from the normal, the spiritual from the natural. The only way that we can begin to participate with God and receive the things that He desires to teach us to function in is to cease from our own will.

The desires of men spring from a will of its own; and thus are in opposition to the will of the Father and submission to His Spirit (1 John 2:16-17; Luke 16:13). We were born of God and given the nature of the sons of God so that we might live according to the will of the Father (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Romans 8:14,16-17; Galatians 4:6-7). Yet even though we have now been given the mind of Christ and the nature of God, we still must choose whose report we are going to believe, and whose will we are going to submit to. We were not made sons of God by the will of the flesh or the will of man, but by the transformation of nature and renewing of the Holy Spirit (John 1:13; 3:3-5; Titus 3:5; 2

Corinthians 5:17-18; Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 8:1,9).

Likewise, we are not going to be able to do the will of the Father through our own reasoning and human ability, but by the Spirit of the Lord. It was by the will of God that we came into this unspeakable gift of union with the Father and fullness of the Spirit, and it is only by submitting to that same will that we can realize the glory and splendor of it. God's purpose for our lives is that we live only according to His will and cease from our own will and the will of others. Whose will are you going to submit to - yours or God's? If God's will, then prepare yourself to do things just like God described it in His word, while everything natural and common to men opposes you!

⁷³ Peter used the word for licentious (aselgeia) a total of four times in his first and second Epistles (4:3; 2 Peter 2:2,7,18). He uses this word to describe those who are entirely lost and ready to incur the judgment of God at any moment. Licentiousness refers to those who have no restraint when it comes to immorality and especially with respect to sexual matters. Peter uses this word in context to those of Sodom and Gomorrah, which further allows us to more perfectly understand the meaning that Peter associated with this word.

⁷⁴ Peter provided another list of things that are fruits of unrighteousness, which in reality are a testimony of those who are unsaved. Peter calls these activities blasphemous excesses, which are the same as the lust of men flesh (vs. 2). Six of these seven sins are very common in the 21st century: licentiousness, lust, drunkenness, partying and drinking bouts. Four of these ungodly acts are associated with drinking alcohol. Unfortunately, even many Christians have been misled to believe that they can be involved in these things and still be right with God. Yet Paul says they who do these things will not inherit the Kingdom of God (Gal 5:21).

4- In this they are surprised that you do run with them into the blasphemous excess⁷⁵ of the unsaved⁷⁶.

5- Who shall give account⁷⁷ to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6- For to this the gospel was preached to the dead⁷⁸ so that they may indeed be judged according to men's flesh but may live according to God's Spirit.

75 Sin is the pollution and demonic assault against God's life and it is viewed by Him as, "blasphemous excess" (anachusin blasphemountes). God has provided the deliverance that was essential to set men free from the spiritual pollution of sin. To continue on in the twisted ways of death and darkness in the face of the light of God's glorious life is a direct insult to His ways. Surely when the spiritual blindness is removed, and we behold the purity and beauty of what God created us for then we should rejoice in the freedom and be repulsed by iniquity.

76 The Greek word 'asotia' is used three times in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:18; Titus 1:6; and 1 Peter 4:4). It is a compound word of 'a' and 'sozo' which literally means 'not saved.' The Greek word 'sozo' is used 110 times in the New Testament to describe the deliverance that has been given to us in Christ Jesus for the spirit, soul, body, and material blessing. It is impossible to be confused with the statement that is being made here. Those who are involved in these activities of sin are not saved!

77 One of the most important things that everyone must understand is that we will all give an account to God for the things that we have done in this life (Hebrews 9:27). Every person has been honored with the privilege of living in Father's sacred gift called life. The way in which we live our life is very important to God and make no mistake, He will judge us. We are His workmanship and as such we have been endowed with the ability to do what is just and good. Consider the fact that we were created for His pleasure, and He takes no pleasure in unrighteousness. We were created for His glory and there is no glory in wronging and abusing others. God wants us to walk in reverence of Him and He wants us to love every person. There are many people who think that they can do whatever they want to do and that somehow, they can escape accountability. But God says there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and that every secret will be shouted from the housetops (Luke 12:2-3). The way that we live our life is so important to God that He will even hold us accountable for every idle word that we speak (Matthew 12:36). God has made known in His word what He will hold us accountable for. Jesus said that even though all judgment was committed to Him, He would judge no man rather the word that He had spoken would be our judge in the last day (John 12:48). It is Jesus who will judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42; Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5). It is Jesus who will bring the hidden things to light

and will reveal the counsels of the heart (1 Corinthians 4:5). When the saints of God appear before Christ Jesus, they will be judged for both the good and the bad things that they have done (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17). There are two places of judgment, the judgment seat of Christ where every redeemed person will be judged and the Great White Throne Judgment where all those who refused salvation will be judged (Romans 14:10; Revelation 20:11-12).

⁷⁸ When Jesus went down into hell at the time of His death, he preached to the spirits that were in prison. The prison that Peter refers to is the place that Jesus called “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22). Abraham’s bosom is also the place that Jesus called Paradise (Luke 23:43). Jesus would have been able to preach to those who were in the place of torment just as in the story of Lazarus and the rich man (1 Peter 3:19). It was a place where those who belonged to God were kept until the time of redemption. We understand this from the fact the Jesus lead captivity captive when he arose from the dead and ascended up on high (Ephesians 4:10).

7- Now the end of all things is near⁷⁹ therefore be sober and watch through prayer⁸⁰ .

8- Above all things having fervent love⁸¹ among yourselves because love will cover a multitude of sins⁸² .

⁷⁹ The end of the world has come upon us (1 Corinthians 10:11; 1 John 2:18; Revelation 1:3; 22:10). The death and resurrection of Jesus has brought us to the last day. Jesus said: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17). Peter referred to his day as the last times, declaring that Jesus was manifested in these last times for us (1 Peter 1:20). Peter wanted everyone to understand that the end of the world will come very soon — and we better be prepared. If we know that the end is closer now than when we first believed, and that everything that is contrary to the ways and will of the Father will be destroyed — what should be our response? (Romans 13:11; 2 Peter 3:11-13).

Prayer is far more than a religious activity; it offers us a special

opportunity to fellowship with God and receive things from heaven. Daniel gave himself to prayer so that he might understand the day and the hour in which he was living in (Daniel 9:3,22). It was not only revealed to him where his generation was on the calendar and timeclock of God's plan; but also, for those of future generations (Daniel 9:24-27). We must sober up and understand what prayer will do for us. It is not only an act of submitting ourselves to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, but a realm in which we hear from God (Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2). Today we must pray that God would show us the things that are about to happen, so that we can be prepared and ready to move forward with His plan no matter what takes place in the world around us. We should be very aware of what we should be doing to reach the lost, preach the gospel, and help people become established in the household of faith. When we realize that the end is near, we should be that much more earnest to make our lives count for the kingdom of God. We must be conscious to live our lives in godly fear: desiring that every part of our lives continually be pleasing unto the Lord.

⁸⁰ The first century church followed a custom that has been largely forgotten by both the Jews and the Church. There was a time in which those devoted to the Lord would pray three times a day just as Daniel prayed (Daniel 6:10). It was a practice to pray at the time of the morning sacrifice, 9:00 AM, at noon, and at the time of the evening sacrifice, 3:00 PM: "Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud and He shall hear my voice (Psalms 55:7). There remains an indication of this practice in the New Testament as we observe the Holy Spirit being poured out on the day of Pentecost at about 9:00 AM (Acts 2:15). Also, there was an hour of prayer that the church gave themselves to at 3:00 PM highlighted in Acts 3:1. Then finally the time that Peter went to pray by himself was at noon (Acts 10:9).

Peter helps us to understand that it is through prayer that we are going to be empowered to keep a clear head and remain watchful during these last days as Satan goes about with his deceptive power seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). We are reminded of what Jesus had told Peter and the others when He had asked them to pray the night that He was handed over to be crucified. Jesus told His disciples to "watch and pray that they do not enter into temptation..." (Matthew 26:41). Through the activity of prayer, we are strengthened and equipped to deal with the next temptation that we will be faced with when Satan comes with his deceptions and lies against the truth.

Prayer is that spiritual place that God has given to us where we

are empowered by the Spirit to interact with God. There is a glorious realm that one can discover in prayer that is testified to by Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. As Jesus was praying “the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening” (Luke 9:29). There is a wonderful communion found in the place of prayer that God has provided to us by His Spirit: through prayer we are strengthened by the Spirit in our inner man; we are built up in our most holy faith; we are filled with the Spirit and begin to speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and thus allow Christ to dwell in us richly (Jude 1:20; Ephesians 3:16; 5:18; Colossians 3:16). Prayer is an activity of the Spirit that we are supposed to continually give ourselves to (Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). Today let us come to the throne of grace by the Spirit of God and allow God to hear our voice as we offer the sweet incense of prayer (Psalms 141:2; Revelation 5:8).

