

A Living Hope Bible Church Bible Study Course

Complete 1st Peter Study Notes

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Introduction

This series of study notes is designed to cover the book of 1st Peter on a verse by verse basis

They are the notes from the Bible Study program used at Living Hope Bible Church Bible Study Group on a week by week basis, hence you will find regular references to “last week”, but the notes can be used in whatever way best suits your own program of activity and study

There are, as you will discover, a total of 40 studies, most of which can be covered within about thirty to forty five minutes or so of personal reading and study. However, if you are using the notes to guide a group meeting, then I would advise that you build in a time of worship and prayer, and allow time for group discussion and reading the advised Bible cross references, in which case the time for each study would rise to perhaps 90 minutes.

Mostly the studies allow for discussion, but there are some that would be better used as a didactic teaching session because the content is more detailed and complex, and difficult to split.

All the Bible references and Bible verses quoted are from the ESV translation

Apart from direct verse by verse exposition of the text there are instances where related side issues are investigated in order to assist with understanding and application of related doctrines

I hope that you find this study program to be of benefit to you in your own study of the book of 1st Peter.

Be blessed.

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Chapter 1

Study 1

1 Peter 1:1

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

The background – Peter – original name Simon, Son of Jonah (or John) – fisherman – brother of Andrew – Disciple – leader of the Disciples of Jesus – Simon Peter – Peter was a married man (**Matthew 8:14 and 1st Corinthians 9:5**) who had his home at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee and plied his trade from there until the Lord called him to become a “fisher of men”. This is the man who seemed to put his foot in his mouth every time he opened it – with one or two significant exceptions – notably when he said to Jesus “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God**” at Caesarea Philippi (**Matthew 16:16-19**) and he also said, in answer to Christ’s question whether they too would leave – “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life**” (**John 6:67-69**).

Given the name Peter by Jesus; Peter (Petros) means a small chip or piece of rock from a rock face, unlike the word Petra which means a rock face or cliff or ridge of rock. This is where one of the heresies have arisen in the Roman Catholic religion, they take Peter as “Petra” the ridge of rock hence the rock on which Christ will build His church – but it was not Petra that Jesus called Peter but Petros, a small piece of rock. However, to acknowledge this as correct would mean that the Roman Catholics could not justify a human authority, that would not suit them, it would rob the hierarchy of the power that they wanted to retain over the people. The Rock on which Christ would build His church was reality that Jesus was “**the Christ – the Son of the Living God**” – also known some times as Cephas (**see 1st Corinthians 1:12**) from the Greek word Kephass meaning rock – spoke up with confidence at Pentecost.

The Apostle Peter – In **chapters 1-12 of Acts**, we see much of the early ministry of Peter, including his releasing of the Holy Spirit to the Jews in **Acts 2**, the Samaritans in **Acts 9**, and the Gentiles in **Acts 10** – Peter truly had been given the keys of heavens at the incident at Caesarea Philippi, as Jesus had said, as a result he had been given this one massive privilege, to release the Holy Spirit to each people group so that there could be no thought that the experience of one group was any different than any other group. From then onwards all people receive the Holy Spirit fully at their conversion (**Romans 8:8-9; Eph 1:13-14**).

He spent much of his life and ministry in and around Jerusalem but did travel at times, at least once to Antioch to spend time with Paul and on this occasion he and Paul had a disagreement when Paul took Peter to task for behaving incorrectly to gentile saints (**Galatians 2:10**). He and James and others confirmed Paul as an Apostle to the Gentiles and confirmed his understanding of the Gospel at the Jerusalem council in **Acts 15**. Between Paul and Peter there was no lingering conflict despite the confrontation at Antioch – Peter shows us that he has a great love and respect for Paul as a beloved brother in **2nd Peter 3:15** and Paul refers to Peter (Cephas) as a “fellow worker” in **1st Corinthians 3:9**

Peter finally went to Rome towards the end of his life and ministry and he worked closely with John Mark, whom he refers to as his “son in Christ”, in the compiling of the Gospel of Mark. Peter’s relationship with Mark – John Mark – was a long term relationship dating right back to the early days – possibly even to the time before Christ’s crucifixion. This is the same young man that caused the rift between Paul and Barnabas in **Acts 15:37-39** when Barnabas supported Mark but Paul rejected him for his desertion on the first missionary journey (**Acts 13:13**), however Paul later forgave Mark and refers to him in several of his letters, most notably as a great benefit to him in **2nd Timothy 4:11**

Tradition has it that Peter was forced to witness the execution of his wife by crucifixion and he too was crucified, but at his own request he was crucified upside down as he declared that he was not worthy to die the same death as his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Peter’s crucifixion was prophesied by Jesus Himself in **John 21:18-19**. This book of 1st Peter was written in about 62-64 AD when Peter was most likely in Rome – he refers to being “in Babylon” in **5:13**, but it is likely that this is a euphemism for Rome itself, stressing the level of evil that had set deep within the society of that city.

Verse 1 – “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,” – Peter writes this epistle to “the dispersion” – Christians who had been dispersed as a result of persecution that had come upon the church in the first century, these could be places he had visited, in order to encourage them to remain faithful and hold true to the doctrines of the faith as they face the persecution. He is writing to give specific guidance to them in aspects of their faith, as we shall see. He opens the letter by identifying himself as normal, using the term “Apostle” to describe himself, then identifying the recipients, as usual, but with the description of the recipients as being to “those who are elect exiles of the dispersion” – no doubts in Peter’s mind as to the truth of election, he nails it to the mast straight away. It is amazing that this clear doctrine is ignored by so many in today’s church.

I read an article this morning from the Evangelical Alliance that talked about the failure of men and women causing fewer people to be saved that would be the case if they were witnessing as they should. This very statement denies the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, is in direct conflict with dozens of statements in Scripture, including the very words of Christ, it also denies the doctrine of election and the power of the Holy Spirit, yet there are over 3500 churches in the UK that are members of EA, so they apparently agree with this view.

There are fearful things about this frightening striving for unity today – always at the cost of truth. The EA recently congratulated the new Pope Francis on his election to office, when, if they were genuine, they should have stood out by stating that, in the first weeks following his inauguration, he was teaching lies from the very pit of hell. The work of the Apostles was clear from the start – to direct the church to unite **only** behind truth and to that end they all stand firm on doctrine (see Acts 2:46) – this epistle matches all others in that effort. Amen

Study 2

1 Peter 1:2

(Verse 1 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,”) verse 2...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Last week we introduced the Apostle Peter looking at a bit of his background and some of the history of his life as recorded in the Bible and we looked briefly at the recipients of the letter. In addition we took some time out to consider the matter of doctrine that Peter nailed to the flag pole in the first verse of the epistle – namely that of election – if you recall the in the first verse Peter described the book as being: “To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion” and so we discussed some of the implications of that doctrine in the way we understand church, salvation and the sovereignty of God – While we need to recognise that this does not mean that man has **no** responsibility nevertheless it makes it irrefutable that **God is the author and the completer of our salvation and not man.**

We ran out of time to look further into these opening verses last week, so this week we will take time to look at verse 2 and take the time we need to consider and discuss the elements of the verse.

Verse 2 part 1 – “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ” – The Trinity – again Peter identifies a key doctrine in the first words of this epistle – no hesitation – it is what it is with no vagaries and no possibility of error – three parts one God. God knows all things, the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier of His children and the Lord Jesus Christ is the Justifier through His death on the cross – no procrastination –

no deviation from the simple facts – just – it is what it is, make no mistake! Peter gets to grips with things and from this opening we can look forward to him sharing good, solid, even at times gritty truth, as this wonderful Apostle wrestles with the things he has to say to the church and to the individual Christians in these churches and, of course, this is also to us and our churches today – he is holding us to account from line one!

Vital – We must not get lost in the word “*foreknowledge*” – this is sometimes the passage that is used to quote that God chooses because He knows who will turn to Him – No – the word “*foreknowledge*” is the Greek word “*prognosis*” from which we get the word “*prognosis*” meaning in medical terms – forecasting a future outcome – but it comes from the word “*proginosko*” which actually means “*ordained*” – we must not lose site of the fact that our names were written before one came into being (Psalm 139:16), that God is sovereign over all things and that God predestined those He would save (Ephesians 1:3-6). We could also reference Romans 8 29-310 in this context, notice that the 4 verbs are all past tense not present tense “*predestined*”, “*called*”, “*justified*” and “*glorified*” – this is not about God responding to the choices of man, but rather it is about man responding to the will, purpose and plan of God.

In fact – if we look a bit more closely at the passage in Romans 8:29-30 we will see that it is a beautiful reflection of sections of this verse that we are looking at tonight – predestined - “*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*” – called – “*in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ*” – justified – “*...and for sprinkling with his blood:*” – glorified – “*May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*” – Let’s work through these 4 aspects and discover something of the depth of the meaning that Peter reveals to us by these clear and significant links

Verse 2 part 2 – “*...in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ*” – What is this saying? We are saved by grace through faith and that is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). We need to understand the fact that the faith that we need to be able to believe in the saving work of Christ is the gift of God. That faith comes to us by the work of the Holy Spirit in the initial sanctifying work drawing us to the Lord (see John 6:44). This work carried out by the Holy Spirit, brings us to the place of obedience to Jesus Christ the step that actually brings salvation namely obedience to the call to repent and recognise the saving work of Christ on the cross and to acknowledge Him as the Lord of our lives. The elect of God are drawn through this process – always the same. Chosen before the beginning of time, sanctified by the Holy Spirit to the knowledge of God and of Christ’s work on the cross, and through this they are brought to repentance, surrender to Christ and obedience to Him. Here the word “*obedience*” – “*hoopakoa*” is a word that means compliance and submission to Christ – this is not ever about our words it is about our lives and our actions – real actions!

That , of course is only the first part of the work of the Holy Spirit – at our salvation He then takes up residence in us and from then onwards we see Him at work in us challenging us through conscience and growing knowledge and awareness, to deal with sin in our lives – unless we quash the work of the Spirit within us bringing about God’s discipline on us , we become a people who increasingly hate our sin and find it more and more difficult to live with – we find the battle with our flesh and it’s sinful desires is a battle that is constantly with us but the more we are obedient to Christ the more of those battles we win by the power of the Holy Spirit at work within us – praise be to God!

Verse 2 part 3 – “*...and for sprinkling with his blood:*” – The precious blood. Here then is the means of the completion of that work – it is not of ourselves or our action it is by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus – His precious blood – the only means of salvation – the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ as He who was pure and innocent paid the price for us – the Great Exchange – our unrighteousness upon Him and His righteousness upon us. See Isaiah 1:18-20 – consider. When we remember the blood of Jesus shed for us at the cross as we come to communion, we are recognising that the work of our salvation was His work – as was so well illustrated by the coloured book tract that used to be about; we were black – yet when washed in His red blood, we become white and as a result we will receive golden crowns of glory at our resurrection – again, praise God!

