

# The First Letter from PETER

**T**his is from Peter, a messenger of Jesus Christ. I am writing to you who are living as pilgrims and aliens in this world, and are scattered throuthout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia in Asia Minor.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>2</sup>In the far distant past, God the Father chose you to belong to Himself, because even then He knew<sup>a</sup> you would choose to be made holy by the Holy Spirit as you surrendered in obedience to Him, and accepted the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.<sup>b</sup>

May God's undeserved blessings and His peace be very real in your lives in multiplied ways.

## **An Absolutely Sure Hope**

<sup>3</sup>And may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be most highly praised!<sup>a</sup> It is because of His great desire to be merciful to us that He led us into a new birth—into a hope that is vibrantly alive.

**1:1a** Presently Turkey.

**1:2a** Romans 8:28-30.

**1:2b** This again refers to the two things necessary for our salvation. In order to enter Heaven and gain eternal life, we must now be willing and determined (with God's help) to *obey God* and live to please Him above all others, and *accept His offer of forgiveness* for our sins by recognizing Jesus as God's Son and our Savior, who suffered, shed His blood and died for us, and rose again. See Acts 20:20-21; Romans 8:29; Matthew 22:14, and notes.

**1:3a** It is possible for us to bless God and bring joy to Him by our thanksgiving, praise, and our thoughts of Him. And of course, we always bring joy to Him when we are obedient.

**1:3b** Our hope in Christ is alive because He not only died for our sins but He was also *raised from the dead*. Because He is alive, He can fulfill every promise He made to us, that we too will live. We have every reason to live in joyful expectation of spending eternity with Him.

If Christ had not been raised from the dead, there would be no assurance whatever that we would be raised from the grave. But Christ's resurrection assures the resurrection of the born-again believer to eternal life with God. See Appendix 230, page 491, for extensive note on the absolute need of Christ's resurrection, and the assurance of ours.

And the reason our hope is so alive is because God has indeed raised Jesus Christ from the dead!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>4</sup>And He has reserved an inheritance for us in Heaven that is absolutely indestructible. That is, it will never perish, nor will it ever spoil, or fade away.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Because of your genuine faith, you are constantly being protected by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of this age.

<sup>6</sup>You have good reason to continually rejoice in a great way about this,<sup>a</sup> even though it may have been necessary for you to suffer grief now for a brief time because of various trials.

<sup>7</sup>But these trials have been allowed by God in order to reveal just how genuine your faith really is. And the testing of your faith is of far more value, and much more important, than the testing and purifying of gold, which will soon be of no value to you or anyone else. So even though your

**1:4a** What a description of our *inheritance*! It is *immortal*! In other words, it will not rust away, be eaten by termites, blown away, destroyed by earthquake, fire, or anything else. Nor will it *ever fade away*. Our *inheritance* is more real than the earth on which we live. Instead of being an illusion, as so many have claimed, it is reality in the greatest sense of the word.

When traveling, it is good to know that we have our accommodations reserved for us. How exceedingly wonderful is the thought that our *inheritance* in Heaven is *reserved* for us. Since God is the One who reserved it, the reservation is sure, lasting, and binding.

As long as our faith is genuine and sincere, and not merely a pretense (for we cannot fool God), we are *constantly being protected by God's power*. And our *salvation* will become reality when Christ comes for us *at the end of this age*.

**1:6a** We who are converted to Christ, and know that our hearts are wholly given to Him, can indeed *rejoice in a great way*. We have the assurance that all is well. However, we still run into times of *temptations* and *trials*. God allows these temptations and trials in proportion to our needs—to test the genuineness and strength of our faith, and to strengthen it as we see Him undertake for us in answer to earnest, continued prayer.

faith is now being tested by fire, may the end result be praise, glory, and honor<sup>a</sup> for you when Jesus Christ is revealed in the heavens as He returns to receive His Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup>Although you haven't yet seen Him, you love Him. And even though you don't see Him now, you continue to believe and rejoice in Him with an overflowing and ecstatic joy which just can't be adequately put into words.

<sup>9</sup>Because even now, you are in the process of receiving the end result of your faith—the final salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup>Even the prophets, who prophesied about the undeserved mercy that God would offer you, asked God with intense interest to tell them more about this salvation. And they diligently searched the Scriptures for the meaning of the predictions God had given them about it.