⁸¹ Love is the most important subject of the Bible. It was because of the love of God that the Savior was sent into the world to die for our sins (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10). It is love that fulfills all of the law and the prophets (Romans 13:8,10; Galatians 5:14; 1 John 2:10). It is by our love one for another that we have the proof that we have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14; 2:3; 4:12, 20; 5:2; Ephesians 1:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:9). If we will dwell in love we will dwell in God, for God is love (1 John 4:7-8).

The way that we treat one another is very important to God. We cannot treat each other with anything less than fervent love and be pleasing unto the Lord. God does not just want us to like each other or tolerate each other he wants us to have “fervent love” for one another. It is God's command that we “love one another fervently with a pure heart” (1 Peter 1:22). Fervent love is love without ceasing or zealous love. This may be understood as intense unceasing love that does not allow an opportunity of any kind of animosity or unforgiveness to creep in. This kind of love that God demands that we have for one another is the same love that He has loved us with. God who has commanded has also supplied the ability by pouring His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. If we will yield to the realms of God's glory His love will spring up in us and pour out of us like rivers. God says, “This is my commandment that you love one another!”

⁸² Peter quotes proverbs 10:2 as the reason that we should, above all other things, have fervent love one for another. Earlier Peter said that

through the Spirit the saints had pure love one for another and thereby had purified their souls through obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1:22).

9- Use hospitality towards one another without complaining.

10- According as each one has received a gift⁸³ minister one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11- If anyone speaks then as an oracle⁸⁴ of God if anyone ministers then as from out of the strength which God directs⁸⁵ that in all things God may be glorified through Christ Jesus to whom be the glory and might unto the ages of the ages amen.

12- Beloved do not be surprised by the fiery⁸⁶ trial which tries you as though a strange event happened to you.

13- Rather rejoice as partakers of the sufferings of Christ⁸⁷ that also in the revealing of His glory you may rejoice with great joy.

⁸³ Hospitality is not actually listed as one of the gifts in either of Paul's list of 'charisma' in 1 Corinthians 12 or in Romans 12. Peter probably does not intend to imply that hospitality is one of the 'charisma' of the Spirit. Rather he is simply going through a list of things essential for the saints to do one of them being to utilize the 'charisma' that they have been given for the benefit of others. Therefore, verse 10 should be coupled with verse 11.

⁸⁴ Everything that we do should bring glory to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who we shall worship and adore throughout all eternity. The noted Greek scholar A.T. Robertson describes the meaning of oracle (logia) as the utterances of God through Christian teachers. Paul said that when he ministered, he would do so by the activity of the Spirit through revelation or knowledge or prophecy or by doctrine (1 Corinthians 14:6). Paul also said that when he preached it would not be with the words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power (1 Corinthians 2:4). When God endued the saints with the power of the Holy Spirit the first thing that happened was that the Holy Spirit took over what they were saying (Acts 2:4). When Peter spoke to the great crowd of people that had gathered that day he did so by the

power of the Holy Spirit. For the first time the true meaning of the passage of scripture in Joel 2:28-32 was set in its proper context. Through this mighty display of the power of the Holy Spirit speaking through men God was glorified through Jesus Christ and 3000 souls were added to the Kingdom (Acts 2:41).

⁸⁵ The Greek word ‘chorego’ is a compound word of ‘choros’ (dance) and ‘ago’ (lead). The meaning of the word refers to the one who leads a chorus or a director of dance.

⁸⁶ Fiery trials are inevitable, and no one should be concerned that something is happening out of the ordinary. We know that God allows the tests that we face but he does not allow us to be tested above what we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). We know that God makes a way for us to escape every trial that we have to go through. It would be wrong to submit to a trial just as it would be wrong to submit to a temptation to sin. God expect that we should rise up in faith and bring an end to every opposition that we face for it is the shield of faith the quenches every fiery trial of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16). The way that we escape these fiery trials is to submit to God and resist the devil. Peter also said that we are to resist the devil, “firmly in the faith knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Peter 5:9). The Psalmist said, “many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all (Psalms 34:19). James said, “Blessed is the man who endures temptation for after that he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life which fades not away’ (James 1:12). Jesus said, “in this world you shall have tribulation but be of good cheer for I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Because Jesus overcame, we are also able to overcome through His divine power.

⁸⁷ One of the desires of Paul expressed to the Philippians was that he continue to be a partaker of the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3:10). Peter specifically names the sufferings of Christ as fiery trials that have come to try the saints. In Hebrews it is revealed that Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). One of the ways in which Christ Jesus suffered was by being tempted yet through it all He did not sin (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).

14- Happy are you if you are reproached for the name of Christ because the glory and the Spirit of God rest upon you⁸⁸; on their part he is blasphemed but on your part he is glorified.

15- Let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evil doer or as a meddler in the affairs of others.

16- But if as a Christian⁸⁹ do not be ashamed but in this name glorify God.

17- Because the time of judgment⁹⁰ has begun from the house of God and if first from us what shall the end of the disobedient be who do not follow the gospel of God.

18- And if the righteous are barely⁹¹ saved where will the ungodly and sinners appear.

19- Now therefore those who may suffer commit their souls to Him in doing good according to the will of the Faithful Creator God.

Chapter 5

1-Therefore the elders among you I exhort being a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker of the glory about to be revealed.

2- Shepherd the flock of God among you taking the oversight⁹² not of necessity but voluntarily according to God and not eager for base gain but freely.

⁸⁸ We are called to forsake all and follow Jesus. If we will obey God and go everywhere and preach the gospel to every person, we will doubtless run up against persecution. If we stand in righteousness and live godly, we will suffer persecution - but the good news is that we will experience that same glory that came down upon the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 40:34). We were baptized in the Holy Ghost and fire, so that we might live in the glory and power of our heavenly fire. If we will continue to declare these glorious truths of the kingdom of God, we will see the expressions of the great exploits of God. Even as in the days of Paul, we will be able to say that mightily grew the word of God and prevailed (Acts 19:20). We will give witness to Him with great power, and there will be great grace upon us that will cause the world to encounter the living God (Acts 4:33).

Jesus was persecuted by man and Satan, and Jesus told us that we would be persecuted too. We must not count our lives dear unto ourselves, but instead be willing to take up our cross and follow Jesus. These are the days of great exploits, but we must not love our lives even unto the death (Revelation 12:11; Matthew 16:25). These are the days when the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are nearer than before. Soon everything about the earth and the governments of men will change — as Jesus Christ Himself will come to reign. We must not withhold our voice; we must not hide in self-preservation; but boldly go out and declare these wonderful works of God.

⁸⁹ This is one of three times that the word ‘Christianos’ (Christian) is used in the Bible (Acts 11:26; 26:28). The common way to address the believers in the New Testament is saints.

⁹⁰ The prophet Ezekiel described how God’s judgment begins at His sanctuary. The ones who have been given the responsibility to oversee the house of God are those who are judged first (Ezekiel 9:6). The judgment that is referred to here by Peter has already begun among God’s people. This judgment not only began with the house of Israel 2000 years ago but is also ongoing today. Paul says that if we are chastened then we are judge of God so that we will not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:32).

⁹¹ Certainly, the idea of the righteous being barely saved must be understood in the light of God’s absolute Holiness and Purity. It also should result in a sobriety in the believer to realize the urgency of our need for God’s mercy and protection in the midst of a wicked and perverse world. Upon hearing that the “righteous are barely saved” we should be left with a certainty that there is no room to justify any sort of compromise with sin and ungodliness.

⁹² The Shepherd of any flock has four basic responsibilities: to provide food and water for the flock, to protect the flock against predators, to keep the flock from injuring itself and to treat wounds and diseases that may threaten the flock. The most important of these four is the supply of food and water. God leads His sheep into green pastures that are beside still waters. It is our responsibility as the minister of the Lord Jesus Christ to cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that the people of God are led into the glory and presence of God. If we take seriously the call of God on our lives, we will always be watchful against anything

that would attempt to prevent God's flock from walking into ever increasing realms of His glory to which we are called.

3- Neither as exercising dominion over the heritage⁹³ but being examples to the flock.

4- And at the appearing of the Chief Shepherd you shall receive an unfading crown of glory.

5- Likewise younger obey an elder and everyone be subject one to another and be clothed with humility⁹⁴ because God battles against one who exalts himself above others but gives grace to the lowly.