Verse 2 part 4 – “*May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*” – As we go through this epistle, we can realistically claim this gift from Our Lord through the ministry of Peter to us in our studies. His grace – not just given, but abundantly given to us and multiplied towards us! As is always the case – when we face the truths of the Word of God they can

sometimes leave us having to deal with things that are uncomfortable, challenging, even painful – but as we come under the authority of the Word of God and subjugate our own will to His, then we will experience a peace like no other and that is through His grace – Amen

Study 3

1 Peter 1:2 (part 2)

(This is a longer study)

(Verse 1 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,”) verse 2...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

When we spent some time looking at this particular verse we covered some key elements, but I felt that we should re-visit the verse again as it seems to me that there are factors that come out #from this verse that we need to look at a little more deeply and allow more time to discuss these issues, these things, while we did touch on them in part, I don’t believe that we really covered them in enough detail to grasp a true depth and implications of the doctrine that is visible here in the words of the Holy Spirit through the pen of Peter.

Verse 2 part 1 – “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ” – You recall that when we looked at this verse, we recognised that the presentation of the order was perhaps slightly different than we might, at first, think would be correct – 1) foreknowledge of God – 2) the sanctification of the Spirit – 3) for obedience to Jesus. I observed that we might more readily expect sanctification of the Spirit and obedience to Christ to be in the reverse order. After all, sanctification is surely the process of the development of the Christ-like nature and personality in the redeemed person – the process that follows repentance to the Lord.

If you recall I observed that the order was in fact rightly presented this way because the Holy Spirit had a role in the primary calling of the sinner to redemption and so bringing them to the point of obedience to Christ, thus the order given in the verse is correct. **However** – we stopped at that and moved on to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit. The more I have thought about how we dealt with that issue the more unsettled I have become – particularly as my own studies in this area have continued since that evening when we discussed the issue and I have been troubled that we have missed some important aspects of the related doctrine. Therefore, tonight and maybe next week as well, I want to go back and look again at the matter of the order and clarify some issues.

Tonight I want to focus on the text of Scripture in the area of the redemption of the lost. The Bible teaches very clearly that there is a process of salvation that we need to understand. But as this generation has developed this understanding has been eroded and replaced with a popular view that is not an accurate reflection of Scripture.

The popular view suggests that if the Gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to a person in an acceptable way, then on the strength of that persons felt need he or she might make a decision for Christ. Following that decision that person may “invite Christ into their life”, usually accompanied by a thing that has come to be known as the believer’s prayer. This idea is at its very best unscriptural – it is simply not in the Bible anywhere – and at its more typical worst, this idea has no saving value whatsoever. The sadness is that in most situations where this is applied, that the person will be “converted to church” and will live a life that enjoys the satisfaction of thinking that they are saved. It is possible that a few may be among those who the Father calls to faith in Christ, but the real tragedy is that many, many of these people

will be the ones who will hear the voice of Jesus saying “I never knew you!” and in the end be lost to the depths of hell having never really understood the truth. You might find that statement to be a shock, particularly if your background has meant that this is the only thing you have known up to now – a church with this kind of teaching at its core, so I need to explain in much more detail.

God is sovereign. We know that, we accept that – but do we really grasp the implications of that truth?

Mankind is dead in their trespasses and sin. We know that, we accept that – but do we really grasp the implications of that truth?

On Sunday of the week before last we heard the comment from Colin that “dead men can’t vote”, yet we still harbour this idea that mankind chooses God in some way. We have discussed the fact that God’s election and predestination of those who are being saved, also, somehow is tempered with the action that comes from the application of man’s responsibility. It is something that is difficult to reconcile and that sometimes and because of this, what we need to do is just accept that God is sovereign and just put it aside and accepting that both are true even if we cannot sort it out in our own minds. I want to apologise that I have encouraged some to do this by my own words, because it doesn’t answer the question and there is an answer, so we should look at it more closely in order to understand the truth.

Let us go back and see if we can get a better hold of the truth on this matter!

Man is dead in their trespasses and sin

They are unable to choose God through the natural rebellious nature that is the nature of Adam that is in all people (Romans 3:10-12) Notice – “no-one seeks God – no not one!” – it does not say that no-one seeks God until such time as they seek God – neither does it say that some people seek God – it says that no-one seeks God! **Where is man’s choice in that?**

Man is dead in their trespasses and sin – remember, “Dead men can’t vote” – neither can they start to look for a saving God – they are dead!

If free-will was the answer then on the basis of this scripture and many others we are not talking about man choosing their destiny with God – all men will have the same destiny – eternal damnation – they are dead in their trespasses and sins – and no-one seeks God – no not one!

How is it then that from among the dead – none of whom seek God, some of them can come? Not by their will or effort or their felt needs the Bible makes it clear! It is not possible! Therefore there is only one way this can happen, completely by the action and provision of God!

The potter chooses what kind of pot He is going to make before He begins

Before the foundation of the world

God foreknew each one of us – every person – He knew us because He chose to create us – we are His creation – He created us, but before He did, first He chose those whom He would redeem to be His for eternity. **He is God it is His right** – we have no choice in the matter – we are the pots He is the Potter. The potter chooses what kind of pot He is going to make before He begins to throw the clay onto the wheel!

He foreknew; “**prognosis**”; remember – we looked at the word it means “ordained” foreknew – He knew us – that does not mean that He was subject to our choices – the potter is not subject to the choices made by the pot – it means that He knew us just like the master potter knows what the pot that He is about to make will look like and what it will achieve – He knew because He had decided – He had ordained exactly what we would be and that we would be who He made us to be – ordained by God the Father (Ephesians 1:3-6) and all the days of our life were written in His book

before one of them came to pass (**Psalm 139:16**). That does not just refer to the good decisions or our responsible choices – it refers to ALL THE DAYS, good days, bad days, good choices, bad choices, everything.

The Golden chain of redemption – **Romans 8:28-31** states; *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined, he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

All things – everything throughout the life of those who are called and are named before the beginning of time is for the purpose of God for the good of those who are called! God equips us and fulfils His purpose by our experiences – even our bad ones!

Now that chain that I’ve just read out

I’ve said it before – His people are – Called – Justified – Sanctified – Glorified! All past tense – it is a done deal – before it all started it was written in His book – all done!

Before we move on I want to take a moment and just look again at who it is that we are talking about here – we are talking about God – YHWH – The Almighty Creator of the universe – of all things! This God who we are considering created the vast array of the universe, placing every star and every planet in every galaxy throughout the entire universe. He created every atmosphere, every element every molecule. The vastness of God and His creative power is beyond our imagination, but also we can look at the detail and the wonder. I was looking something up the other day about the structure of the human body – I did not realise that the two halves of a woman’s pelvis joined at the front by a tiny strip of very hard cartilage has to be there to protect an infant, keeping the child in the womb until the right time. But that cartilage changes its nature at the point of childbirth – that the brain instructs the body to release a particular hormone during labour that causes this cartilage to become slack and flexible so that the pelvis can separate far enough to allow the head and the shoulders to pass through and so natural childbirth can take place without damaging the child or breaking the pelvis. The mind that constructed this method of childbirth is the same mind – the same God who designed the layout of the stars and placed them as He wanted them to be!

Are we beginning, yet to get any real perception of who this God is? His vastness – His wonder – His power – His majesty – His might – His..... Un-human-ness

This is the God that planned and completed the plan of our redemption before the beginning of time – He does not leave redemption to the chance of mankind’s inclination or felt needs. He fulfils His perfect plan in all things right down to the very last person who He has named among His elect.

So that is the fact – now let’s look at the process

We talk about being “Born Again” – the next verse in 1st Peter 1 talks about being “born again into a living hope”. In **John 3:3** – the interaction between Nicodemus and Jesus we see that; “Jesus answered him, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**” I want you to note the order here. Jesus does not say that Nicodemus must see the Kingdom of God in order that he can be born again – He says that Nicodemus must be born again **before** he will be able to see the kingdom of God. That is important.

What we are looking at here is the biblical difference between Reformed Theology and that which has moved away from biblical teaching in order to attempt to transfer the choice and the power into the hands of man. This attempted transfer of power is an unbiblical presentation of the Gospel and is the basis of probably one of the most significant sins of this latest generation – the sin of pride – the pride that says man has the power to choose to accept God.

The Bible says in John 6:37 – “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out” – It does not say all that choose God!

And in verses 43-45 we see – “Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—“

Yet, despite these texts we find that today’s delivery of the Gospel suggests that mankind comes because they find Jesus and His promises attractive and the church often suggests that the more attractive we can make those promises the more people will come to Him – that is in direct conflict with the Word of God – “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

So, what we need to understand – what we need to discover, is just how the Father draws those who are dead in their sins, unredeemed and totally disinterested in the truth of God and Christ, remember “no one – no not one!” so that they have a heart that changes from the natural state into a heart that seeks to know God and be obedient to the call of repentance to Christ.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 – “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

And that, brothers and sisters, is where the initial sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of the means of salvation. The Holy Spirit causes a person to be born again – to die to self and sin and to be born again into a new person, one not born of flesh, but born of the Spirit, in the words of Ezekiel, no longer with a heart of stone, but now with a heart of flesh, so that they, the ones that God ordained before the beginning of time, can see the need for repentance – that call of God – “the effectual call of God” – the irresistible call of God. We do not choose God – we do not invite Him into our lives – we do not give our lives to Him – He – through the Holy Spirit **rebirths** us to a living hope – we respond to His irresistible call through the faith that He places into us – it is all His work – His choice – His grace.

We need to recognise that the process is often – even usually an almost instant combined event, but sequentially it is not as we are told by the modern view – we do not see need – choose Jesus – choose to repent and so are born again – it is that we are born again by the Holy Spirit, so that we can see and hear the irresistible call of God and so we come to repentance and are redeemed by Him.

The whole lot is about God, it is not about man’s responsibility at all, it is about God’s revelation – an irresistible revelation that through His gift of faith, and His work of grace, completes His plan of redemption, for His Glory.

We need to get hold of the truth, that anything other than this means of redemption would simply be a display of man’s pride. Anything! Even the “work” of a person “choosing through faith” would be a work, an effort, a choice of mankind, so it would be about man’s effort – a means of his pride – an earned achievement – nothing, but nothing to do with the redemption of men and women who God has chosen, is about anything to do with us!