<sup>11</sup>They were trying to find out who the person was, and when the happening would take place, that the Spirit of Christ within them was referring to when He predicted the sufferings of Christ<sup>a</sup> and the glorious happenings that would come later.

<sup>12</sup>But they were told that what they were receiving was not for their time, but for ours. And the things they were told have now taken place, and have been reported to you by those who preached the Great News to you with the help of the Holy Spirit who has been sent from Heaven. In fact, the Great News is so glorious and amazing that even the angels have great desire to learn all about it.

### ***A Call to Holy Living***

<sup>13</sup>So exercise diligent control over your minds, and don't allow yourselves to become intoxicated by the cares or by the captivating attractions of this brief and uncertain life; but center your thoughts and hopes fully on the undeserved wonderful

things that will happen to you, including the great inheritance you will receive when Jesus Christ returns to earth in His glory.

<sup>14</sup>As true children of God now, be obedient to Him, and don't continue to conform yourselves to the worldly desires that formerly shaped your lives, when you were ignorant of God's great plans for you.

<sup>15</sup>But in the same way that the One who called you to Himself is holy, you must now let Him help you to live a holy life<sup>a</sup> as well, in everything you do.

<sup>16</sup>Because God Himself has said,

**I am holy, and you must be holy too.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>17</sup>And always remember that the One you call on as your Father is One who has no favorites. He is fair and just in all His judgments, and He will judge each of us according to our true character, by how we have lived and by what we have done. So live your lives as aliens here in reverent fear.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Because you know that God didn't ransom you by means of perishable things, like silver and gold, from the worthless way of life you inherited from your ancestors.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>19</sup>But you were redeemed by the priceless<sup>a</sup> blood of Christ. Like a lamb chosen to be sacrificed, He was without a blemish or defect of any kind.

<sup>20</sup>It was decisively determined by God even before He made the world that Christ would be our Savior.<sup>a</sup> But He has been revealed to us as our Savior only recently.

<sup>21</sup>And you have come to believe in God because of what He has done for you thru Christ, especially when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him such a great position of glory at His right hand. So your faith and hope are based on what God has already done.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obey-

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**1:7a** The brilliance and joy of that *glory and honor* will vary, depending upon our faithfulness to Christ in our life and service for Him. *Not failure, but low aim, is sin!* For each of us, our aim from now on should be to be the most faithful and most productive Christian who has ever lived! See notes on Matthew 25:14-30.

God is able to take the most unlikely person and make of him or her a most brilliant hero of the faith. Begin right where you are by speaking out for Jesus and helping others in various ways. *The pilot is unable to guide the ship until it is under way!*

**1:11a** See references in Luke 24:26 note.

**1:15a** This is in the passive voice, indicating that *you are receiving* the help from God to live a holy life. You are not on your own, without help. Philip-

pian 2:12-13.

**1:16a** Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7. If we are one day to be like Him (1 John 3:2-3), we must begin to be like Him now.

**1:17a** ... of *displeasing your God and Father, as you ponder the Day when you must give an accounting of your life before Him*. 2 Corinthians 5:9-11; Matthew 25:14-30.

**1:18a** Are you living your life in a more worthwhile way than those who lived before you? How much more?

**1:19a** Costly, precious, beyond price, of inestimable value.

**1:20a** See Revelation 13:8. "It follows from what is said here that the atonement of Christ was not an *after-thought* on the part of God. It entered into His

ing the requirements revealed by the truth which the Holy Spirit made real to you, causing you to love your fellow followers in all sincerity, love one another fervently, from a heart in which there is no dishonesty or hypocrisy.

<sup>23</sup>Because you have been born again. But this time, you were not given birth by means of human seed, which ends only in certain death. You were given birth by means of that which will never die, by the living word of God<sup>a</sup> which will endure forever.

<sup>24</sup>Because

**All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower soon fades away,**

<sup>25</sup>**but whatever the Lord has said will continue unchanged forever.<sup>a</sup>**

And it's that unchanging message that was preached to you.

### ***A Stone That's Alive And a Holy Nation***

**2** So rid yourselves of all desire to harm others, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander, and insulting speech.

<sup>2</sup>Be like newborn babies, earnestly craving the pure milk of the word of God, so that by drinking it in, you may grow spiritually.