⁹³ Those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and thereby born of the Spirit are part of the family of God and thus referred to as God's heirs (Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:29;4:7;Titus 3:17; James 2:5; 1Peter 3:7). The responsibility of every minister and every saint is to realize that the people of God, that they interact with, are joint heirs with Jesus Christ and therefore God's heritage or lot. This awareness should cause us to treat one another with the utmost respect and love. Jesus said that whatever we do to the least of the brethren (family of God) we also do to Him (Matthew 25:40). We have all been taught directly by God that we are to love one another (1 Thessalonians 4:9). The love and the respect that we have been instructed in by the Holy Spirit should result in the deepest honor and appreciation for one another. At the moment that we see each other's short comings and fault we should not despise each other but encourage and assist one another with the help that we need.

⁹⁴ Humility is one of the chief characteristics of God's nature. Jesus modeled it for us as the servant of all. Humility is also one of the fruits of the Spirit, and a manifestation that we are giving God the control over our lives (Matthew 11:29; Zechariah 9:9; Philippians 2:8; Colossians 3:12). Humility is the virtue that results in wisdom, and the outpouring of the grace of God upon us and through us (Proverbs 11:2; 1 Peter 5:6). The way of God is humility, and if we desire to walk in the honor that our Heavenly Father wants to give us - then we must first be trained in humility (Proverbs 15:33; 18:12; 22:4; 29:23). True Holy Ghost-inspired

humility can only flow from the love of God, which we must continually abide in if we are to represent Christ Jesus (Jude 1:20-21; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16). If we are to understand the real meaning of humility, we must view it first as the opposite of being proud, and secondly as the nature of Christ.

Pride is a serious offense against God and the Kingdom of God. It was through pride that Satan rebelled against God, and it is by pride that all rebellion exists unto this day. God has vowed to fight against the proud and is resolved to bring all rebellion to an end. The pride of life is as evil as the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye. Because of the subtlety of the pride of life, it is common among many in church — because the litmus test of humility against the pride of life is not enforced, and in many cases not modeled. One of the many things that characterize the proud is their unwillingness to submit to authority (1 Timothy 6:3-4). The proud are like the waves of the sea who refuse to be stopped (Job 40:12; Psalm 12:3; Psalm 86:14; Psalm 101:5; Psalm 119:21; Psalm 123:4; Proverbs 6:16-17; Proverbs 21:4). Pride is behind every defensive action. It is the place from which all warring, strife, and envy flow. The Old Testament scripture that is related to this passage contrasts the scorners (or slanderers) to those who are humble (or lowly). Even as Satan found an accusation against God, the proud still focus their venom against the anointing and its authority, scorning and accusing those who represent God — especially when they bring correction. Paul lists the proud among the apostates of the last days, who are lovers of themselves more than lovers of God (2 Timothy 3:2-4). Through their rebellion, the proud create their own downfall: “He scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts” (Luke 1:51). Those who are proud will never humble themselves to be servants, nor will they truly submit themselves to God or His servants; they only accommodate others for one reason: to serve their own interest. In the pride of life men struggle for success and promotion and will do almost anything to achieve their goals. They slander and defame one another in order to discredit their perceived rivals, always with the intent of making themselves shine brighter than everyone else.

The Holy Spirit demands that we be clothed with humility if we are going to walk with Him and represent Him. The particular Greek word used here refers to a slave’s apron and reminds us of the time that Jesus clothed himself with a towel to wash the disciples’ feet (John 13:12-14). Jesus was God manifested in the flesh yet was among us as a servant instead of a prince. He humbled Himself to lay down His life for us, and we are to be dedicated to serve one another in the same way. He

submitted himself to the death of the cross for our sakes because of the love of God that dominated His life. The transformation of nature that we received at the new birth brought to us a conversion that allows us to humble ourselves as a little child and walk in this same way (Matthew 18:3-4).

The blessing of choosing the way of humility is that God will come and make His dwelling with us (Isaiah 66:1-2). Nothing characterizes humility more than submission and servitude. Some of the words that are synonyms of humility further characterize the nature that we should have if we are walking in humility: lowliness, brokenness, and being poor in spirit. When we are walking in the Spirit, we are far from independent and self-reliant. Through the insight and revelation of the Holy Spirit we have discovered our great need for one another and have no problem receiving instruction and correction from those who love us. Defensiveness has no place in humility, and because we are so filled with confidence and boldness in the Holy Ghost, we are able to hear instruction without feeling offended. Even our response to those who hate us is one of grace and not retaliation (1 Peter 2:23). Humility that springs forth from this glorious love of God compels us to be the servants of all.

6- Therefore humble yourself under the mighty hand of God that you may be exalted in time.

7- Casting all of your care upon Him because He cares for you.

8- Think clearly⁹⁵ be alert your adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion seeking someone to devour⁹⁶.

⁹⁵ Serving God demands constant obedience. The Greek word (nepho) that is translated ‘think clearly’ means to be sober. Philo went so far as to say that being sober was recognizing that God is God (The Works of Philo- Posterity 175). We may say that being sober is the constant recognition that God is God. There is no room for us to have fuzziness of mind about what is really going on in this world. We are in the midst of a spiritual battle both for our own souls and the souls of men. It is imperative that we recognize that we are called to be soldiers in the army of God as well as children with authority to represent God’s

cause in the earth (2 Timothy 2:3-4; John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

It is absolutely imperative that we recognize that on our own we are no match for the devil. We must find ourselves continually under the protection of the word of God, which is like a sword (Ephesians 6:17-18; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 9:15,21). We must be willing to rely upon the strength of the Lord and the power of His might that is supplied to us by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:16; 6:10-12). We must not allow ourselves to be ignorant of Satan's devices. If we become slow of thought through being intoxicated by various forms of temptation and deceptions, then Satan will gain an advantage over us. However, if we hold tightly to the word of God in obedience to His will, we will find the ability to cast down every attempt that Satan makes at destroying us, our families, churches, and communities. We can discern a play on words in this scripture if we refuse to be sober (nepho) and instead swallow that which would intoxicate or deceive us then in that deception Satan will swallow us up (katapino-translated devour)

⁹⁶ If there is any one thing that God's people need to sober up about it is that they are in the midst of a conflict over good and evil (Romans 6:16; 2 Corinthians 10:5-6; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Isaiah 55:7). This is a battle between the sons of God and the powers of darkness (Ephesians 6:11; 1 Peter 2:11; 3:11; 4:1; 2 Corinthians 10:3; 1 John 2:14; 1 John 3:1-10; 3 John 11; Hebrews 5:14; John 5:29; John 1:12). The captain of our salvation has totally defeated Satan in his reign of terror over all mankind, yet a battle still rages (Hebrews 2:10; Romans 5:11-21; 1 Peter 4:1-3). You may ask how can it be both? How can Satan be defeated and yet still be in the fight? There are two parallel kingdoms that run side by side at the present time: the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of the Dear Son (Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 2:2; 6:10-11; John 16:11; Acts 26:18; 1 John 2:16; 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; John 14:30). Jesus was manifested to destroy the works of darkness and in so doing He destroy the devil who has the power of death. Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light (Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; John 12:31). Yet at the same time Satan is still at work for a period of time exercising his dominion over those who are lost. Satan also desires to overthrow the faith of those who belong to the Kingdom of the Dear Son (Luke 22:31; 2 Timothy 2:18; 1 Timothy 1:19; Revelation 3:14-22). If we walk in obedience to God Satan cannot exercise any form of dominion over us nor can he even touch us (Romans 6:1-22; 1 John 5:18; 5:4; 2:13). We have been given power over every one of Satan's

works insomuch that we can trample his works under our feet by the authority that we have been given in Christ Jesus (Luke 10:19; Romans 16:20).

The name Satan means enemy or adversary. He is a formidable foe with a power of deception and deceit that could even overthrow the very elect if it were allowed to be unleashed without restraint upon the saints (Matthew 24:24; 24:11; Mark 13:22; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 3:17). The Holy Spirit warns us by Peter to be continually aware of the attack that Satan attempts to launch against us (2 Corinthians 2:11; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). We are to be strong in the strength of the Lord and the power of His might to stand against all of the deceptive tricks that Satan attempts to use to devour and to destroy (Ephesians 6:10-13; James 4:7; Ephesians 4:26-27). As our adversary he is a devil set against all mankind to slander and to accuse. The weapons that he uses to destroy man is sin. It was through the act of sin that this battle was set into motion, and it remains central to the conflict today. If we do not observe the fact that sin is far more than something we choose as an alternative to righteousness there is no way that we will be sober about this battle that we are engaged in. We need to feel the same way about sin that God does; he hates it (Habakkuk 1:13; Psalms 97:10; Proverbs 8:13). God so hates sin that He has judged that it is worthy of an eternal torture in a place called Hell (Luke 16:22; Matthew 8:12; 22:13; Mark 9:44-48). So many people have a difficult time understanding how that a loving God could create such a terrible place like Hell. What they fail to understand is how awful sin is to God and what a terrible offense it is against life. We need to have the same insight and revelation as to what Satan's devices are and see it as the weapons of the powers of darkness that are set against us to destroy all mankind.