This, then, leaves us with a problem that we need to resolve

God can save any that He chooses – any that He has chosen – He has chosen those whom He will save – He is God – He has the right as we have already said. The question is not about God’s ability but about God’s will – He chooses because that’s His decision – to choose a people for Himself – He hasn’t chosen everyone – that is His choice. It would be blasphemy to suggest that He cannot save those that He wants to save – therefore we have to accept that He only saves those whom He has chosen.

The problem we have is that we want God to be exactly how **we** want to model Him. **We are not called to love the God that we want Him to be – we are called to love the real God** – but the fact is that because of our wilful nature and our desire to have the kind of god that fits in with our will, rather than one that is fulfilling His will, we cannot love Him and we will not love Him – it just is not within our capacity to love the real God **who we have not created** in the likeness that we want – not without the work of the Holy Spirit in the transforming of our minds by re-birth.

It is God Himself who changes us, so that we see Him for real and cannot help but love Him. We see His mercy, grace and love towards us – we love Him – we see His mercy and common grace towards the world in not bringing immediate judgement – we love Him – we see His just judgement upon sin and the sinful world – we love Him still. **We see the real God** and we cannot do anything but love Him! He is not the soft, fluffy, Father Christmas type figure, who satisfies the demands of men and women, and who is so popular in the world and in the church – we put down that image and get the real picture of the true God – and, if we are really His, then we love Him!

It is His influence upon those whom He has chosen to be His children that makes us a people who love Him and want to be His. **This is not about being puppets – it is about seeing truth and finding that truth to be irresistible. The reason for this is because God Himself has carried out a work that involves the transforming of our minds;** the regeneration, a transformation that is achieved by a re-birth and that gives to us a love for Him and a desire for the things of God

Now – this leaves us having to deal with several specific Scriptures that are often used by those who are uncomfortable with these truths, insisting that it is man's work, mankind's free will; Scriptures which could confuse the issue if not looked at correctly and understood in context.

1. The propitiation, not just for their sins but also the sins of the whole world – 1 John 2:2
2. God so loved the world – John 3:16
3. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart. Jeremiah 29:13
4. God being the Saviour of all men, especially those who believe 1 Timothy 4:10
5. Not wishing that any should perish, but all should reach repentance – 2 Peter 3:9
6. Oh how I wish that I could have gathered you under my wings – Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34

These are significant verses that are frequently quoted in opposition to the doctrine given above, but the fact is that not one of them is in conflict with the truth of God's elective choice.

1. In the context of the use of the word "world", as we see in 1 John 2:2; we need to recognise that for multiple generations the children of Israel had believed that this God, YHWH, was the God of the Israel alone. That salvation was for the Jews. They believed this despite the verses in the Old Testament that clearly stated that the Jews were the means of bringing salvation to all the nations of the earth.

Both the Apostles and the Lord Himself broke that self centred understanding by stressing that salvation was not just for the Israelite nation but it was for the whole world. But – and this is important – that did not mean universalism, but meaning that the elect of God were not just Israelites but that they would come from every nation of the world.

I would also make the point in this reference that this is not saying that Jesus took the punishment for the sins of everybody. Another common falsehood; If that were so then salvation would be universal and without any requirement for faith as the sin of unbelief would have also been covered and there would be no sin to pay for by anyone. This cannot be the case because we know that the person who dies in unbelief will be paying for their own sins in eternal damnation, so that would be a case of double punishment – once on Jesus and once on the sinner. No – when Jesus

took the wrath of God, He took it for the sins of the chosen ones of all the nations of the world, that they might be redeemed and not for every single person in the whole world. This is referred to as the doctrine of “limited atonement”.

2. The “God so loved the world” verse (John 3:16) does not talk about how the “whosoever” will believe – it does not discuss free will or man’s choice or, as some have suggested, universalism – it simply says that “whosoever believes” as RC Sproul says by doing “A”, “B” will not happen but instead “C” will happen – it is not a verse that makes any reference to how people believe – John deals with that in chapter 6 – it is only by the call of the Father as we have seen.

3. “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart” Jeremiah 29:13; like the John 3:16 verse, this one says what it says and makes no reference to how people will come to the point of seeking God, but it is Jeremiah, remember, who later clarifies that it is God who changes our heart of stone to make it a heart of flesh (Jeremiah 36:25-27 as previously stated)

4. The passage that says that God is the Saviour of all men, especially those who believe, must be understood correctly – if it meant all people would be eternally saved it would be clearly wrong – it would be universal salvation – the last part is then irrelevant (especially?) – it is referring to God’s grace that is common to all men – we all breathe even after we sin – Adam lived over 900 years after God said to him that if he sinned he would surely die. Common grace saves all for life – this is the expression of God’s compassion for all of mankind – but eternal salvation is for the believer. Again this does not identify the how by suggesting it is in man’s hands, but simply who it is that gets the special salvation – those whom He fore-ordained.

5. With regard to the verse in 2nd Peter 3:9 that is so often quoted suggesting that God’s will is for all men to turn – this is not a correct interpretation – if that were so it would be a desire for universalism not as plea to the will of man. The correct understanding of this verse is found in the text itself. Peter is writing to “those who have obtained faith like ours” – so he is talking to the elect and he is saying, in this verse in 3:9 that God is not slow as we would understand slow but that He is patient so that the chosen ones of every generation will be saved and that not one of them be lost – He will not act too soon – He will act only when the completion of His will is fulfilled.

6. There is the expression of sadness of Jesus Christ in the Gospels (Matthew 23:37 and Luke 13:34) over the reality that not all of Israel would be saved, but that only endorses the truth that is expressed by that sadness – namely that they have rejected Him and will continue to do so – would that this were not the case. The fact is that mankind’s rebellious nature towards God is the cause of the fall in the first place and that inevitable consequence creates the requirement for the containment of evil and Christ Himself declared judgement on the nation because of their rejection (Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:44 and Luke 21:6). If we do not imagine that this would cause sadness in Christ then we fail to see the reality of so much of the nature of Christ and of God.

Remember that in God we see perfection and His nature is made up, among other things, of justice, wrath, anger, patience, forbearance, mercy, grace, faithfulness, love, gentleness, self control and so much more, and if we are to see His nature then we need to see the exercise of all of these characteristics for His true glory to be revealed

So then, we need to stop. We need to go back again and see something – a truth that we have to understand and learn to accept and acknowledge. Namely that God is sovereign over all things. He has chosen that in His dealings with His creation He has two basic ways that He chooses to act – both are His to choose and both are to His glory – both show the beauty of His nature – in one He is absolutely correct, in the other He is absolutely loving – one way is through showing absolute justice in judging the unrighteous by an act of His own will, the other is through showing absolute grace on the unrighteous by an act of His own will. Both are right and in neither case have we got anything that we can say since we are simply His subjects and His creation. Please notice that there is no injustice in either of these choices – God is not acting with injustice – simply with both justice and grace as He desires. None of us qualify for grace – the display of His grace is His to provide as He chooses.

Those angels who fell into sin and rejected God choosing to follow the ways of Satan have no opportunity for redemption – they are part of God’s creation – but their choice has led to their eternal judgement without the chance of salvation. The same thing could be the case for mankind – but God – out of His great love for His creation and for us whom He ordained to be His and because of His mercy and grace, chose to make a people before the beginning of time that He would redeem to be with Him and enjoy Him forever as a gift to His Son.

There is one last question that we need to cover tonight – that is that since those who are to be in the Kingdom are going to be there anyway, because God does not fail in His intent – why do we need to share the Gospel?

The answer is simple:

1. Because that is what God has commanded us to do.
2. He has chosen that men and women will be brought to Him by “the foolishness of preaching” and He has commanded that we faithfully preach the Gospel.
3. By doing so He gives to us the privilege of being able to share in His work of redemption – and what a privilege that is!
4. We do not know who the elect are – the ones chosen of God – they do not stand out – they are just as evil as we were and all are, until they are saved, so we cannot tell who they are – so we are simply called to obedience and to share the gospel with all of mankind.

Can you see then, if we consider the facts that we have learned over the course of this study, we ought to be greatly relieved! We are responsible to share the Gospel, but we are not responsible for the quality or efficiency of doing so and our ability or inability to do so will have no effect on the eternal situation for any one – God is sovereign over the destiny of every person and His perfect will shall be fulfilled to His glory. There is nothing that we can do which will result in a person not getting to heaven, nor is there any failure on our part that will cause that to happen. Conversely we can take no pride in the salvation of any soul – when God chooses to let us partner with Him in the salvation of a soul the work is entirely His and nothing to do with us. We get the delight of seeing and sharing the work of God but without the fear of responsibility.

Finally then, to close, we have wonderful reason to praise God and to rejoice at our salvation – we cannot know why God chose to make us to be His, but He did and for that we can and will be literally eternally grateful – we have no place for pride in any part of that since it is entirely the work of God and by His choice and through His completion in causing us to be “born again into a living hope”.

Study 4

1 Peter 1:3

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

We are already discovering that what Peter has to say to us is often a great deal more than we might at first think. So far we have seen some of the effects of the persecution, an introduction to the doctrine of election, a reminder of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the process of the chain of redemption, and all that in just 2 verses – I seem to recall saying to you that this was going to be a really good book to study and even after just 2 studies Peter has already proved that the way that the Holy Spirit had Him write this letter is a way that will test us and will clarify issues to us. The passage that we are now moving into – (verses 3-5) – is the very passage that is the basis of the naming of our church, Living Hope Bible Church, so let's look at what we have.

Verse 3 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” – As an introduction to the Epistle we have this first phrase – as we have already seen – Peter is not slow in nailing things right where they need to be straight in front of the noses of his readers – here again we have **a declaration of God being The Author of our redemption** “he has caused us to be born again” but how? Look at what he says – **God has done it – the Father of Jesus – “According to His great mercy”** Do you get the feeling that Peter is going to re-establish many – of the characteristics of God as he takes us through the letter? Here he presents God's merciful characteristic!

Remember – we were “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3) and God hates and despises anything that is not holy and righteous – we have already seen that in so many passages and we know it as surely as we know God at all – read through Psalm 5 – we have become so used to hearing the saying that “God hates the sin and loves the sinner”, **but that is not a biblical saying at all** – it does not appear in the Bible anywhere – it has been coined by evangelical churches in this generation as part of their “sales gimmick” to make the church attractive to the world, but we are not called to make churches attractive to the world – we are called to keep the church pure. **The fact is that God hates evil**, but also as this Psalm points out; “The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.” God's judgement is the only thing that the workers of evil can expect and that includes every person ever born to man – yes all of us – instant judgement on the workers of evil would be a very natural reaction – we need to get away from the satanic illusion that man is the victim – some say of evil, some say of Satan, and some even say of an unfair partisan God – men are not victims of anything! They are by nature those who refuse to acknowledge their creator as worthy of worship, choosing to make any excuse they can to make themselves rulers of their own lives and the only ones they worship – punishment of this very correct for the one perfect and Holy God – why wouldn't it be? But that is not His reaction – He stays His hand – He holds off on His judgement – why? Because of His patience and His mercy! These traits of God are spoken about in almost every book of the Bible, and so they should be – we need to recognise that without His amazing mercy none of us would be on earth today and not one of us would ever taste the wonders of His love or experience His glory.