<sup>3</sup>You have already experienced how helpful and kind the Lord really is.

<sup>4</sup>So keep coming to the Lord Jesus who is the Living Stone. It's true that He has been rejected by most of mankind, but He has been chosen by God<sup>a</sup> and is most highly valued by Him.

<sup>5</sup>You, too, are living stones, who are continually being built up to form a great Temple.<sup>a</sup> You are also a holy priesthood, appointed to offer up spiritual sacrifices that will be acceptable to God as

they come to Him from you thru Jesus Christ.

<sup>6</sup>For that reason the Scripture also says,

**Look, I have chosen a priceless Cornerstone whom I am placing in Zion. Those who are believing<sup>a</sup> in Him will never be disappointed.<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>7</sup>So this Stone is of great value to you who believe. But to those who refuse to believe and obey God—

**The Stone that the builders threw out as worthless, turned out to be the most important One of all.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>8</sup>Another Scripture says,

**He will be a Stone over which people will stumble, and the Rock that will bring about their downfall.<sup>a</sup>**

They continue to stumble over God's message because they continue to live in disobedience. And God has decreed that those who are determined that they will not obey, will indeed stumble.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>9</sup>But you are a people whom God has chosen. You are now a royal priesthood.<sup>a</sup> You are a holy nation,<sup>b</sup> a people who are very special to God. And He has done all of this for you so that you might praise Him to others, telling them how God called you out of awful darkness into His own marvelous light.

<sup>10</sup>At one time, you had no standing at all with God, but now you are His people! You knew nothing about God's mercy then, but now you have obtained His mercy!

### ***Live For God!***

<sup>11</sup>Dear friends, realize that you are indeed aliens and temporary residents here on planet earth! So I beg you always to refuse to satisfy the evil desires of your body and mind that are continually at war, in mortal combat, against your soul.

<sup>12</sup>Continue to live such honorable lives among the unbelievers, that even when they speak against

plan before He made the world, and was involved in His purposes from eternity.

"It was not a device to repair a *defect* in the system; that is, it was not adopted because the system did not work well, or because God had been disappointed. It was arranged *before* man was created, when none but God could know whether he would stand or fall."—*Barnes' Notes*

**1:21a** ... *which gives you full confidence that God will yet do all He has promised to do.*

**1:23a** We are born again by the Spirit of God using the word of God to convince, convict, and convert us from our self-centeredness and sin to full dedication to God. See John 1:13; 3:1-8; Galatians 4:29; James 1:18.

**1:25a** Isaiah 40:6-8.

**2:4a** ... *to be above all others* ...

**2:5a** Each true Christian is a house in which God lives. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16. Peter tells us here that collectively we are one great house of God.

**2:6a** What does it mean to *believe in Jesus*? See Galatians 3:11; Luke 14:26-33; John 3:36; Acts 16:31, and the notes there.

**2:6b** Isaiah 28:16.

**2:7a** Psalm 118:22.

**2:8a** Isaiah 8:14.

**2:8b** ... *and die lost.*

**2:9a** Revelation 1:6.

**2:9b** A nation scattered thruout the world, called Christendom.

you and claim you are doing evil, still, as they see the good lives you are living,<sup>a</sup> even yet they may end up being included among those who will glorify God when Christ returns.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>13</sup> So for the Lord's sake, obey every law of the government, whether it's a national law or a state or local ordinance.

<sup>14</sup> Always realize that those who are sent to enforce the law are there to punish those who do wrong, and to praise and help those who do what's right.

<sup>15</sup> Because it's God's desire that by doing what's right, you may silence the ignorant charges of foolish people.

<sup>16</sup> Yes, live as people who are free, but don't use your freedom as a cover-up for doing wrong. Use your freedom, as well as every other strength you have, to serve God!

<sup>17</sup> Have a high regard for everyone. Show continual love toward all who are true fellow followers of the Lord. Always have a reverent and wholesome fear of God. And always honor those in governmental authority.

<sup>18</sup> Employees, have a high regard for your employers, and always be submissive to those in charge of your work—not only if they are kind and gentle, but even if they are harsh.

<sup>19</sup> If you patiently endure the pain of undeserved suffering because you are concerned about bringing honor to the Lord in the way you react toward unjust treatment, you can be sure that God is well-pleased.