As soldiers of the Kingdom of God we have been given weapons and authority to destroy every work of darkness (2 Timothy 2:3-4; Philemon 1:2). We have been given the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God to destroy everyone of Satan's lies. We have been given the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left to overthrow all unrighteousness. Like the mighty men of David's army, we are trained up by the Holy Spirit to use both the right hand and the left hand equally effective in this battle against sin (2 Corinthians 6:7; Romans 13:12; Luke 10:19; Ephesians 6:17). We are to yield our members as weapons of righteousness against sin (Romans 6:13).

9- Whom you must resist firmly in the faith knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

10- And the God of all grace who called you into His eternal glory in Christ Jesus after you having suffered⁹⁷ a little He will restore you, establish, strengthen, set firm.

11- To Him be glory and might to the age of the ages amen.

12- I wrote a little to you through your faithful brother Silvanus as I thought best exhorting and witnessing this to be the true grace of God in which you stand.

13- Those chosen together with you in Babylon greet you also Mark my son.

14- Greet one another with a kiss of love peace to all those in Christ Jesus.

⁹⁷ Peter uses this word ‘pasko’ (suffering), eleven times in his First Epistle (2:19,20,21,23; 3:14,17,18; 4:1,15,19; 5:10). Peter began this Epistle by saying that it was a little distressing for those who were in need of the testing of their faith because of a great variety of trials. The beauty of the trials is the purity of faith that it brings because as fire is for the purification of gold trial is for the purification of faith. In fact, it is safe to say that this is one of the dominant themes of Peter’s message. What we may look forward to is that God will restore us, establish us, strengthen us, and set us firmly in place. This work of grace will strengthen us so that we will never be removed and at the appearing of our Lord Jesus our faith will be found unto glory, praise, and honor. Those who trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion they shall be as a tree planted by the waters and everything that they do shall be blessed. The trials are all about working an unmovable trust and confidence in God. “They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever.”(Psalms 125:1).

The Second General Epistle of Saint Peter

Chapter 1

1- Simon Peter a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ to those equally honored⁹⁸ with us having obtained faith in the righteousness of our God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

2- Grace to you and peace multiplied by an exact⁹⁹ knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

⁹⁸ This Greek word ‘isotimos’ may be translated ‘equally honored’ or ‘equally precious’. This is a compound word from ‘iso’ (equal) and ‘time’ (honor).

⁹⁹ The Greek word used here for knowledge is ‘epignosis,’ it is a specific word for the correct or precise knowledge. A.T. Robertson translates ‘epignosis’ as ‘full knowledge’ and believes that it is in contrast to the Gnostics who claimed a special knowledge. However, in keeping with the text perhaps Peter is referring to a matured knowledge that results from walking in obedience to God.

3- As His **Divine Power**¹⁰⁰ has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of the One calling us through¹⁰¹ glory and virtue.

4- Through which precious and exceeding great promises are given to us that through these you may be partakers of a divine nature¹⁰² having escaped from the corruption in lust in the world.

5- And this is it also¹⁰³, bringing in all diligence¹⁰⁴, you supply in the faith¹⁰⁵ virtue and with the virtue the knowledge.

¹⁰⁰ The Divine Power of the Lord Jesus Christ has been extended without limitation to us through the Holy Spirit. Through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the Spirit of God comes upon the one who calls and

changes that person into a new creation. When a person has been born of God they received the capacity to walk in the glory and virtue of the One who redeemed them. By this awesome work of grace, the ability to walk in everything that pertains to life and godliness is supplied. Every dimension of His abundant life and power of godliness has been extended to us so that we may say “as he is so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17).

¹⁰¹ The Greek phrase used here incorporates the preposition ‘dia’ (through), although other Greek manuscripts use the adjective ‘idios’ (own). In either case it is through both the knowledge and the glory and virtue of Jesus Christ that we are called to everything that pertains to life and godliness. It is the word of God that brings to us the knowledge of this saving grace and through that knowledge we either accept or reject God’s salvation. If we accept then the glory and virtue of Jesus comes and fills are lives also. The divine power of the Lord Jesus Christ has stripped every force that was against of its hold on us and His divine power reaches into our life by His Spirit and gives us a new heart and a new spirit. God who has called us has also with the same call empowered us to fulfill the call. If we give ourselves to glory and virtue, then the results will be life and godliness. Peter will bring the attributes of this call together in the next few verses revealing to us that we have received a divine nature, which empowers us to walk in the glory and virtue. And that in this divine ability we are to supply through faith those things, which pertain to glory and virtue.

¹⁰² The divine nature is the same as the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). The message of this verse is primarily the same as that given by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation, old things are passed away and behold all things are new.” When a person is born of the Spirit, they become the servant of Jesus Christ doing the will of God from the heart (John 3:6; Ephesians 6:6; Romans 8:2). The power of the divine nature, which is the nature of Christ Jesus empowers us to escape the sinful desires that are in the realms of the world. All that is in the world the lust of the flesh the lust of the eye and the pride of life is a satanic influence, which results in the corruption of spirit, soul and body (1 John 2:15-17; Romans 6:23).

¹⁰³ A.T. Robertson says that this phrase “ kai auto touto de” means “Yes, and for this very cause”. However, being as literal as possible the phrase is “ and this is it also”; either way the practical application of

obedience is being highlighted by Peter. The divine nature has empowered men with the nature of Jesus so that we can behave ourselves accordingly. The message that Peter is bringing is one of coming to a correct knowledge and spiritual maturity. If obedience is not the result of our encounter with the Divine Power, then we have failed to understand why Christ Jesus died and rose again.

¹⁰⁴ The Greek word ‘spoude’ denotes urgency; this word may be rendered ‘haste’, and together with ‘pasan’ the urgency is even more resounding “all haste”.

¹⁰⁵ The Greek phrase “en te pistei” (“in the faith” or “by the faith”), takes this activity way beyond both the Law and human discipline. In the faith is not to be understood as “in religion” or some other concept of religious conviction. Faith is much more than these things it is the activity of the supernatural and divine working of God’s grace. Faith is how God created everything. It is how the mouths of lions were shut and how the violence of fire was quenched (Hebrews 11). Faith is how every miracle that Jesus worked by the Spirit took place (Acts 3:16; Galatians 3:5). Faith is always equated to the miracles that Jesus did throughout the gospels (Matthew 8:10, 26; 9:2, 22, 29; 14:31; 15:28; 17: 20; 21:21; Mark 11:22; Luke 17:5,19; 18:42) The miracles which were done by those who believed on Jesus were done by the activity of faith (Acts 3:16; 6:8; 14:9; Galatians 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; James 5:15; Jude 21). These attributes of God’s nature and God’s people are to be supplied by faith not by human discipline. Therefore virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love will be supplied through the faith realm. The Greek phrase “en te pistei” is found 4 times in the New Testament as such it is in the dative form and translated “in the faith” in every case except 2 Peter 1:5 in the Authorized Version, (1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 13:5’ Titus 1:13; 2 Peter 1:5).

6- And with the knowledge the temperance¹⁰⁶ and with the temperance the patience and with the patience the godliness.

7- And with the godliness the brotherly kindness and in the brotherly kindness the love.

8- For these things being in you and abounding you shall not be barren or unfruitful in the complete knowledge of our Lord Jesus

Christ.

9- For the one in whom these things are not present is blind and short-sighted forgetting that he was cleansed from his former¹⁰⁷ sins.

¹⁰⁶ The Greek word that is translated temperance (enkrateia) means lordship our dominion over oneself. Paul uses this word in 1 Corinthians 9:25 to describe the discipline that an athlete must have if he is to accomplish the goal of winning the crown. Temperance was one of the three main subjects that Paul focused on in His ministry to Felix (Acts 24:25). Temperance is observed through self-control and discipline. It refers to self-restraint and is thought of as the cornerstone to all other virtues. If a person does not have the ability to control himself then no other virtue would be possible. One of the easiest ways to grasp the meaning of temperance is to recognize that self-discipline is a synonym. We do not find self-discipline in the bible instead we find temperance. The self-disciple that is usually referred to when this word was used in Greek culture was with respect to sexual purity and proper restraints with food. Job made a covenant with his eyes not to behold a maiden (Job 31:1). The proverbs demands that a person who is given to an appetite place a knife to his throat to ensure that there is no overeating (Proverbs 23:2).