What has that mercy provided? It's given mankind the chance to experience God's grace, externally in creation (Romans 1:19-20), and internally in conscience (Romans 2:14-15), so that they might seek Him. But for those He has called, through the gift of faith “He has caused us to be born again”. When we were born we were infused with the nature of evil – when we were born we were children of the family of Adam (see 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; and Romans 5:12-17) – at the fall, Adam brought sin into the nature of man, and we, as his children, carry that sin nature, rebelling against the sovereignty of God. Yet God did not act to pass immediate judgement on all, but having chosen before time a family of people to be restored to Him, He shows mercy not just to them but to all, and allows even those who

continue to reject Him in their evil, to share something of His grace throughout their life, (the sun shines on all) having sufficient time to perhaps reduce the depth of their punishment by making some better choices in their life (**Revelation 20:13**). Of course, good deeds cannot save anyone, the rejection of God brings the lake of fire, but the level of punishment within that varies. But to those whom He has chosen to be His, He caused us to be “**born again**” no longer in the family of Adam following the will of Satan, but now in the family of God – rebirth – new family – dead to the old family alive to the new one – adopted as His children with a new nature – to be with Him for eternity.

So what is the result of that rebirth? – We now have a “**living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**” a living hope – not a death wish! – it is sad that many people think that when a true Christian longs for glory, yearning to be with the Father, false people in false and liberal churches, join with people of the world, wanting to call the counsellors and psychiatrists – they have missed the point – it’s not a death wish Christians’ have, it’s a life wish – the people of the world are the ones with a death wish! An eternal death wish! We who have been born again have no fear of death only a “**living hope**”. Let me just say something about this word “**hope**” – *we sometimes think that a hope is a vague wish that something might happen or come true* – that is **NOT** the kind of hope that we have here – this hope is the anticipation of **a future event that is certain** – a desire, a longing and in the case of the living hope, the hope we have, has already started to come to fruition for those who are the children of God through Christ, because we have already passed from death to life – we are already in our eternal life right now, but not yet entered fully into the inheritance – **see Ephesians 1:13-14** – the Holy Spirit is the deposit, the guarantee – given to us in advance so we have God in us while we work as ambassadors for Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:20**), as the down payment until we come into the full inheritance in due course. We will do that only as we fall asleep in Christ, or at the Rapture of the church, if it is in our lifetime.

And how do we have this hope? “**..through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**” – only one way. Not by our own efforts, traditions, practices, family links, or goodness – no – only because of the “Great Exchange” that we looked at a little last week through Christ’s death and resurrection – His death was the execution of God’s wrath – but not on us – on Himself in our place – and Jesus’ resurrection was the means of defeating Satan once and for all (**see Genesis 3:15**) – yes Jesus’ heel was bruised, but Satan’s head was crushed and we were set free through Christ into this living hope!

We will learn some more about the inheritance at our next study

Study 5

1 Peter 1:4-5

(Born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,) **4** to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **5** who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Last time we looked together at verse 3 and considered the implications of being born again – from what – by whom by what means – a big subject and one that we could probably do some more work on but what we have done is, I believe, enough for now so today let’s move on in this incredible sentence to the next part of the focus, to see what are we born into? We have seen that we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, but the sentence goes on into verses 4 and 5 and that is where we are going to go as well.

Verse 4 – “**to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,**” – We saw last week as we looked at **Ephesians 1:13-14** that we are indwelt at the point of our salvation, by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee –

a deposit – guaranteeing our future inheritance and here we see it confirmed again by the Word of God – the promise of God – that inheritance – but here we see the Holy Spirit, through the pen of Peter giving us a glimpse at some of the facts relating to that inheritance. “Imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” – sounds good for starters “imperishable” – will not cease or die; “undefiled” – not a single flaw in any part of it; “unfading” – its glory will never diminish. Unlike any earthly inheritance which will perish will be defiled and will fade, the inheritance that we will receive at our resurrection will not reflect these faults but will be perfect in every way and will remain perfect. We have a hard time imagining things that will be perfect for eternity because it is outside of our capacity to grasp perpetual perfection simply because it is outside of our experience – everything ends in our experience and we have to face that end, but not so when we come into our glorious inheritance. That will never end.

Remember that Peter was writing this epistle to groups of beleaguered, persecuted Christians who were facing all kinds of dangers in a situation that was risk, risk, risk. This promise of God through Peter’s words was exactly the encouragement that they would have needed at this stage in their life. Much of what they had experienced – the history of their lives – settled and normal had been turned upside down since the persecution hit the Christians of the first century. Before they had come into the knowledge of Christ, yes they had been dealing with Roman dominance, but so long as they towed the line there would have been no real fear or danger in that, but now that they had discovered the truth of Christ and had declared their allegiance to Him, every day was a day of some risk and for every one of them, their circumstances had changed to become much more precarious – remember how Peter started the letter? “To the elect exiles of the dispersion...” These people had been displaced from their normal homes and had dispersed across a wide area of Asia Minor miles away from home – for some maybe hundreds maybe more miles from their place of origin. What an encouragement these words must have been to them.

What can we take from this? We are still in a society, for the moment, which accepts us and our faith so long as we do not stand too firm on the facts of Scripture! But that time is passing and in reality it is beginning to heat up – we have talked before about the realities of the potential for persecution to come upon the true church of Jesus Christ in this generation – we are already in direct opposition to the state and to society in a number of quite significant areas – abortion and homosexual “marriage” are now accepted as legal within state legislature but they are in direct conflict with biblical teaching – the time is coming when Christians are going to start facing off against the law of the land and as that time approaches we are going to need to hold on to these encouragements too – we are going to need to have a clearer vision of glory and a clearer understanding of the hope that is before us, as it says in this verse; “kept in heaven for you,” What is heaven like? What is our hope? – Discuss

Verse 5 – “who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” – These things that we have been discussing – they are the things that we have to look forward to in Glory – our inheritance. A safe inheritance “Imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” and these things are being kept in heaven for you and me and also notice that this verse is saying – guarded by God’s own power – what is guarded by God’s power? It is not the things that are being guarded – this verse begins with the word “who”! Who are being guarded – this is the “you” that is mentioned in verse 4 “...kept in heaven for you,” – it is you who are being guarded by God! WOW _ REJOICE BE THRILLED – we who are His are being guarded by Him – do you see that? Just let’s make that quite clear – God is guarding not only the inheritance but also the believer so that neither the inheritance or the believer will become defiled and lost. Is that not an incredible reason to rejoice at the promises of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! And what are we guarded for? Here we see that Peter is pointing us towards the fact of the completion of our salvation – we are saved on earth by grace through faith, but the completion of that salvation is not made manifest while we are still away from home as His ambassadors. We will in fact only come into the fullness of our salvation – experiencing the full benefits – when we come to be with Him in glory. Then and only then will the fullness of our salvation be “ready to be revealed” – when will that happen – it will happen “at the last time” when all things have come to an end – this earth, this life that we know – replaced through the work of the Almighty – there will be a new heaven and a new earth and we will have resurrection bodies that are imperishable (as we have previously discussed – see 1st Corinthians 15:54-57)

Study 6

1 Peter 1:6-7

6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We have just gone really deep on a matter of doctrine that's been vitally important – an area so often treated wrongly leading to many people thinking that they are saved when they've only been converted to church, not come to eternal salvation. That has challenged one or two, but that is good as we will see this week as we go back on track looking at the section starting in [verse 6](#).

Verse 6 – “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,” – We looked a few weeks ago at the reality of the inheritance that awaits those who are “in Christ” having been “born again into a living hope”, therefore, the Apostle identifies in this the reason for the readers to rejoice. But he then goes on to recognise that they are – albeit for a short time – suffering trials (even if the trial goes on for the rest of our natural life, it will be dwarfed compared to the eternal life that is ahead). Remember that from [verse 1](#) we saw that Peter is writing to people who have been “dispersed” because of persecution and so these folk are experiencing “various trials” by which they “have been grieved”.

Verse 7 – “so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” – here we see a reflection of the words of James from his Epistle – see [James 1:1-4](#) – James, too, is writing “to the dispersion” and he too recognises the trials that these folk are suffering, so it clearly is significant, but notice what he says in this passage – that we should look on the trials themselves as something that we should rejoice in because of what is being achieved in us through these trials – the steadfastness that comes through the testing of our faith, and that is exactly what Peter is repeating in this passage. ***We live in a generation that is becoming increasingly hostile to the things of God – are we prepared – have we considered the possibility that our experience may increasingly be one of having to face the trials that come through the testing of our faith?***

In this context, Peter talks about our faith and the faith of those at that time being tested in the way that makes him think of the testing of gold in the heat of the furnace fire. That is the means of the purification of the gold and in the same way our faith is tested to establish its purity. As Gold is heated in the fire beyond the point of becoming molten, the impurities separate from the precious metal, leaving the purest of gold. The analogy, however, enables Peter to make the observation that gold “perishes” under extreme conditions, whereas the same cannot be said of the true Christian under trial – the very presence of the Holy Spirit strengthens us in the trial as we are refined by it, being sanctified; and in addition we need to remember the facts that we have recently been drawn to regarding the sovereignty of God, the Lord himself makes a promise to us that He will bring us to be raised up on the last day and lose none of us who are His ([John 6 37 – 44](#)).

That faith – tested through these temporary trials – grows purer as we see the faithfulness of God through our lives. That testing and trial could be external or internal pressures, or even come from the exposure to the truth as we move from a simplistic understanding to deeper doctrines that challenge the reality our faith to show that faith is not real and to bring us to a place where we face reality and choose correctly or move away. Either way fulfils God's plan! When we see God at work, we experience golden nuggets” – the Lord's faithfulness – His hand at work on us or our circumstances; that faithfulness becomes particularly obviously when we are obedient to His calling upon us day by day. Remember, as I have said before – store up those golden nuggets so that in the times of trial and testing you can look again and capture the confidence of the knowledge of the faithfulness of God.