<sup>20</sup> But don't expect any credit if you do wrong and bear up under the punishment you receive because of it. But if you suffer because of the good you do, and suffer patiently, that definitely pleases God.

<sup>21</sup> After all, this is the kind of life God has called you to live. Christ too suffered unjustly for our benefit. So He has left us an example, intending that you should follow in His steps.

<sup>22</sup> **He never committed a sin. Not even one lie came out of His mouth.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>23</sup> When He was abused with vile and hateful

remarks, He never answered back. When He suffered, He didn't threaten revenge. He left the matter completely with God, who always judges fairly.

<sup>24</sup> He carried our sins in His own body when He died for us on the cross. He did this so that we might die to our sins and live to please God. You were healed by the wounds He received for you.

<sup>25</sup> Because you were just like sheep, always going astray. But now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

### *Wives and Husbands*

**3** Wives, in the same way,<sup>a</sup> you must be submissive to your own husband.<sup>b</sup> Then, even if he is one who won't listen to God's message, he may be won to the Lord without a word being spoken, by means of your conduct,

<sup>2</sup> when he sees the beautiful life you are living, and your fear of displeasing either him or the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> Don't let your main concern be your outward beauty, such as a beautiful hair arrangement, or expensive clothes and jewelry.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup> But let your true beauty be the inner glow from the person you really are in your heart, the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is beauty that doesn't fade. God takes great delight in and highly values such beauty.

<sup>5</sup> That's the way the holy women who trusted in God in former times made themselves beautiful.

<sup>6</sup> They were always submissive to their husbands, as Sarah, for example. She obeyed Abraham, and even called him her master. You are her daughters if you continue to do what's right, and don't allow any circumstance to get you upset or fearful.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>7</sup> And you husbands, listen: Always be considerate of your wife. Treat her with honor, realizing that as a woman she is physically weaker than you, but that you are equal heirs of the marvelous future life God has promised. One good reason you should make sure you do this is so that you won't keep your prayers from being answered.

**2:12a** Matthew 5:16; Hebrews 12:15.

**2:12b** Your testimony for Christ, backed up by your good life, may yet bring them to faith and obedience to Christ. Then they too will glorify God.

**2:22a** Isaiah 53:9.

**3:1a** ... *in the same kind of submission as above* ... 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-11

**3:1b** ... *and be responsive to his needs.*

**3:3a** Outward adornment that is overdone is distasteful. But don't neglect your outward beauty either. Your husband wants to be proud of you in

every way, but give Him good reason to be especially proud of you as a woman who truly loves and obeys God. See 1 Timothy 2:9-10.

**3:6a** Always bring every problem to God in fervent, persevering prayer. There is no situation too hard for God to handle. And leave your problem with Him. Don't be fretful. This can be a powerful testimony to your unbelieving husband.

**3:12a** ... *in order to protect and care for them* ...

**3:12b** Psalm 34:12-16.

**Be Willing to Suffer for Doing Right**

<sup>8</sup>To sum it all up, you should all live in harmony, having true compassion for each other. Love one another as brothers and sisters, and be tender-hearted and courteous.

<sup>9</sup>Don't repay evil with evil or insult with insult. Instead, do something good for those who mistreat you, and say something good to them, because this is what God has called you to do. Only then will you receive the good things God has promised you.

<sup>10</sup>Because

**Whoever wants to really enjoy life and see good times must keep from speaking evil and stop telling lies.**

<sup>11</sup>**He must turn away from what's wrong and do what's good and right. And he must strive for peace, and really pursue it.**

<sup>12</sup>**Because the eyes of the Lord are watching over those who do what's good and right,<sup>a</sup> and His ears are open to listen to their prayers. But the face of the Lord is set with firm determination against those who practice evil.<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>13</sup>Who will harm you if you become eagerly involved in doing what's good?

<sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for doing what's right, you will be blessed by God.

**And don't be afraid of their threats, nor be concerned about pending trouble.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>15</sup>Do make certain, however, that you have truly made God the Lord and Ruler of your life. And always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you what reason you have for the hope that motivates you. But do so with gentleness and respect.

<sup>16</sup>And always keep your conscience clear, so that those who charge you with doing evil, and speak against the good life you are living for Christ, may be ashamed of the way they're treating you.

<sup>17</sup>Because it's better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing wrong.