Unfortunately, there seems to be little focus both in sermons and individual application to our responsibility to give ourselves to the practice of humility, virtue, temperance, and godliness to name a few. Each of us need to become familiar with practical applications in our life to the conduct that God demands. After all we have been given the nature of God, the divine nature, and thus these are not virtues that we must acquire rather they are virtues that we need only walk in. There is no question that Peter demanded such application and furthermore made it essential in order to ensure our calling and election in Christ Jesus (2 Peter 1:10). In fact, Peter says that if we lack these things that we are blind and cannot see and have forgotten that we were purged from a sinful nature (2 Peter 1:9). We have been given the divine nature and the help of the Holy Spirit so that we may walk in the highest level of expression of these virtues. If we give ourselves diligently to walking in the ways of God and conducting ourselves properly in the divine nature, then we are promised that we will not stumble (2 Peter 1:10; Jude 1:24; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:18). The Spirit of God will uphold us and strengthen

us to live in the way that pleases God. The light of His nature and the beauty of His ways will be seen in the midst of our lives, and we will not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of God. There is most certainly a realm of relationship in God that we enter into as we mature in God. This maturity is a result of our willingness to be obedient to His will and to His ways (1 John 2:14; 1 Corinthians 3:1; Hebrews 5:14; 2 Peter 1:11; Ephesians 3:18-19; 4:12; John 14:21, 23; 15:16).

¹⁰⁷ The Greek word used here is ‘palai’ and it means ‘long ago, old or former.’ It is used in the passages of scripture in Matthew 11:21 and Luke 10:13 “They would have repented long ago.” The fact is that the New Testament doctrine of redemption is emphatic about the fact that the sins of the redeemed have been washed away, purged, and destroyed (Revelations 1:5; Hebrews 1:2; 9:6; Colossians 2:13; 1 John 3:5; 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:6-7, 22;). We derive our New Testament word for forgiveness from the Greek word ‘aphesis’ which translates the Old Testament word ‘yovel’ (Jubilee). It was on the Day of Jubilee that every debt and slave was released, and everyone was returned to their original inheritance. The Day of Jubilee was announced on Yom Kippur, which was the day that a goat would carry away the sins of Israel into the wilderness. In similar fashion and for this reason Christ Jesus was put to death at Calvary to carry away our sins, “Who himself carried our sins in his own body that the sins being removed we might live righteously, by whose wound we were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Because the sins and the power of sin has been removed from those who have been born of God and made partakers of the divine nature they should be walking in the nature and Spirit of God outlined in the preceding verses. If they are not walking in virtue, temperance...godliness... and love then they have forgotten that they were transformed by the power of God through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

10- On account of this brethren, instead be diligent to make your calling and election ¹⁰⁸ sure ¹⁰⁹ for doing these things you shall never stumble ¹¹⁰ .

11- For in this way you shall be richly supplied the entrance into the everlasting Kingdom ¹¹¹ of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁸ The doctrine of election as taught by the scripture is in fact a divine selection of all men unto salvation. The divine selection of all men to salvation is stated in no uncertain terms when Paul said that God has “commanded all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). The Greek noun ‘ekloge’ is used only seven times in the New Testament. It is not used at all in any of the canonized books of the Septuagint. The word means “divine selection”. The doctrine of ‘election’ or ‘divine selection’ can easily be understood once a person decides whom it is that God loves and who it was that Christ died for. Upon the realization that God loves the whole world and that Christ died that all men might be saved the doctrine of election becomes easy to understand.

¹⁰⁹ The Greek adjective ‘bebaian’ means ‘firm, secure or certain’. The doctrine of election as described in the New Testament refers to those who are chosen by God (John 15:16). Jesus has come to seek and to save those who are lost but many men refuse to hear His voice. Those who do respond to the call of salvation are commanded to walk in obedience and to overcome even as our savior overcame (Revelation 3:21; John 14:23-24). The calling and election of God has been sounded out to all men (John 12:32; Titus 2:11). Peter emphasizes the fact that God would have all men to be saved in the third chapter of this epistle (2 Peter 3:90). However, both Peter and Paul also issued a warning that diligence must be given to obey the will of the Lord if the calling and election is to be established (Hebrews 2:3)

¹¹⁰ Peter’s understanding of our calling and election by God could not be spelled out more clearly than it is in this scripture. Certainly, there would have been no other apostle who would have understood the grace and election of God better than Peter (1 Peter 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9; Acts 2:39). Here he reveals the response that each individual must have to the election of God: a willing and obedient heart — one that does not take for granted what God has done for us, but just the opposite — one that seizes the opportunity and counts the riches of God as more valuable than all other things. The riches of His grace that have been given to us in this so great a salvation cannot be neglected; but rather diligently attended to (Hebrews 2:3; Hebrews 6:11; Hebrews 11:6). If we give ourselves to continually living in the conduct and behavior listed in verses 2 Peter 1:5-9, then a confirmation and security is supplied to us through the work of grace.

We live in a day where wickedness is more prevalent and more endorsed — yes, even encouraged by society — than ever before.

Everywhere we turn, there are those things that would draw us away from the faith, virtue, and godliness that Peter refers to. Therefore, all the more, we must give ourselves to the holiness that Peter preached in his first Epistle, and the fear and holy conversation that he will conclude with in this Epistle (1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Peter 2:5,9; 2 Peter 3:11; Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 22:11). If we should so give our hearts and minds to these things that please our heavenly Father, then we can be certain that He will provide us with the supernatural strength and divine power of godliness to never stumble; much less fall (Jude 1:24; Ephesians 3:20; Colossians 1:22; Philippians 2:13).

Moral integrity and holiness are absolutely essential with God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Galatians 5:21). Jesus did not die to just remove the guilt and the penalty of sin — but the very power of it (1 John 3:8; Romans 6:1-23). He died to make us holy, so that we can live holy. He died to make us righteous, so that we can live in righteousness. So then, let us all be strong in the strength of the Lord and the power of His might, and let us walk over top of all the power of the enemy. He has given us power over all unclean spirits to cast them out; therefore, we should never be taken captive by them. Let us shine as lights in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh. Let us hold fast the doctrines of the word of God and take hold of the beauty of God's ways and the glory of heaven; so that our hearts may enjoy the pleasures of His life, and the presence of the one who has brought to us the reality of His godliness. It is this manner of living that is the abundant life - which is truly full of joy unspeakable, and glorious!

¹¹¹ One could simply view this scripture as an assurance to the obedient and diligent of being granted with a lavish entrance into the Kingdom of God at the time of death. Professor Salmond felt that this text was the reverse of “saved, yet so as by fire” (1 Corinthians 3:15). Yet there is more to this verse, for surely the purpose of our lives now to be the witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ must take on more of the dimension of the life and glory of Jesus (John 14:12; 17:22). The divine opportunities that are given to us now in the Kingdom of God cry out to us in the declaration “Until you be endue with power from on high” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Keeping in mind the fact that Paul said that the saints have been translated from the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of the Dear Son we must be willing to embrace that we have already entered into some dimension of the Kingdom of God now (Colossians 1:14). Jesus told the leaders of Israel that the Kingdom

would be taken from them and given to another nation that would bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom (Matthew 21:43). Jesus also commanded us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness as a way in which we daily live our lives (Matthew 6:33). Paul also gave us a description of the fruits of the Kingdom of God that should be manifested in our daily lives as evidence of our communion with God when he said, “For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” Romans 14:17). The only qualifications of entering into the Kingdom is having been born of the Spirit (John 3:5). Peter is addressing the saints to take hold of a realm of consecration that will result in an increase revelation of God’s glory now and know doubt a triumphant entry into the realms of that glory after this life on earth has ended. Although, as The Bible exposition commentary points out, “If we make lavish provision to grow spiritually (2 Peter 1:5), then God will make lavish provision for us when we enter heaven,” the witness and fruits of the Kingdom are to be manifested in our lives now. If we are willing to function in the lavishly supplied riches of the Spirit to walk in the nature of God then there will also be a lavish supply of grace to function in the realms of the miracle glory of the Kingdom (2 Peter 1:5,11). The examples of those who stepped over into that realm of glory are many, from Enoch to Paul. Surely, there is a continual increase in the nature of God as well as the glory and power of God if we are willing to give ourselves wholly to His purposes. Paul opens the door to all saints to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge and to be filled with all of the fullness of God. He also sets forth the call to “the measure of the maturity of the fullness of Christ...”(Ephesians 3:18-19; 4:13). We may be certain that God rewards those who diligently seek Him with the same kind of rewards that He gave to Enoch and all of those spoken of in the Bible (Hebrews 11:6). There awaits boundless insight into the glories of the inheritance and exceeding greatness of the power of Christ Jesus for all who are willing and obedient (Ephesians 1:18-19). Peter is not referring to a works-based reward, but to an obedience based inheritance. The door is opened to explore the endless realms of the Spirit of God, but it is only through yielding to and obeying the Spirit of God that we may enter into and explore these unsearchable riches of Christ and gaze upon those things which eyes have not seen, nor ears have heard, nor has entered into the heart of man (1 Corinthians 2:9; Ephesians 3:8-9).