Can I encourage each of you in your time of study, to be diligent and consistent – whatever time you have laid aside for study, give it all that you have got – don't be tempted to skim over things – read thoroughly – read deeply read with a determination to understand – use facilities that are available to you – commentaries, teaching from good teachers, asking those who you trust to help you to understand things that you are unsure of that have cropped up. The more you do this, the more you will get answers to prayer, a deeper understanding and a greater satisfaction from your studies and the result will be a greater excitement as you see God at work in your life, growing you and progressing you to a deeper knowledge of Him. Skimping in this robs you more than anyone else and you miss the blessings that are there for you for the taking because of God's good grace towards us!

The result of the refining of our faith through trials – **as we see in James** – is that there is a crown laid up for us (**James 1:12**) – this is one of the 5 crowns that we have previously considered while we were in **1st Corinthians** – remember – these crowns are the ones that Christ will present to us who have endured and with them we will honour and glorify the Lord for eternity, hence, here in this text we see that reflected as Peter says that our faith, tried and perfected **“may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”** That is when we will see the result of our perseverance – at the revelation of Jesus Christ – at the resurrection. When we were children it seemed like life would continue forever but as we get older we come to realise that life is actually very short, but praise God the hope that we have is eternal and so trial at any level, that only lasts for this life, or better still only for part of this life, is transient, to be followed by that **“living hope”** that we were considering previously

Study 7

1 Peter 1:8-12

8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, **9** obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, **11** inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

12 It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Back on track after a few weeks dipping in and out of the subject of election; I am not going to suggest that we will not revisit this subject with Peter, since it is a recurring theme that is bound to enter the focus again at some future date, but for now we are pressing on with something slightly different.

Verse 8-9 – **“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”** – These recipients of the letter that are spread throughout these cities are **1st** century Christians that have not seen Jesus. Most have become believers after His death, resurrection and ascension, so, like us, they have come to know Christ having been drawn to Him by the Holy Spirit, to the salvation of their souls, without personally seeing Him – Peter, of course, walked with Jesus and so He is acknowledging that these Christians love Christ with a *genuine love that comes purely from the exercise of the gift of faith*. Having believed in Christ to the redemption of their souls through re-birth by the work of the Holy Spirit and repentance through faith in Christ, *they are now experiencing the inexpressible joy of that salvation, despite the condition that they find themselves in through the dispersion*. Recognising

the situation of oppression that exists under the ruler-ship of Rome and acknowledging that their experience due to their faith is likely to be one of the probable increase of persecution, either now or in the near future, Peter is reminding them that the knowledge of the Lord Jesus is an assurance that should continue to give them joy and hope – *the joy of the completion of their salvation*, the hope of glory. Displaced, dispersed, insecure and unsafe, yet together, secure and safe in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Verse 10 – “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, 11 inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.” – Following the death of Jesus, but before the disciples had really got hold of the truth of the resurrection, the two saddened disciples who were travelling on the Emmaus Road in [Luke 24:13-35](#) were accompanied by Jesus, anonymously, as He revealed, from the Old Testament, just how the Christ must suffer in order to come in to His glory. The revelation that Jesus presented to these men was the evidence of Salvation through Christ’s suffering, bringing deliverance – redemption – to the Elect of God. Peter is reminding them that this evidence is there for all to see written in the prophets within the Old Testament – that these prophets – having searched diligently – (this searching diligently is the word *exereunaō ex-er-yoo-nah'-o* – this word has the same basis as the word “excavation”) – these prophets have “excavated”, had found this to be the truth. Having delivered the Word of God they then studied that given Word to discover for themselves the truths that they did not know fully.

There is in this also a hint of the experience that these first century Christians are beginning to suffer in the same way, through the Gospel, as the Lord Himself suffered – through the persecution that is coming upon them. Peter has just said in the previous verses, that they are grieved by various kinds of trials. There is perhaps a reminder in this that Peter himself at Caesarea Philippi, had stood against Christ when Jesus told the disciples about the forthcoming suffering that He would experience and he had been severely reprimanded by the Lord ([See Matthew 16:21-23](#)), Peter is now reminding the people that he is writing to that ***suffering before glory is the lot to be expected*** by all those who would truly follow the Lord, as Jesus told them in the next verses in that passage in [Matthew – verses 24-28](#)

Verse 12 – “It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.” – The point here is that the prophets, when they were searching diligently into the things of God – they were enabled by God to bring His words to the people – but they were not doing this for their own, personal benefit. They were doing their work in obedience to God and for the benefit of the people. When it comes to the matter of searching diligently to understand and deliver the truth of the salvation that is to be won by the Messiah for those chosen by God, then this is clearly not for the benefit of those prophets, since they were already men of faith from that previous generation, but it was a work that they were doing for the benefit of others including those in the future – “***they were serving not themselves but you***” – the good news that had been declared was for the ones to whom Peter is writing, ***among others – ourselves included***. This Good News is sent to them and to us, from heaven – by the given Word and by the preaching of the Word through faithful servants of the Lord, and this is God using men in partnership in order to bring the fulfilment of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing “obedience to Jesus” by bringing us to repentance and to our regeneration in Christ Jesus.

What is this last phrase? – “***things into which angels long to look.***” – This work of redemption is a work that is beyond the knowledge and experience of the angelic hosts – those who have not fallen do not need repentance and those who have fallen are not called to repentance as they are condemned to judgement already by their fall, so this evidence of the grace of God in salvation is something upon which the angelic hosts look with wonder and amazement and great joy.

Study 8

1 Peter 1:13-16

13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

We start this week's passage with the word "therefore" – what do we have to consider when we see the word "therefore"? – We need to consider what is the "therefore" there for? – It's a reminder to look back at the previous text

Over the last weeks we have been looking at the hope that we have as a result of being born again. "Born again to a living hope" as a result of the work of Christ, and through the work of the Holy Spirit, thereby fulfilling the purpose of Almighty God, who in His Sovereign will, chose His children, ordaining them to be His before the beginning of creation. In consideration of this reality therefore we see the next words of Peter commencing with "therefore"...

Verse 13 – "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" – This is the beginning of Peter's instructions to the children of God to whom he is writing, regarding how they should respond to the truths he has revealed and confirmed in the previous verses. Starting with the **minds** – "**preparing**" them for action – Do we (considering the same truths, and how they relate to us) – do we really go about **preparing our minds** for action as a result of the revelation of hope that we have received? Can we see what Peter is saying here – **the knowledge of our calling and our hope should have an effect on the demands that we place upon ourselves** – he goes on to explain – "**being sober-minded**" – that is not taking about "not getting drunk", but about taking our choices seriously – then he goes on to say that we should focus on the hope of the final situation at Christ's coming. There is no talk of making the best of the days here it is all about keeping our minds fixed on the hope of glory, "**the grace that will be brought to you...**". He goes on to talk about the effect of that knowledge, but we must recognise that the focus – the driving force – **is having our minds soberly set on the future hope and not on the present situation**. Isn't this a reflection of the verses that we've considered before in **James 4:4 and 1st John 2:15**, where we see the writers saying that if we are focussed on the things of the world it brings into question the reality of our love for Christ and God.

Verse 14 – "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance," – Here is the crunch verse that makes a train wreck of the modern attitude that those who call themselves Christians should "just let go and let God" – there is absolutely none of that here – Peter is clearly making us responsible for the work of our sanctification – with the power of the Holy Spirit equipping us – for sure – but it is **us** that drives the work of sanctification, it is up to us to turn away from our former ways and to be "obedient children" (see **Eph 4:17-24**), it's not up to the Holy Spirit to deal with things in us as and when He chooses, which is what is so often and so incorrectly taught. For sure the Holy Spirit will convict us of sin through the activation of our consciences from time to time, but the problem is that if we do not do the work of turning away from "**former passions**" then all we do is to silence our consciences and so give ourselves excuse to continue in our sin.

Verse 15 – "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct," – Here Peter is giving us an insight into the specifics of the call that is upon us and why. We have become children of the living God – He is holy – thus we are called to be like Him. This is not a vague "be good" calling with no real bar for us to reach up to – this call is for us to be **HOLY** in all our conduct – every area of our life, no exceptions, nothing under the radar – every area is in view and it is every area of our lives that we have a responsibility to deal with under God. This is a very tall order – it is one that is depressively tall – impossible in our own strength – but we do not have to do this in our own strength **for, praise God,**

He has sent His Holy Spirit to enable us. The big challenge to us all is to want to act to please the Lord. Do we? – Are we there yet?

Verse 16 – “since it is written, **“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”**” – The “coup-de-gras” – here is the “biggy” of the passage – even of the whole of the epistles, **“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”** – The instruction to be “Holy” – how can we be holy? – We are sinners – we are failures – we are still “in the flesh” surely we cannot be holy? We can be blameless – yes – through Christ – but we can’t be holy can we? Here we can see that, though in many ways ambition is wrong – it is envy legalised in the world – nevertheless there is something that we should be ambitious about – that is, **our personal holiness** – this is something that we should want so much, that we drive for it, and in that driving we invoke the power of the Holy Spirit in us to enable us to deal with things day by day and even moment by moment – never accepting second best but always driving forward; in a sense, always dissatisfied with our progress, striving for more. Paul puts it like this in **1Corinthians 9:25-27**; **“Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. 27 They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”** – Peter says **“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”** – Are we striving forward?

Study 9

1 Peter 1:17-19

17 And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, **18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Peter has just called his readers to be holy as Our God and Father in Heaven is holy, having defined the living hope that we have before us, that we are heirs to an imperishable inheritance – remember – verse 4 and 5 – one that is “undefiled and unfading”. So here he goes on – not with the demand but with the reason.

Verse 17 – “**And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,**” – There are a couple of key points that come from this opening verse of these 3 – the first is that Peter is talking to those who “call on Him as Father” – the significance of that is pretty clear – Peter – when he goes on with the next part – which we will look at in a moment – is not talking to the unredeemed but to the redeemed. The reason that it is important to note this is because the warning that Peter goes on to give, is not one that applies to the lost and so can be set aside by the redeemed, on the contrary – it is for the redeemed to note and apply to their lifestyle and actions. God is a just judge and as we will be considering further in our End-time studies all of mankind will come before some kind of seat of judgement – but for the redeemed it is not something that will be fearful as it says in **1 John 2:28**, it is something that will be a great cause for praise as the deeds of the flesh are finally disposed of – burned up – as we saw when we looked at **1st Corinthians 3:10** onwards. But we need to be fearful in the respect of our behaviour because the Father deals with His children here on earth through Godly discipline (**Hebrews 12:5-11**; **1st Corinthians 11:30-32**)

The second matter that is raised in this verse, takes us to a point that is really not popular in the current teaching of the Gospel, but it is one that we should deal with and acknowledge – the subject of the fear of God. We are quick to call God our Father, as we have noted – and if we are His, then we should not hesitate to do so, for He is our Father – our Heavenly Father – immeasurably better than any earthly experience of “father”. I learned during the 10 years that I spent as involved in Christian Counselling, that I had to be very careful using the term “father” while I was talking to

people who were coming to me for support, when I referred to God either discussion or prayer, because in so many situations this triggered a wrong reaction in their mind as a result of harmful abuse. Often the first job I had to address the concept of father and correct the image to reflect our wonderful Father Creator rather than the fallen father of their experience. There is so much damage in the world!