<sup>18</sup>Because Christ also suffered once because of the sins of others. Here was One who was without sin, suffering in order to bring us to God.<sup>a</sup> His

body was put to death because of our sins, but then He was made alive again by the Divine Spirit.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>19</sup>And in His spirit He also went and preached to the spirits locked up in prison.

<sup>20</sup>These were the spirits of the people who had been disobedient to God long ago when He waited patiently for them to repent during the days that Noah was building the large ship.<sup>a</sup> Only a few people were saved in that ship. Only eight people were brought safely thru the water of that great flood.

<sup>21</sup>The picture of these eight people believing in God and committing their lives, their reputations, and all they had and could ever hope to have, or be, to the ship that God had provided, was a foreshadowing illustration of the kind of water baptism that now saves us—not a baptism that merely removes dirt from the body, but a baptism that truly involves a total surrender of ourselves to God. And baptism receives its saving power from the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Jesus has now gone into Heaven and is seated at God's right hand, where angels and authorities and all other powers have been made subject to Him.

**Be Faithful to God!**

**4** Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in His human body, we must arm ourselves with the same attitude He had. When we willingly accept suffering by refusing to satisfy the evil cravings of our flesh,<sup>a</sup> we have put a stop to our sinning.

<sup>2</sup>We *must* do so in order to no longer live the rest of our very brief lives here on earth for the short-sighted purpose of gaining the satisfactions that we humans naturally crave, but to now do only what God wants us to do.

<sup>3</sup>You have certainly spent enough time in the past living to fulfill the desires that the godless live for—shamelessly committing sexual sins and satisfying every other lustful desire, getting drunk, carousing, attending drinking parties, and the shameful worship of various idols.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Now your old friends think it strange that you

**3:14a** Isaiah 8:12. Leave it all in God's hands, and trust Him to work everything out.

**3:18a** Now we should be willing to suffer for others, in order to bring them to God.

**3:18b** John 10:17-18.

**3:19-20a** See 4:6 note.

**3:21a** ... *by the power of God to a new life.* And the same must be true of us. John 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

**4:1a** There must indeed be a tearing away from

the various temptations and desires to sin, and that involves suffering. Your body of flesh and your mind suffer when you refuse to satisfy their wrong desires.

But this is what must happen if you are to reach God's Heaven. 2 Corinthians 5:17. And to do this, you surely need God's help, which He has promised. John 15:1-5; Romans 8:13,26,37; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philipians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:13-16; Jude 1c. See also Appendix 218, page 482.

are no longer eager to join them in the same old flood of evil, and they repeatedly revile you in contempt and scorn.

<sup>5</sup>But don't forget, they will all have to give an account of themselves before God, who will definitely judge both those who have died and those who are still alive when Christ returns.

<sup>6</sup>That's why the Great News was also preached to the dead,<sup>a</sup> so that even though they were judged like everyone else in regard to their body, they might go on living eternally, even as God does, in regard to their spirit.

<sup>7</sup>The end of all things here is near for all of us. So be seriously concerned, and spend much time with God in prayer.

<sup>8</sup>Above everything else, be fervent in your love for one another, because love makes us blind to many of the faults and imperfections of others.

<sup>9</sup>Open your homes to one another, and do so

cheerfully, without grumbling.

<sup>10</sup>Each of us has received at least one of God's many wonderful gifts.<sup>a</sup> Keep using that gift to serve and minister to others. Be good stewards of the many good things God has given you.

<sup>11</sup>Whoever preaches must preach as God would preach if He were in your place. And in whatever way you serve God and your fellow men, never forget that every ability you have comes from God, so that in everything God may be glorified thru Jesus Christ. Because all glory and power belong to Him alone, forever and ever. Indeed, may it forever be so!

### ***Be Willing to Suffer for Being Genuine***

<sup>12</sup>Also, my dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trial that's testing you, as if something that should never happen to the Lord's followers is happening to you.<sup>a</sup>

**4:3a** An idol is anything you love and treasure more than you love God. It is also anything you put your trust in more than you trust in God.

**4:6a** This appears to refer to 3:19-20. There are many opinions as to what this means; but if you have heard the Great News in this life, and have rejected or neglected it, you can be sure that you will not be given another chance in the next life. Hebrews 9:27. Your opportunity to accept God's forgiveness thru what Christ has done for you, and to then live for Him, is NOW.