12- Therefore, I will not neglect to continually remind you concerning these things although you know and have been established¹¹² in the present truth.

13- Now, I think it right that as long as I am in this tabernacle¹¹³ to stir you up with a reminder.

14- Knowing that soon I will put off this tabernacle just as also our Lord Jesus Christ declared¹¹⁴ to me.

15- And I will also be diligent that you may always cause to have these things be remembered after my departure¹¹⁵.

¹¹² The Greek word ‘sterizo’ is found 13 times in the New Testament. Another word very closely related to it is ‘episterizo’, which may be translated confirmed or established; it is found 4 times and all in the book of Acts. The Greek word ‘sterizo’ is first observed in Luke 9:51 and may be translated, ‘set’ as when Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem”, speaking of his resolve to go there. The second time that it appears in Luke it is best translated fixed, as in “a great chasm has been fixed between us and you” Luke 16:26. Jesus also used this verb when he commanded Peter to strengthen or establish his brethren (Luke 22:32).

¹¹³ This Greek word ‘skēnoma’ is only found one other time outside of this passage in 2 Peter and is never used as Peter is using it here. In Acts 7:46 it is the word used for the ‘Tabernacle’ of God. The Greek word ‘skēnoō’ from which ‘skēnoma’ is derived is used of Jesus tabernacling or dwelling in John 1:14. This word is found 80 times in the Septuagint. Its first occurrence is in Deuteronomy 33:18 where it is used to refer to the ‘tent’ or dwelling of Issachar. The first usage of the word for tent is found in Genesis 4:20, ‘skēne’. It is this word that is used to describe the Tabernacle of God in the Old Testament. Is translated from the Hebrew word ‘mishkan’, which is derived from ‘shakan’, which means to dwell. A closely associated word is ‘shekanyah’ (shekinah) which means dweller with Yahowah.

¹¹⁴ Peter is referring to what the Lord Jesus told him in John 21:18.

¹¹⁵ Peter uses the Greek word ‘exodos’ which would be equivalent to ‘exodus or departure’ instead of the word for death which is ‘thanatos’. This Greek word is first used in Exodus 19:1 in reference to Israel’s

departure from Egypt. It is used two other times in the New Testament once of Israel's exodus from Egypt and once of Jesus departure to heaven (Hebrews 11:22; Luke 9:31). The Hebrew equivalent in Exodus 19:1 is 'yatzah' which means 'to go up'.

16- For we did not follow cleverly invented fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but having become eyewitnesses of that majesty.

17- For receiving from Father God honor and glory such voice having come to him of magnificent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased¹¹⁶.

18- And this voice we heard when it came from heaven when we were with him in the Holy Mount.

19- And we have a more certain word of prophecy that you do well to take hold of as a light shining in a murky¹¹⁷ place until the day shines through and the morning star arises in your heart¹¹⁸.

20- Knowing this first that every prophecy of scripture did not come by one's own¹¹⁹ interpretation.

21- For prophecy did not come at any time by the will of man but was brought forth under the Holy Spirit¹²⁰ as holy men of God spoke.

¹¹⁶ Peter is referring to the event called the Transfiguration recorded in Matthew 17:5. The audible voice of the Father spoke to Jesus from the midst to the cloud of glory (shekinah).

¹¹⁷ This Greek word 'auchmeros' only occurs this one time in the Bible. Perhaps the meaning here is shadowy place however, its meaning is reported to be 'dry, dark, squalid, murky, dirty'. The implied meaning is destitute of brightness. This may be associated with the idea conveyed in the Hebrew verb 'shakar' means 'duskiness, dark' or 'black'. The noun of 'shakar' means 'morning' or 'dayspring', which implies 'dawn'. The word 'shakar' is used in Isaiah 14:12 and is translated as the noun 'Lucifer', in the Authorized Version. The Hebrew phrase is "ben-shakar" which is "son of morning".

¹¹⁸ All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are found in Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. God the Father testified of Him on the mount of transfiguration and Peter heard His voice. Yet Peter includes all who are willing to study the word of God in this great moment of revelation because Jesus is revealed with all the more certainty for everyone to see in the scriptures. Anyone who will simply give themselves to the study of the word of God will see that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

We need to value the spiritual growth that comes from drinking the milk of the word. If we would take a hold of the reality that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, then perhaps the study of the word of God would become more meaningful to us. It is certainly more important than the food that we value for our natural lives.

If we will give ourselves to knowing those heavenly things that God locked up in His word, then surely the treasures of heaven will be opened to us and the revelation of the things of the Spirit will shine with the radiance of heaven into our understanding. God's word is a light that shines in a dark and uncertain world full of fears and doubts. It is Father's will that you and I come to realize the liberating knowledge of the truth that may only be found in the glorious light of His word. All the revelation of heaven and the ages to come are found in the face of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. As we handle the word of life and gaze upon those wonderful words of God, we are handling that eternal life, which was manifested, Christ Jesus the Lord. Give yourself to the study of the word of God and you will discover an ever-increasing revelation of Jesus in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells.

¹¹⁹ The Greek word 'idios' refers to that which belongs to an individual. It is most commonly translated 'one's own' as a unique and distinct ability, opinion or possession (Luke 6:44; Matthew 25:15; Acts 4:32; 1 Corinthians 3:8).

¹²⁰ It was through prophecy that the Word of God came. Prophecy is the utterance of the Holy Spirit brought forth through the mouth of man. When men are totally yielded to God they may come under the control of the Holy Spirit and be a mouthpiece for the Holy Spirit to speak. This utterance may be so exact that it may be called the Word of God. Such influence and control of the Holy Spirit would be likened to the utterances given to the 120 on the day of Pentecost. They so came under the divine influence and control of the Holy Spirit that they had no

control over what they spoke. They spoke as the Holy Spirit gave them the utterances (Acts 2: 4).

Chapter 2

1- Now there were also false prophets¹²¹ among the people just as also false teachers¹²² shall be among you who shall sneak¹²³ in destructive opinions¹²⁴ also denying the Master who bought¹²⁵ them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

2- And many shall follow their licentious¹²⁶ ways through which the way of truth will be slandered.

¹²¹ In order to grasp the identity of these false teachers that will be among us we must understand the false prophets that they are compared to. The Greek word ‘pseudoprophetai’ is found 10 times in the Septuagint. Although, there is no actual Hebrew word conveying the meaning of ‘false prophet’ it is implied by the context. Of the 10 times that ‘pseudoprophetai’ is found in the Septuagint it occurs 9 times in Jeremiah. It is in this context then that we can further understand the impact of false prophets and the impact that they can have. Unfortunately, we discover that the false prophets were accepted while Jeremiah was rejected. The popular opinion of the people refused to accept that they were wrong and needed to repent and conformed to the sanctity of and obedience to God’s word. The issue of God’s controversy against His people has always been over purity and obedience rather than minor issues or details associated with style and ritual. Jesus warned us to beware of false prophets that look like sheep but are actually wolves (Matthew 7:15). Jesus also identifies these false prophets as those who His rebellious people spoke well of warning His disciples to beware of such expectations (Luke 6:26). Jesus credits these false prophets with the ability to do great signs and wonders thereby increasing their ability to deceive (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22). John associates false prophets with the antichrist power that was already at work among the churches in his day (1 John 4:1).

¹²² Just as there were false prophets that were contemporary with the

prophets such as Jeremiah, Peter warns us that there will be false teachers among us. Although, the Greek word for false teacher is only found here Paul describes false teachers in his Epistles to Timothy. The description of false teachers is as follows: 1- They do not consent to the sound word of God. 2- They do not consent to the doctrines of godliness. 3- They create strife, envy, evil speaking, and suspicion of others. 4- They suppose gain to be godliness (1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:6-7; Titus 1:11).

¹²³ The Greek word that is used here is very descriptive of how destructive heresies find their way into the community of the church; they come along side of true doctrines and less harmful opinions. Although there may be opinions about the scripture that are not destructive one falsehood is the foundation on which more destructive falsehoods are built. The word used here is a compound Greek word ‘paraeisago’ which literally means to ‘bring in along with’ or to ‘lead in along with others.’ Thus, we catch a glimpse of the way that false doctrines begin. These opinions are grouped along with Bible facts and become the subtleties by which wrong conclusions are derived and thus destructive opinions are precipitated.