Nevertheless we need to recognise that **our Father in Heaven is a just judge** “who judges impartiality according to each one’s deeds” – what does this mean for us how are being saved through the Blood of Christ? Well – I’ve commented on that a little already, but for now let’s just stick to the point of how we should conduct ourselves. Peter makes it clear – “conduct yourselves with fear...” None of us know the end of the story yet – right now we are walking with the Lord – and we know that the Lord promises that He will lose no one from among the ones that have been given to Him by the Father (**John 6:37; and 44**), but we live in an age when so many think they are safe and yet they have not been called to the Lord Jesus by the Father through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit – so many have come to an understanding of their hope because they have been attracted by the social gospel that is no gospel and the truth is that they **have never come to repentance in Christ**. We need – as Matthew says in **Matthew 10:28** – “**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**” God sees through the words to the reality of the heart and the reality of the person – He knows who are His and who are just deceived and He judges justly and impartially – **He is not swayed by the irrelevances of the tongue!** Peter tells his readers to be wise and fear God for the time of their exile. We are exiled from the place of our rightful home, if indeed the Lord of Heaven is our Father, and while we are here and not there we are quite able to be fooled into thinking we are safe with God and yet still be deceived. It is right therefore to fear God in the sense of recognising that He is all powerful and **we should fearfully test if we are deceived or true.**

We need to understand that everyone who says they are a Christian will stand firm as a rock on their own personal assurance when challenged, the natural inclination is to protest against a challenge – but yet we know from **Matthew 7:21** that on that judgement day **Christ will say to MANY that He never knew them** – that is why Peter – along with the other Apostles urges us to make certain of our standing before God by applying specific tests such as we see in **2 Peter 1:3-10** and John does the same through 1st John. **To urge a person to check their salvation is not to show disdain, it is to show genuine love** – how dreadful it will be for those whom Christ rejects of that Day!

Nevertheless we have no reason to fear God if we are truly His – as we have already seen from **1 John 2:28**, we have no reason to shrink from the Lord, it says in **1 John 4:18** “**perfect love drives out fear**” but rather **we should run to Him** as the awesome protector, yes the Father is a fearful God but – **I confess that I would rather be protected by someone who loves me and is to be feared than someone who loves me but has no power to protect me and is feared by no-one**

So – The Father is a just and impartial judge, but does that mean that we will have to face that judgement – look at the next verse. Amen

Study 10

1 Peter 1:18-19

18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Last week we concentrated on verse 18 and so we did not complete the full study that I had planned, so this week I will just recap some of last week's discussion for those who weren't here and then we'll move on to the rest of this passage up to verse 19

We looked at the reality that God is an impartial judge who will judge everyone according to his deeds, and we registered that this was a message that was directed at the saints – “those who call on Him as Father” – this was not a warning that was for the unredeemed but one that was directed to the redeemed. However we also noted from **1 John 2:28**, that we have no reason to shrink from the Lord, it says in **1 John 4:18** “perfect love drives out fear” but rather **we should run to Him** as the awesome protector, yes the Father is a fearful God but – **I confess that I would rather be protected by someone who loves me and is to be feared that someone who loves me but has no power to protect me and is feared by no-one.** During the End-time studies at the week-end we looked at the way judgement for the believer works – how the Lord draws us before His seat of judgement – the Bema Seat – Bema means judgement – but perhaps, as we saw, not quite judgement as we may think of the judge passing sentence, but rather the reference to the judge at the Isthmian Games – one who assesses and discerns to establish the true winner in a contest and ensures that the rules of the games have been adhered to – an adjudicator. It is in this context that we are “judged according to each one's deeds” as it says in verse 17. We noted also that the way that God deals with His children who are disobedient is here – in this life – through godly discipline (**Hebrews 12:5-11; 1st Corinthians 11:30-32**).

We also looked at the reason why it is a loving thing to do to challenge people who name the name of Jesus to test the reality of their faith – recognising that any who claim to be Christian will be likely to stand firm on that claim but there will be many who – on that day – will be judged to be deluded and to have done “many miracles” in the name of Christ but actually not be His. Satan traps the unwary into a deluded state, so for us to challenge as Scripture challenges (1 John; 2 Peter and many other places) is to be a worthy and diligent friend.

Ok – so now let's move on to the rest of the passage – verses 18 and 19.

Verse 18 – “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,” – When God looks at the people who are His own – called by Him to be redeemed by the work of Christ on the cross and placed in His care for the day of judgement – under His wing so to speak – protected from the judgement of the Great White Throne, He is looking at people who are redeemed – made to be blameless through Christ's incredible work – **see Ephesians 1:4**. So if our standing before Him is true and genuine then we are free from that judgement that will come upon the unredeemed – it is therefore all the more vital for us to be diligent in checking our salvation.

On the matter of fear; It is true that we should fear God – we should be awe-struck by Him – so much so that we should never treat Him with casual disdain, nor should we ever take our salvation for granted – there is a real reason to be in dread of the God who can dispatch us in an instant (**Hebrews 10:31** “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”) – But yet there is an even greater reason to **praise Him** for His mercy towards us who are truly His. **Why?** Because we have been **ransomed** – we were held captive by the enemy and Christ paid the price for our release – and not with mere disposable income – cash or precious metals – but **with** something of infinitely greater value – **the Blood of Jesus**.

Verse 19 – “but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.” – God made it clear to the Jews that His displeasure was massive when they tried to rob Him of that (**see Malachi 3:8**) – a displeasure that cost them dearly – the sacrifice had to be perfect – and that was the temporary sacrifice that would last a day or a season – but for the redemption once for all – only the perfect Saviour – the God-man Jesus – could do that for His people! The perfect – the innocent – the only one worthy to pay the ransom – there was no one who could do that for us – not on earth – no man or woman could “take the bullet” for us; **It had to be God Himself in the incarnate body of Jesus Christ**

who as fully innocent – as fully God and yet as fully man – paid the ransom by His own death in our place. Jesus – the Lamb of God – the Lamb without blemish or spot. When Jesus died on the cross it was 3 pm on the day of the Passover and that is important!

The Passover was celebrated over 2 days in Israel depending on where you were geographically. If you came from the area of Galilee and the north, then the Passover Lambs would be slain on the Thursday and the Passover meal would be eaten on the Thursday night, however if you came from Jerusalem and the south, then the Passover Lambs were slain on the Friday and the Passover meal was eaten on the Friday evening. Jesus and all of His disciples except Judas came from the area of Galilee and so they ate the Passover meal on the Thursday night as we see in Scripture, but the main body of the Israelites in Jerusalem would be from the tradition of the south and so at around 3 pm on the Friday the Passover Lamb was slain. God's purpose in the placing of Jesus in the Galilean region was the completion of a perfect plan to display to the world that Jesus was indeed the Passover Lamb who was slain for the redeemed of God, and yet able to partake of the Passover Himself and thereby institute the Lord's Supper with His disciples. What a wonderful God! The sacrifice always had to be a perfect sacrifice – Jesus was that perfect sacrifice

Study 11

1 Peter 1:20-21

20 He (*Christ – the Lamb without blemish or spot*) was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Last week we finished looking at Christ the perfect Passover Lamb. We celebrated the wonder of God's perfect plan in placing Christ and His disciples as men from the region of Galilee so that they would celebrate the Passover on the Thursday. This meant that Christ could both take part in the meal to inaugurate the Lord's Supper on the Thursday, and also be the perfect Passover Lamb as was the tradition of the Jerusalem area slain around 3 pm on the Friday for the evening celebration on Friday – one of the "wows" of Scripture that could only have been planned and executed by Almighty God (no pun intended).

Verse 20 – "He (Christ – the Lamb without blemish or spot) was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you 21 who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." – Peter has been building as these verses have progressed – to show the picture of the Gospel – this whole first chapter has been about re-affirming the truth of the Gospel in the minds of the dispersed believers.

The dispersion of the believers from Jerusalem and the increased persecution, brought about the fulfilment of God's perfect plan expressed in *Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The natural behaviour of people is to choose the easier path. Who wants to take the harder route when they have a choice? The Lord's command is expressed in these words to the disciples in Acts, but the progress of the Gospel was not left to the vagaries of the choices of men and women to up sticks and go – the Great Commission said that the disciples **should** "go", but life in the centre of things in Jerusalem was terrific! Loads of fellowship and support a very dynamic church no doubt, but that was not going to do the job of spreading the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth, so how was that to be achieved? **Through the persecution** and the dispersion of the saints across the world! The inherent problem, however was that this would leave the saints vulnerable to "the wolves" who would spoil, **and that is why the**

Apostles worked so hard to ensure that the true gospel was soundly set in the minds of the believers. Hence, Peter has been re-establishing a clear picture of the basis of the hope that is central to the Christian faith and here in these two verses we see another key part of that re-establishment. Peter is reminding the believers of the deliberate work of God in the manifestation of Christ!

In this couple of verses for today, we see that this perfect plan was ordained before the foundation of the world. Remember that “foreknown” is the word that in the Greek indicated not previously aware but previously “ordained”. It was ordained before the foundation of the world that God would be manifest – come in real tangible form – made man – in order to complete God’s own perfect plan – the plan of salvation. God in the form of Christ – manifestation – the completion of the ordained plan – made to be man – 100% God but also 100% man in Jesus – planned by God for completion **“in the last times for the sake of you”**.

What does Peter mean by this statement – the last times? He is referring to the final period before Christ’s return to bring about the culmination of the plan of God for the redemption of His creation. The period from creation to the crucifixion was all part of the earlier times, but at the Crucifixion of Christ and His subsequent resurrection, the “last times” began. This age – the church age is the “last times”, the period before the return of Christ and the setting up of His Kingdom – that time, referred to as “the last times” is an undefined period in length, but is firmly set in God’s mind and His plan.