**4:10a** 1 Corinthians 12:1 to 14:40.

**4:12a** This, and the following seven verses (13-19), are especially appropriate for us today. They were also appropriate when Peter wrote them, because the Christians were about to enter a time of fearsome persecution. They were hated and hunted. They were fed to lions, and persecuted in many other ways.

Once again Christians can expect fearsome persecution, as the end of the age approaches. Christians will be hated and persecuted as never before. Matthew 24:9-10; Daniel 7:19-22.

Actually, these words in v 12 have been for Christians thruout the ages, because God tests and tries *everyone whom He receives as His child*. He allows certain *fiery trials*. For this reason, we should not think *something strange is happening to us* when we are persecuted and when God allows us to go thru various hard experiences. There is a purpose in each test and trial that He could not justly prevent coming our way. It is all for our present good and future glory.

**4:13a** See Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 3:12 and the notes, also Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2

Thessalonians 1:5.

**4:13b** Peter refers here mainly to persecution of Christians by the ungodly. Jesus stated that anyone who harmed one who believed and trusted in Him was actually persecuting Him. So when we are persecuted because of our testimony and our life for Christ, we *are suffering for Christ*. We should *rejoice* that it is our privilege to take such a firm stand for our Lord that persecution may result from it.

The main reason for rejoicing, of course, is because of the promise of future *glory and joy*. The glory and joy will be in proportion to the blows, both physically and verbally, that we have taken for Christ's sake. In such degree as we have lived, labored, witnessed, and suffered for Christ, we shall be rewarded. Keep your eye on the goal!

In other words, don't feel sorry for yourself when you are persecuted for your faith and for your stand for Christ. And don't hold back because of possible persecution. Begin to rejoice now because of Christ's promise of the great joy that will be yours when He returns. See His promise in Matthew 5:11-12.

**4:14a** Are we actually to be *glad* when we are insulted and persecuted because of the stand we take for Christ? Yes, let us remind you again of the words of our Lord in Matthew 5:11-12, *There is indeed great happiness coming your way when people insult and persecute you and say all kinds of things about you which are not true, because you are truthfully and faithfully obeying Me and talking to others about Me. Always rejoice and be extremely glad when such persecution comes, because your reward in Heaven will be great!*

<sup>13</sup>Instead, you must keep rejoicing when that happens. Because when you suffer for the same reasons that Christ did,<sup>a</sup> you will experience extreme joy when Christ's glory is revealed.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>14</sup>If you are abused verbally because of your testimony and stand as a true follower of Christ, you should be glad!<sup>a</sup> Because when that happens, it means that it's evident that both God's glory and His Spirit are resting upon you. Those people are abusing not only you, but Christ as well; and by your life and testimony you are glorifying Him!<sup>b</sup>

<sup>15</sup>But make sure that none of you ever needs to suffer as a murderer, a thief, or a meddler in other people's affairs, or for being involved in any other evil.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>16</sup>But never be ashamed if you suffer because

you're a follower of the Lord. Instead, always praise God when that happens,<sup>a</sup>

<sup>17</sup>because God has already justly begun to bring to trial those who belong to the family of God.<sup>a</sup> And if He begins first with us, what will become of those who refuse to obey?<sup>b</sup> God's commands<sup>c</sup> included in His Great News?

<sup>18</sup>If even those who are determined to live to please God find it difficult<sup>a</sup> to be saved, what chance will the person have at God's judgment bar who continues to disobey God and lives mainly to please himself?<sup>b</sup>

<sup>19</sup>So when you suffer because of your obedience to God, continue to give yourself completely to Him, and continue to do the good you know you should be doing. And trust your faithful Creator

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*Because that's the way the prophets who lived and witnessed faithfully for God before your time were treated.*

**4:14b** Somehow, Christ is glorified when we suffer for Him. In turn He will glorify us when He returns. Keep in mind that there will be degrees of glory, depending upon our living and laboring for Him in this life. A person who is never persecuted for Christ's sake is one who never takes a definite stand for Him where it really counts. And to fail to take a stand for Him actually means that in a very real sense we deny Him.

Jesus warned, "Whoever disowns Me before others—I will also disown him before My Father in Heaven." Matthew 10:32-33. So, stand up and be counted on the side of Christ no matter what the cost! The reward will be *glory* and life everlasting.