¹²⁴ The Greek word ‘hairesis’ may be translated ‘choice, opinion, inclination, dogma, sect, party, school, or heresy. The choice was made to translate ‘hairesis’ as ‘opinion’ in order to underscore how subtle one may become involved in heresy without knowing it. The best thing to do is to let the scripture interpret scripture so that we do not drift from the word of God unaware. In other words, if one is trying to understand the meaning of a verse of scripture it is best to search out all other information on that topic in the Bible and let the conclusion be soundly derived from such a study. One of the most difficult things to do is to remain objective and unbiased from one’s own opinions and the opinions of others.

¹²⁵ The same word is used in 1 Corinthians 6:20, “For you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits which are Gods. And again, “You are bought with a price; be not the servants of men” (1 Corinthians 7:23). Peter reveals that we were purchased not with silver and gold but by the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18). Paul describes the first installment that Gods has given to us for the purchase as being the promise of the Holy Spirit; through this instalment we were endued with the power of God (Ephesians 1:14; Acts 1:4; 2:39). The down payment that has been given to us provides proof to all that we

have been purchased by God.

¹²⁶ The meaning of this Greek word translated ‘licentious’ is revealed by the context in which it is used in this chapter where it occurs three times. It is used in verse 7 to describe the behavior of those of Sodom and Gomorrah and then again in verse 7 where it is association with the lust of the flesh. They are also associated with the sinning angels of Genesis chapter 6 which had sexual relations with the daughters of Adam. Jude refers to these angels as having given themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh like those of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 1:6-7). One of the ways to identify these false teachers is by their practice of sexual immorality. The Greek word translated as licentious here is most commonly translated ‘lasciviousness’ and may be understood as unbridled lust.

3- And by covetously crafted words they will use you for gain whose judgment shall not wait long and their destruction¹²⁷ shall not sleep¹²⁸.

4- For if God spared not sinning angels¹²⁹ but put them in chains of darkness casting them into hell¹³⁰ to be kept for judgment.

5- And did not spare the ancient world but kept Noah, eighth, a preacher of righteousness¹³¹ bringing a flood upon a world of ungodliness.

¹²⁷ There is little doubt that as men believe that they cannot lose their salvation now there were also those then that thought because they were ministers of the word that they would not lose their salvation. However, Peter makes it very clear that their destruction is certain and goes on to contrast them to the holy angels who revolted against God and the judgment that followed their sin.

¹²⁸ The description that is given of the impending destruction upon the wicked is that of an ever approaching and watchful power that is approaching the person who has done evil.

¹²⁹ All of the angels that followed Satan who we call Lucifer sinned

but not all angels are in chains in the darkness of hell right now. For all we know all other angels are free to move throughout the heaven and earth even until this day. In the Old Testament we observe angels in many passages of scriptures freely moving about and affecting the affairs of men. Some of the most outstanding examples are found in Job and Daniel (Job 1:6; 2:11; Daniel 10:13, 20). We discover in Revelation that Satan will finally be cast out of heaven along with his angels during the middle of the tribulation (Revelation 12:7, 9). The world will real in great upheaval because having been cast out of heaven he will unleash his wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth (Revelation 12:12). However, these angels that are pictured in hell (Tartarus) in this passage and in Jude 1:6 are a distinct group of angels who because of their sin were not allowed by God to continue to roam about freely.

¹³⁰ The Greek word for hell used here is very unique to the New Testament. In fact, the verb form of Tartarus is not found anywhere in scripture except here, ‘tartaroo.’ This Greek noun ‘Tartarus’ is found three times in the Septuagint but seems to refer to hell only once (Proverbs 30:16). However, this is where the ancient Greeks believed that all of the wicked dead were cast down to suffer the punishment for their evil deeds. It is interesting that Peter who was far from being influenced in any way by the Hellenism used this particular word to describe the place where the wicked angels are kept. There are two words used in the New Testament for hell, ‘geenna; and ‘hades’. Of these two words only ‘hades’ is used in the Old Testament. The Greek word ‘hades’ translates the Hebrew word for hell, which is ‘sheol’. Hades is found 10 times in the New Testament and geenna is found 12 times. Although these two words are used interchangeably in the New Testament, ‘geenna’ is more associated with ‘hell fire’. There is one exception to this however in Luke 16:23 ‘hades’ is used in association with the rich man being tormented in hell fire. The Greek word ‘geena’ is from a Hebrew word ‘Gehenna.’ Gehenna was originally Hinnom, which was a valley south of Jerusalem where all of the garbage and dead animals were burned.

¹³¹ God demands righteousness and there is no possibility that He will in any way compromise the necessity of it. In fact, when we consider the potential result of God making a compromise and allowing unrighteousness to exist in His kingdom we would conclude that it would be the ultimate ruin of everything that is good. Righteousness is a word that is clearly defined by its frequent use in the

Bible. It appears 249 times in the Bible and is primarily translated from the Hebrew word ‘tsedakah’ and the Greek word ‘dikaiosune.’ From its first appearance in Genesis 15:6 to its final occurrence in Revelation 22:11 it speaks of obedience to God’s will and describes purity and moral integrity. In this passage here in Second Peter Noah is set in contrast to the rest of the world (Genesis 6:9; 7:1). Noah was the one that God called righteous while all the others were unrighteous or ungodly. Righteousness by definition means one who is pure and virtuous. Through God’s amazing love and grace, we are made the righteousness of God. When we think about this level of righteousness we are confronted with the purest and most exact righteousness that exist. Even though Noah was righteous, and it was by his righteousness that he was saved God has given us a greater righteousness. We were not given the righteousness of Noah or Abraham but the righteousness of God. How? Because Jesus who knew no sin became the sin offering for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 2:21; Philippians 3:9; Ephesians 4:24; 5:9; 6:14; Romans 8:4; Philippians 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:11). God has given us this wonderful free gift and we must give His righteousness first place in our life (Matthew 6:33).

6- And overthrowing cities of Sodom and Gomorrah burning to ashes condemned them setting an example for ungodliness.

7- And delivered righteous Lot who had been worn down by their lawless licentious behavior.

8- For the righteous living among them seeing and hearing their lawless deeds day after day tormented a righteous soul.

9- The Lord knows to deliver the godly¹³² from temptation but the unrighteous are kept to a day of judgment being punished.

10- And most of all those going after flesh in lust going about defiling and despising rulers, arrogant, self-serving, not trembling at glory, evil speakers.

11- Where angels being of greater strength and power do not bring before the Lord a slanderous judgment against them.

12- But these as those without rational natural life having been born for capture and destruction¹³³ speak evil about things they do not understand and by their corruption shall perish.

13- Doing wrong for an unrighteous wage taking pleasure in the

day of luxury; spots and blemishes sporting themselves with their own deceivings, feasting with you.

14- Having eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin enticing unstable souls hearts having exercised for covetousness cursed children.

15- Forsaking the right way wonderers following the way of Balaam of Bosor; who loved the wage of unrighteousness.

16- But having his iniquity rebuked by a speechless donkey speaking with a man's voice to prevent the prophet's madness.

17- These are wells without water clouds driven under a hurricane to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever.

18- For with excessive empty speeches entice with fleshly lust lascivious acts of those escaped from them who live in error.

19- Promising them freedom themselves being slaves of corruption for by whom anyone is overcome by this one he has been enslaved.

¹³² Now the Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself (Psalms 4:3). There are four Greek words translated godly in the New Testament. Three of them share common roots, whereas the fourth is the same word that is used to translate God (theos), "For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world works death" (1 Corinthians 7:10). All four of these words denote the opposite of unrighteousness and ungodliness. Godliness is the nature of holiness that we have all been given by the Holy Spirit. Every day if we give ourselves to the realms of the Kingdom of God and yield to the word of God and the Holy Spirit we are taught how to walk in godliness (2 Peter 1:6). One of the primary words in the New Testament that is translated godliness (eusebeia) is given a clear definition by its application in 1 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:3. In these verses godliness is defined by the life and nature of Jesus Christ and as the divine nature that has been given to everyone who has been born of God. We are taught of God that we are to deny ungodliness and live soberly, righteously, and godly (eusebos) in this present world (Titus 2:12). There should be no mistake godliness is something that God demands of our lives. He has called every one of us to take hold of "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Timothy 6:3).

These individuals are being described as the worst kind of animals. They are not even good for food but as destructive beasts are fit only to be captured and destroyed.

20- For if these having escaped the defilement of the world by a full knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and again entangled having been overcome their last state shall be worse than the first.

21- For it were better for them not to have fully known the way of righteousness than fully knowing to turn back from the holy command delivered to them.