This ordaining of the events of the Passover Lamb that we looked at last week, was set in place – **“for the sake of you who through him are believers in God”** – amazing! Remember – Peter is talking to the elect of the dispersion – then and now. God planned it – no surprise – He actioned it, and its completion was for the purpose stated in verse 21 – **“so that your faith and hope are in God.”**

Now, there is something else in this study coming from thi9s text that I want us to look at – When we walked through the providential planning of God over the Passover traditions in the region of Galilee, compared to the rest of Israel, we saw that in God’s plan **nothing** is left to chance.

We are in a time that desperately wants to see God subject to man in all areas of the affairs of mankind. The **pride** of mankind – even in the church – has become so entrenched that **we believe that we educate God and direct Him by our will and our choices**. We have looked before at the book of Job and caught some of the nuances that are put forward by the history of Job. He questions God, so God takes him to task with that amazing presentation of sarcasm in **Job 38** and onwards starting with the question in verse 2: **“Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?”**

God is not just the Creator of all things, He is also the One who sustains all things – He is not just the Saviour but also the Director of the affairs of mankind, not just in a general sense, but in every detail. What then? **Are we puppets? No – we are not puppets**, we are free to choose how we behave and what courses we will pursue in life, but yet NOTHING happens that is outside of God’s ordained plan – how does that work?

For the Christian we get wonderful verses like **Proverbs 3:5-6**, but that is not the complete picture – we have noted the comment in **Psalms 139:15-17**, also, and we need to start getting to grips with the truth of the statement in **Isaiah 55:8-9**: God’s ways and His thoughts are just so far beyond ours that we cannot hope to understand them – all we get is the occasional glimpse of His amazing providence and we are in wonder at that when we see it, but that is going on all the time and we do not realise it, we do not understand it and we cannot explain it!

Are we ok to be disobedient then? No – of course not since that would display both disdain for the God of our Salvation and in reality show that we are not indwelt by the Spirit of God. Should this render us incapable of making choices, waiting for God to direct us by His providence or other means? No! Because of this we become free to make choices trusting in God to fulfil His plan in and through those choices as He directs our paths closing and opening doors and providing circumstances to ensure His plan is fulfilled.

This should give us tremendous hope – we need to realise that **there is nothing out of control** in this world or any part of creation. As has been said – “not one marauding molecule!” Even in the things that we cannot understand or find it impossible in our ignorance, to explain; things that we cannot possibly comprehend as being part of God’s eternal plan, **are in His plan** and His purpose. In order to fulfil His will as yet unknown to us.

The world and its vague hopelessness, offers nothing but pain to mankind. **It is only when we get this** that we can have real peace in the knowledge of God and His providence, coming from His greatness and His unchanging nature; and that – brothers and sisters – is the very thing that gives us the assurance that comes from knowing that **“your faith and hope are in God.”**

Study 12

1 Peter 1:22-25

22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.

The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord remains forever."

And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Last time we studied together we allowed the text to divert us into the matter of the sovereignty of God in the ordination of all things for His purpose. So I want us to get back to the text tonight and look specifically at the 4 verses that conclude this first chapter.

Verse 22 – “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,” – There has been a considerable amount of doctrine in this first chapter – Peter has walked us through the basics of the Gospel and the reason for the hope that we have in Christ and as we begin tonight’s study we start with a **“therefore”** that isn’t actually there! The first phrase of the passage before us is very much a drawing of a conclusion from what has gone before. All that has lead to this point in the Epistle so far should have brought us to the understanding that has **“purified our souls by our obedience to the truth”**. There is the first challenge for us for tonight! We have been studying some deep stuff over the last 3 months – yes – 3 months already in 1st Peter and we are only just finishing the first chapter! But there is a question here that we need to consider. Has the study of the last 3 months achieved anything personally – has it **“purified our souls by our obedience to the truth”**?

The passage continues – Peter is calling for a unity from among the brethren that is **a sincere unity of love for one another** that enables them – and us – to stand even in the face of opposition, persecution and the hatred of the world. There are more than enough references in the Bible that point out that as we stand for the truth we will be hated and rejected by the world and so it is all the more important that we become a strength to each other – together filled with brotherly love we strengthen one another as we share together, continuing on the path of righteousness and following the Lord day by day.

Verse 23 – “since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;” – That unity comes from being together “born again”. We are all His children – **joint heirs with Christ see Romans 8:16-17; heirs** of the inheritance that we talked of when we looked at **verse 4** – there we saw that the inheritance is imperishable, but here we see that Peter goes further and makes it clear that there is something else that

can be described with that same word – “imperishable” – namely “the seed” through whom we are born again – that **seed** – seed of the woman – imperishable **is Jesus Christ our Saviour**. Our hope is together in Him and in that unity we must **stand together** in love unassailable by the world. However, the unity **must** be in Christ Jesus, you might say; “but of course”; but just wait for a moment – “**we are saved by grace through faith**”; **Ephesians 2:8-9** – be careful – faith is the **means** of procuring Salvation that is offered, but it is **not just “faith”** that saves us. The faith we have is a gift from God to us so that we **might believe**, it is the means of trusting in and entrusting ourselves to, **Jesus Christ** – He alone is our Salvation – **it is not faith**, it is our **faith in Christ!** He alone is the living, abiding Word of God – **see John 1:1-14** – we stand together because of Him.

Verse 24 – “**for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,”**” – If we glory in the flesh then our hope is in that which will not last, the flesh – just like everything else in this world – is only temporary – only transient – it is here today and tomorrow it is a memory. **Nothing that we can see in a mirror will be of any value in a few years from now** – it won’t be in existence – it withers and fades – “like a vapour in the wind” but our souls are eternal and Christ, and the hope that we have in Him are eternal – it is Him then that we must focus our lives and our future upon not these worldly things that are here only to serve us and are on no value for more than a moment.

Verse 25 – “**“but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.”** – The world and all that is in it, including all that we see in the mirror, with perish and wither – but the Word – **The Word of God will never fail – Jesus will never fail God’s truth and His Salvation will remain and will last forever**. Here is the whole basis of our hope – in the permanence of God and of Jesus Christ and through Him, the permanence of the Salvation that we have and that we share in together. Since Peter started this letter that has been exactly what he has been delivering – yes, doctrine – yes, explanation – yes, encouragement – but more than anything else, what Peter has been doing is **preaching the Good News** – the Gospel – the very foundation of the hope that we have in Christ – that living hope that we – perhaps especially us as members of Living Hope Bible Church – have in our hands and in our lives to hold on to and to be assured in as we go on day by day in our walk with Him. Amen

Chapter 2**Study 13****1 Peter 2:1-3**

1 So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Chapter 2 – as I said last week – it has taken 3 months to do chapter 1 – I’d like to think we could move faster, but I am a realist – I don’t think that there is too much chance of that happening – this wonderful Epistle is just so full of so much rich teaching that I hope you, like me, want to linger and capture as much as we are able to capture at this time. I do not pretend that even going as slowly as we are, we are exhausting the meaning and the depth – every time we come to this living Word of God, the Holy Spirit reveals more truths to us and – praise God – that will continue for as long as we continue delving, but for now at least, we will gather what we can find and be joyful in the things that He reveals to us as we progress with the passages.

Verse 1 – “So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.” – Again we start this verse with a link that effectively takes us back to what Peter has said previously “so” – thus having heard and grown as a response to the things we have learned from the first chapter there needs to be a result – there needs to be a change in us that is a clear consequence of the truths revealed. We need to “put away” – get rid of – “all malice and all deceit, all hypocrisy and envy and all slander” – easy! – Easy? – Is it? I am reminded of that passage in **Ephesians 4 17-24** that we have looked at before; we can become so used to being the old person and wearing the old jacket that even as we walk as Christians – “little Christs” – we continue doing the things that we have always done, not even thinking about whether or not the behaviour is acceptable to the Lord.

Let’s think about these 5 things that are listed:

Malice:

Desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another, either because of hostile impulse or out of deep-seated meanness: *the malice and spite of a lifelong enemy.*

Law: Evil intent on the part of a person who commits a wrongful act injurious to others.

Deceit:

The act or practice of deceiving; concealment or distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading; duplicity; fraud; cheating: *Once she exposed their deceit, no one ever trusted them again.*

An act or device intended to deceive; trick; stratagem.

The quality of being deceitful; duplicity; falseness: *A man full of deceit.*

Hypocrisy:

A pretence of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles, etc., that one does not really possess.

A pretence of having some desirable or publicly approved attitude:

An act or instance of hypocrisy.

Envy:

A feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc

An object of envious feeling: *Her intelligence made her the envy of her classmates.*

Obsolete. Ill will

Slander:

Defamation; calumny: *Rumours full of slander.*

A malicious, false, and defamatory statement or report: *A slander against his good name*

Law: Defamation by oral utterance rather than by writing, pictures, etc.

Verse 2 – “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation” – Babies grow – it's what they do – providing that they are healthy and being fed! – When we become Christians we long for the Word of God – if a baby is not interested in taking in any milk then there is something seriously wrong that needs attention – it is not natural for a baby to not cry out for food – neither is it natural for a baby Christian to not cry out for the Word of God! If a person claims to be a Christian but has no interest in knowing what the Lord has said in His Word then we are right to question the validity of the claim! Christians in many parts of the world, are excited when they get hold of a page of Scripture, they learn it by heart and then pass it on to others quickly because there is such a hunger for the forbidden Word. In the west we see people claiming to be who never open the Bible from one year to the next and people who claim to be followers of Christ but yet they have no interest in what He has to say in His Word, instead, they focus their energy on dreaming up new sayings or new revelations to fit their personal desires or emotions.

Having said that – it is also vitally important to recognise that there can also be another problem: If a baby stays on the milk forever it will be a very unhealthy child who will probably not survive – babies grow into older children that need more solid food and then into adults that need a plateful of wholesome food – the same must be the case for the Christian. We need to understand that, like the infant who will only ever drink milk even as they grow, or is sick whenever they are fed solids, needs medical attention, so it is with the Christian who remains on the “milk of the Word” and never goes beyond that point of basic teaching, or rejects sound doctrine when it is taught – there is something wrong, that Christian who cannot face the meat of the Word needs serious spiritual attention! **Then we have to face the possibility that what is wrong is what Peter says in the next verse:**

Verse 3 – “if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.” – Now – there's the rub! So often we say that it is important to challenge folk to check that their Salvation is real – that they are among the elect – this is doing the same thing again. I know that it can seem like the record is stuck – but this is of such great importance. It is far too easy in the world in which we live – the western world that tolerates most things and accepts as valid a wide range of moral viewpoints – for people with a reasonable knowledge of Christian thinking to slide into an assumption of Salvation without ever really having faced the realities of repentance and rebirth and so be relying on their perception of religion rather than the reality of Christ as Saviour.