**4:15a** Almost every sin can be included in the warning here. There is no reward from Christ when we suffer because of wrong we have done. And we are warned here to make certain that we leave behind all wrong, so that we will not suffer the consequences of wrongdoing.

**4:16a** Consider Matthew 5:11-12 again in connection with this verse. We should indeed thank God whenever it is our privilege to *suffer* for Christ. Acts 5:41.

**4:17a** When God is getting ready to punish the ungodly, He usually begins by bringing His own people to trial. God cannot do much in effectively attracting the ungodly until He gets His own people fully surrendered to Himself.

So in these days of the end, we can expect that God will allow much persecution upon the Christians (Daniel 7:20-22; Matthew 24:9-13), because He is getting us ready, both for a work to do here, and to be received into His presence and glory.

We may groan and even suffer intensely under the hand of God as He prepares us for Himself, but

this suffering is momentary. Consider the horrendous suffering and punishment that awaits the ungodly! Psalm 9:17.

**4:17b** Some translate this *do not believe*. But the Greek text is definitely *refuse to obey*.

**4:17c** As noted earlier, Finis Dake, in Dake's Annotated Bible, lists over 1,000 commands that God has given for Christians to obey in New Testament times.

**4:18a** Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-28.

**4:18b** Proverbs 11:31. Is it true that it's *difficult* for even true Christians *to be saved*? We often hear preached that the gates of Heaven *will be thrown wide open for us*. Notice, however, in what connection that *wide open* gate is mentioned. It's in 2 Peter 1:11, following instructions and warnings, with the last warning in v 10 reading, *So for that reason, my brothers and sisters, be most diligent to make your calling and election to salvation and eternal life with God a sure thing. Because if you make a practice of doing the things I have just pointed out to you, you will never fall*. Peter is simply saying in v 11, which follows, that if you have diligently followed his instructions and warnings in the previous verses, *then* you will have a wide-open entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord.

So Peter recognized even in his second letter that it is with difficulty that one is saved.

Instead of an easy entrance *without difficulty*, Christ warned, *You must use extreme effort in order to gain entrance thru the narrow gate. Because I tell you, many will try to enter, but will not succeed*. Luke 13:24. The words *You must use extreme effort* are translated from the Greek word *agoneéesthe*. Young states that this word means *to agonize, contend*. Strong says it means *to struggle, compete for a prize, contend with an adversary, to endeavor to accomplish something, fight, labor*

completely with whatever happens as a result.

### ***A Word to Elders and Others***

**5** As a fellow church elder who saw Christ suffer, and who will also share in the glory that will soon be revealed, I have something to say to you who are elders.

<sup>2</sup>Be genuine shepherds of God's flock which is under your care. Act as truly concerned overseers, not because you feel you must, but because you are glad to do so; and not for the low reason of financial gain, but because of your eagerness to serve.

<sup>3</sup>And don't lord it over those entrusted into your care, but give them a worthy example to follow.

<sup>4</sup>Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you

will receive a glorious crown that will never lose its radiant splendor.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>5</sup>And this word to you younger men: Submit yourselves to the leadership of those who are older than you. Yes, all of you should be submissive to one another. Be literally clothed with humility, because

**God works against those who are proud, but He wonderfully helps those who are humble.<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>6</sup>So be willing to take a low place under the mighty hand of God's leading,<sup>a</sup> so that He may honor and elevate you at the proper time.

<sup>7</sup>Throw all your anxious cares upon Him, because He really cares about you.

<sup>8</sup>Don't allow yourselves to be stupefied by the cares, profits, and pleasures of the world. Always

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*ferently, strive.* Thayer points out that it means *to endeavor with strenuous zeal, to strive to obtain something.* Bauer says the word in Luke 13:24 means *to strain every nerve* to enter. All of these authorities agree as to the meaning.

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Christ also said, *You can enter eternal life only thru the narrow gate! The gate that leads to destruction is wide, and the road leading there is broad, and most everyone is traveling that easy road. The reason so many travel the broad road is because of the narrowness of the gate one must enter to get onto the road that leads to life, and because the road that leads to life is also narrow and difficult. So there are few who are looking for it with enough diligence to find it.* Matthew 7:13-14.