22- It has happened to them according to the true proverb — the dog has returned to his own vomit. Also, the hog having been washed to its filthy wallowing.

Chapter 3

1- Beloved I now write this second epistle in which I stir up your pure minds by a reminder.

2- Remember the word spoken before by the holy prophets and the command of the Lord and Savior by us the apostles.

3- Knowing this first that in the last day mockers with mockery will come according to their own lust.

4- And saying, where is the promise of His coming for since the fathers died all things remain from the beginning of creations.

5- For they have purposely not taken notice that the heavens were of long ago and an earth from out of water and through water was established by the word of God.

6- Through which the world at that time was utterly destroyed being inundated with water.

7- But the heavens and the earth which are now are by His word reserved for fire, kept unto a day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly men.

8- But beloved let not this one thing escape you that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

9- The Lord of the promise is not slow as some think of slowness

but is patient unto us not willing for anyone to be destroyed but for all to make room for repentance.

10- But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will be released with a fervent heat and the earth and the works in it shall be burned up.

11- Everything being dissolved in this way what manner of lifestyle should you have in holiness and godliness¹³⁴.

12- Expecting and hastening the coming of the day of God through which the heavens being set on fire will be dissolved and the elements will melt with a fervent heat.

¹³⁴ In the New Testament, the primary message relating to holiness is one of moral integrity and purity. The standard of moral integrity, which reaches into every dimension of one's conduct and behavior, is the character of God. Both holiness and godliness are behavioral words that are defined only in God. The holiness and godliness that God demands is supplied to us through the Spirit of Holiness (the Holy Spirit). We have been baptized into Him, and into His fire. The fire of God that consumed the sacrifice from off the altar and lit up the menorah in the Holy Place has come upon us; and we are to be wholly consumed by Him. Through the work of His grace in our lives, we are empowered to live blameless in holiness as the holy ones of God (1 Corinthians 1:8; Colossians 1:22; Philippians 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:14).

Today if we will be led by the Holy Spirit and allow Him to govern our lives, then we will shine with the character of God: in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, righteousness, and holiness; with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, and endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-8; Ephesians 4:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:22). Let us deny ungodliness now and for the rest of our lives - and perfect holiness in the fear of God (Titus 2:12; 2 Corinthians 7:1). For without holiness no man shall see God (Hebrews 12:14).

13- But according to His promise we look with expectation for a new heaven and a new earth¹³⁵ in which righteousness dwells¹³⁶.

14- Beloved because of this expectation be diligent, spotless and blameless in Him being found in peace.

15- And consider the salvation of our Lord longsuffering just as also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him.

16- As also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things in which are some things hard to understand which those who are unstable and unlearned pervert as also the rest of scriptures to their on destruction.

¹³⁵ Today the redeemed of the Lord should all be cooperating with Christ Jesus in bringing the manifestation of the kingdom of God. The promise of the Father is that all sin and rebellion shall be cast down, and the last enemy death forever destroyed. The new heaven and the new earth will ultimately be revealed after two other great events take place: the tribulation of Revelation chapters 4 through 19, and the subsequent event that will take place immediately after that: the 1000-year reign of Christ. The new heavens and the new earth will come into being after the 1000-year reign of Christ - and the final judgment at the end of that period (Revelation 20:11; 2 Peter 3:7; Daniel 7:10; Revelation 20:13; Jude 1:6; Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1). During the 1000-year reign of Jesus, He will gather all of the nations unto himself; separating them as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31; Revelation 20:4). During this time Jesus will rule with a rod of iron: nothing but the Father's will shall be permitted. The word of God will rule sovereignly and absolutely until the last enemy death is destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:24-29).

The saints which came out of the first resurrection will also rule with Jesus during this time; and as Paul said, we will judge the world (1 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:12; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 1:6). When the 1000 years are finished, Satan will be loosed for a season; and all of the nations will be once again gathered together against God and His saints (Revelation 20:7-10). This final rebellion will precipitate the final judgment. At that time the second resurrection will take place, and all of the unrighteous dead will be raised up; and those who lived through the 1000-year reign of Christ will be gathered before the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11,15; Matthew 25:31-34). Everyone who is not

found in the book of life will be cast into the Lake of Fire, including Satan and all of his angels (Revelation 20:10; 20:11-14). After these events, the Universe will be sealed with the righteousness of God. The earth and all of its works will be burnt up, and God will make a new heaven and a new earth in which only righteousness dwells (Revelation 21:1; Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:7-13; Psalm 102:25-26; Isaiah 51:6; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Hebrews 1:11-12; Psalm 46:2; Nahum 1:5). The New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven; and men will live forever in the glory of the Almighty God, who shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 21:1-4; 21:10-27; 22:1-5). Today all of us should be both looking for and cooperating with God in bringing forth this glorious event (2 Peter 3:12).

¹³⁶ Everything in the world is moving towards the ultimate revelation of God's Kingdom (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22). God will have only righteousness dwelling in the world that He created (Isaiah 45:8; 60:21; Daniel 9:24; Revelation 21:27; Romans 8:21)! In His lovingkindness and tender mercies, He continues to deal with the children of men offering anyone that is willing the opportunity to live with Him in His Kingdom. The most important and relevant thing that we must do every day is to seek His Kingdom and His righteousness.

Those who have been born of God are commanded to walk in the glory of the Lord Jesus and be witnesses of His power and presence. In doing this the Kingdom of God is revealed. When we live out our lives in the promises of God and do those things that He said that we should do then the power and glory of the Kingdom is revealed. It is only through this kind of relationship with God that a living faith can be witnessed. When we begin to imitate Jesus and walk in the authority of the sons of God then the message of salvation and of the Kingdom of God becomes relevant to the world around us. It is relevant because the power to meet their needs and change their lives is witnessed. There are so many things that Jesus commanded us to do that we must begin to participate with. If we are unwilling or even afraid to practice what God has commanded, then we become irrelevant to the witness of the resurrection and the Kingdom. We are supposed to be shining as the lights in the world, as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid. We are those who ask God whatever we need, and He answers and performs a miracle at our request. Many may say that this is not their experience but that is irrelevant because it is still the revealed will of God. All one needs to do to make this their experience is to pursue a deeper relationship with God. The relationship that you have with the Jesus is witnessed by the faith that you function

in. If your relationship is weak then your faith is weak. It is time that we have a strong unwavering relationship with our redeemer!

17- You then beloved knowing beforehand beware that you be not lead away with the error of iniquity falling from your own steadfastness.

18- But grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to Him be glory both now and forever¹³⁷,
Amen.

¹³⁷ All of God's children should be comfortable and feel the love and acceptance of the Father as they grow up in His house (1 John 4:16; Ephesians 1:6; John 1:12; 10:28-29). Yet at the same time we must realize that there is a gross error being propagated that results in God's people having no power to overcome iniquity. God's grace that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lust and at the same time provides us with the ability and the strength to do it (Titus 2:11-12; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:11; 1 John 2:14). While we are growing, we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by our own failures but must remain steadfast in God's love for us. By remaining in the love of God and relying upon the grace of God we will grow spiritually and find ourselves strengthened to stand against everything contrary to the will and the nature of God. We will grow as we desire the sincere milk of the word and as we speak the truth in love (1 Peter 2:2; Ephesians 4:15). As we exercise godliness, we will get strong in godliness. Through the action of resisting the powers of darkness and the sin and iniquity that they propagate we will find ourselves growing in strength and spiritual authority (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9). God who gave the grace will never take it away and He who gives the knowledge of salvation will never withhold it so long as we are willing to embrace His will.

The one thing that we must watch out for is that we do not listen to false teachers. Remembering what Peter said previously, they speak nonsense and with licentious desires of the flesh entice people; they promise freedom but they themselves are the slaves of corruption (2 Peter 2:18-19). We must not compromise with the world and with the sin that rules it. If someone comes along and teaches that sin is an

understandable part of your everyday life reject it (1 John 3:7; Ephesians 5:6). If we sin it is disastrous, and we must think of it as such. We are to repent, knowing the terror of the Lord against sin, and ask God to both cleanse us and strengthen us (2 Corinthians 5:11; Luke 12:5; Hebrews 10:31). Sin is not to be a part of our lives it has been cut off from us and we are cut off from it (1 Peter 2:24; 2 Peter 1:9; 1 John 2:10; Romans 6:2; Matthew 7:23; 2 Timothy 2:19). If we remain steadfast in the truth that is in Christ Jesus, then we will discover that it is God who is perfecting everything that concerns us (Psalms 18:32; 138:8). God will never leave us nor forsake us He will stand faithfully by our side so long as we are willing to walk with Him (Romans 8:35-39; Psalms 94:14; 36:5; 92:2; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9; Philippians 2:13; Amos 3:3).