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So Peter is not developing some new teaching. Remember that thruout the New Testament the emphasis is upon forgiveness thru the blood shed by Jesus Christ, *plus* the new birth. One is not born again by the blood of Christ. We are justified by the blood of Christ, but we are born again (which means made into a new person), regenerated, by the word of God and by His Spirit. John 1:13; 3:1-8; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18; 1 John 3:8-10.

Remember that there are two distinct steps to salvation—not just one. Those two steps are regeneration and justification. They are not one and the same, but they occur at the same time when one is genuinely converted. Even the devil and his demons believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross to save sinners. They believe the facts. In like manner, many people in our churches believe the facts about Jesus, but are unwilling to surrender their lives fully to Him so that they might be regenerated (born again).

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Matthew Henry says about this verse, "It is all that the best of us can do to secure the salvation of our souls; there are so many sufferings, temptations, and difficulties to be overcome, so many sins to be put to death. The gate is so narrow and the way so difficult, that it takes all that the righteous can do to be saved." That may sound like salvation by works, but it is not. It is salvation by faith in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, *plus* the true and absolute conversion from self will to God's will (being born again).

Don't look forward to eternity with God if you are simply trusting that your sins are forgiven because Christ died on the cross for you, while you are unwilling to be true to Him. To be only half converted means to be a rebel still. Peter asks a very thought-provoking question here, quoted from Proverbs 11:31. If true Christians can barely make it to Heaven, what will happen to *the ungodly and the sinner*? The implication of his question is that those who allow sin in their lives will just *not* make it!

While God does not demand sinless perfection, He does demand perfect intent. Both this world and God are sick and tired of people claiming to be Christians who have little love for God and little desire to please Him. The Spirit of God, Paul, Peter, and all who truly love God invite and urge you to surrender yourself wholly—body, soul, mind, and spirit to God, while there is still time. See 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, and 1 Timothy 6:12 note.

**5:1-4a** These four verses are important prophetically inasmuch as they call attention to the statement in v 4 that those who faithfully minister the word of God *will receive the glorious crown that will never lose its radiant splendor.* Actually, every true Christian is called to be a minister to others. All the unsaved need our witness, and so many fellow Christians need our encouragement and our



be awake and alert, because your enemy, the devil, is constantly prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to swallow up.

<sup>9</sup>You must remain unyielding in resisting his temptations, and remain firm and steadfast concerning every teaching of the faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world are experiencing the same kind of sufferings that you are.

<sup>10</sup>But after you have suffered a little while, may the God who has blessed us in so many ways, and who has called us through Christ Jesus to share His eternal glory, perfect, establish, strengthen, and make you firm and unwavering.

<sup>11</sup>To Him be the glory and the great wisdom and power to rule forever and ever. So be it!

### *Final Greetings*

<sup>12</sup>I have written you this short letter by the hand of Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, teaching you and bearing witness to the fact that the faith in which you have put your trust is indeed the truth from God.

<sup>13</sup>The Lord's followers here in Babylon,<sup>a</sup> who are chosen by the Lord along with you, send their greetings. My son Mark also sends greetings.

<sup>14</sup>Greet one another in Christian love. May God's peace rest upon all of you who are His through Christ Jesus. So be it!

Most sincerely,  
Peter

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warnings. Let us all be faithful to all, as we serve the Lord diligently, *presenting the full truth, without compromise*. 2 Corinthians 4:2b.

**5:5a** Proverbs 3:34.

**5:6a** A hand as gentle as it is mighty. "If His hand is mighty to depress, it is also mighty to exalt."—

Clarke's Commentary.

**5:13a** Some claim that Peter meant he was in Rome. But why would he say he was in Babylon if he was in Rome? Babylon was still an active city when Peter wrote. Likewise, there is no evidence whatever that Peter was ever in Rome.

**T**hrow all your anxious cares upon Him, because He really cares about you.

<sup>8</sup>Don't allow yourselves to be stupefied by the cares, profits, and pleasures of the world. Always be awake and alert, because your enemy, the devil, is constantly prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to swallow up.

<sup>9</sup>You must remain unyielding in resisting his temptations, and remain firm and steadfast concerning every teaching of the faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters thruout the world are experiencing the same kind of sufferings that you are.

—1 Peter 5:7-9