Study 14

1 Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **5** you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Last time we gathered we looked closely at some practical stuff relating to our walk – our behaviour – as Christians. Having previously been exposed by Peter, once again to the Gospel and to some key doctrines relating to our salvation, he then challenged those to whom he was writing – including us – to consider, seriously, how that should affect our lives. Now he draws us back to Christ as our model and our foundation and we see something in these 2 verses that is particular to Peter and worth looking into the implication for ourselves.

Verse 4 – “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,” – Are there any bells ringing in our heads at this phrase **“living stone”**? There perhaps should be! Think back to the Gospels and in particular to the **Gospel of Matthew and chapter 16**. Look with me at the familiar passage in **Matthew 16:13-18**: In this passage Jesus renames **Simon son of Jonah** with the name **“Peter”** which means – as we have considered before **“a stone” or a small rock**. This is the passage that the RC church incorrectly uses to justify the crowning of their kingly leader the pope. But as we have previously seen the statement that Jesus makes about building the church on **“this Rock”** is related not to the person of Peter but to the statement that he made that Jesus **“is the Christ the Son of the Living God”**; – here in this epistle is the clear evidence from Peter himself that he fully understood Christ’s meaning when He spoke those words to Peter. Peter is making it absolutely clear that Jesus is the **“Living Stone”** – he later refers to this Stone as **“the Corner Stone”** – this expression, refers to the first stone that is laid in the construction of a building – it is the basis of the foundation and the correct placement is vital – it is then from this corner stone that all the other foundation stones are laid into the ground and then the building is constructed on top. If the corner stone is wrong or it is used wrongly then the building will be likely to collapse. Peter is making it absolutely clear that **Christ is the Corner Stone** and that, unlike any dead corpse that is the basis of religions from history, or even any other corner stone that might be available to be used – Christ is the **“Living Stone”** – Vital, real, alive and current – never past never just functional but absolutely foundational to both the church and the individual Christian.

Here Peter goes on to clarify that, though Jesus Christ was rejected (and continues to be rejected) by men, He is nevertheless chosen and precious in the sight of God – He – being God incarnate – is the full representation of God in human form – the Son of God – the foundation laid by God Himself – precious, beautiful and perfect, upon which the true church can and is built and will stand. He, then, is the one to whom our eyes must be drawn. As we consider the truths that Peter has shared; and as we look at how those truths are taken by us to mould and model our lives we must always be a people who are not just remodelling ourselves to be a moralistic people but we are a people who are growing in likeness to Jesus Christ as a direct result of being **“built on Him”**.

Verse 5 – “you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” – As the Holy Spirit at work in our very being brings us into conviction and renewal in one area after another of our lives, we are being **reformed** into the likeness of Jesus – as long as we co-operate with Him – and like Jesus is the living stone we too become living stones – He is the corner stone – the foundation – we are living stones – the building blocks of His house – we do not just have access to God in the house – we are part of the house! (See **Eph 2:19-22**) How amazing is that? We are being built, by Him, into a **“holy priesthood”**, we have a job to do – we are together the representation of Christ and **as His ministers, we minister on the earth**, bringing His word and witnessing to the truth of the Gospel, by His power within us and by the fulfilling of His will.

In the Old Covenant, the priests fulfilled their work in the temple, or the tabernacle, as the ministers of God – bringing the required sacrifices to the altar and interceding between the people and God on behalf of the people – but that time is over – how then are we “to be a holy priesthood”? Well, the verse says; “to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”; so let’s look at what that might mean:

- 1st thought – Hebrews 13:15 – “...let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God”
- 2nd thought – Colossians 3:17 – “whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,”
- 3rd thought (as Matthew Henry says) – “*This holy priesthood must and will offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. The spiritual sacrifices which Christians are to offer are their bodies, souls, affections, prayers, praises, alms, and other duties.*” Their work is the work which God before ordained for us to walk in (Eph 2:10) and through the indwelling Holy Spirit He equips us for that work. He places in us the desire to fulfil His good purposes.
- Finally – none of our efforts or good deeds that are carried out without them “being in Christ” can ever be acceptable to God – **but in Christ and through Christ, our deeds and efforts become sanctified and are acceptable. – Motive and desire is Christ driven**

Study 15

1 Peter 2:6-8

6 For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

As we finished last week considering the chosen and precious Cornerstone, that is Jesus Christ, so we start this week in the same place as Peter confirms that designation from the Word of God. But this week we look at another area that becomes apparent from the identification of Jesus as the living Stone – the Corner Stone – and it is that aspect that we will pick up on tonight as we look at these verses.

Verse 6 – “For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."” – Here we see the context of the statement found from elsewhere in Scripture: Isaiah 28:16 “therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste.'" This prophesy from Isaiah back in the 6th century BC was a very specific prophesy about the Messiah and one that is picked up as we saw last week both by Peter in this context and by Paul in the passage that we read in Ephesians 2:19-22 – see also Zechariah 10:3-6 “*My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD of hosts cares for his flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like his majestic steed in battle. 4 From him shall come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler—all of them together. 5 They shall be like mighty men in battle, trampling the foe in the mud of the streets; they shall fight because the LORD is with them, and they shall put to shame the riders on horses. 6 "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of*

Joseph. I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and they shall be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the LORD their God and I will answer them."

Did you notice the messianic prophesy – **verse 4** – and the connection to the house of Judah in **verse 3** – Jesus was of the house of Judah – of the line of David – (see the genealogies of **Matthew 1 and Luke 3**) – and notice too, the admonition of the verse in **1st Peter** "...and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Verse 7 – "So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,"" – Remember, we considered last week the way that the cornerstone works as the whole building is brought together as one – I want us to go back and think about this a little more – to extend the analogy a bit more. Those who have been **aligned to that Cornerstone** – Jesus – they will not be put to shame it says – at the final judgement is the point – rather – they themselves will share in the honour through Christ. But the ones who reject – the ones who don't believe – **the ones who have not aligned themselves to the cornerstone** – they will have a totally different experience and a completely different relationship with the Cornerstone:

Verse 8 – "and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do." – **They** will trip and fall over the Cornerstone. Think about the illustration that we spoke about last week – the foundations of the building are dug out – the corner stone laid very carefully and very precisely in its correct place so that the building will be true. If you then walk along the line of that cornerstone you will be following the perfect line of the building that is set by that stone – but if you walk across the stone you are choosing to face a trip hazard! We who are Christ's **become aligned** to Him **but those who are not become endangered by His very presence** – why? Because the stone that shows what is right and correct – what is Godly and of saving value will **become their trip hazard** – it will be an offence to them and they will be crushed by it/Him See **Isaiah 8:13-15** "*But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. 14 And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.*" – Here Isaiah shows the same thing – that the stone which becomes a sanctuary to the true will also be the stone that crushes and breaks the false one who will "be snared and taken" – because "they disobey the Word"

Then – just to finish off we have this awful phrase that I'm afraid we must not ignore – "**as they were destined to do.**" – What is this saying? I'm afraid that we are back to the sovereignty of God – there is so much evidence of the reality of this doctrine not just in this epistle but in every book of the Bible that we cannot ignore this reality. The subject on view again is the subject of those who were created to be His, named before the beginning of time – created to be the redeemed – and those who were not created to be His – created – as Romans puts it – to be vessels of dishonour. Look with me at the passage in **2nd Thessalonians 2:11-12**; "**Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**" *Matthew Henry says "God himself hath appointed everlasting destruction to all those who stumble at the word, being disobedient. All those who go on resolutely in their infidelity and contempt of the gospel are appointed to eternal destruction; and God from eternity knows who they are.* We need to really grasp that every human was destined for wrath before God changed it for His own. We need to take solace in the fact that God is in control of absolutely everything and there is nothing that takes Him by surprise or catches Him out because He ordained it all.

[Study 16](#)

[1 Peter 2:9-11](#)

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

Aligned with the “Cornerstone” – as we have been considering over these last couple of weeks – tonight we see both the outcome and the responsibility. Recently we looked at some practical stuff relating to how we should be behaving as Christians – tonight we take another, more general look at the practical stuff of the Christian walk as we look at these next few verses.

Verse 9 – “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” – A very well known verse in the Bible and often quoted – but tonight we will be looking at this verse in context with the studies that we have been going through over the last few weeks and immediately we can see that there is something here that perhaps we have not previously noted.

Let me just remind us about what we have been picking up from this Epistle – Peter is writing to the “dispersed Elect of God”, the church in an area of Gentile country – this includes local gentiles and Jews and gentiles who have been dispersed as a result the persecution that had hit the church during this first century. During the process of this letter to date Peter has re-established some key doctrines and restated the Gospel calling the people to whom he is writing to hold to their hope in the true faith as they are among the chosen ones that have been set aside by God since the beginning of time to be His. This verse, therefore, re-states this fact once again. So often this verse is used in a patronising kind of way as a bit of a feeble word of encouragement to a group of people who are perhaps feeling a bit out of salts for some reason – **this verse is not that!** This verse is deliberately stating the fact that we – those whom God has chosen – are – exactly that – *chosen* – and having been chosen – we are a Royal Priesthood – we have become purposeful! We have a defined function – we are the people who are to represent God to the people who are estranged from Him and we are the witnesses to them – we are the ones who **should also be** – by our own purposeful choice and will – desiring to bring *a sacrifice of praise and of ourselves* to Him in service of Him, because of our great love for Him – He has **SAVED US** – “called us out of darkness into His marvellous light” – How could we not “proclaim the excellencies of Him”?

Verse 10 – “Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” – Sometimes I have been asked about whether we – the elect of God – were always His children even before our effective call – and in the same vein – what about those who are not yet Christians – but among the elect – are the children of Satan or children of God, now, before their re-birth? Here I think, is the answer to that question – this and perhaps **Ephesians 2;1-3**; both make it clear that those who are as yet unconverted are children of the evil one until their rebirth and adoption into the family of God at their conversion. “Before they were not but now they are!” One other point – again this is the church that Peter is writing to, the Nation of Israel always were God's people.

Verse 11 – “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” – Here again then is a direct challenge – both to them **and of course it is to us also**. But just let's consider what is actually being said here. “I urge you as sojourners and exiles...” The Apostle Peter is making a very clear point here – one that reflects something that the writer to the **Hebrews** alludes to in **11:13** and Paul also does in **2nd Corinthians 5:20** – this business of being exiles and sojourners – **strangers** – a people who are temporarily displaced from their home and living in a foreign land for a period of time. **The Christian is not and should never be a citizen of this world** – we should be separate from this world – present in the world to do the bidding of our home Sovereign – but not part of this world and its system and order. I am reminded of **1 John 2 15-17** – Are we a people who love the world and the things of the world? Ultimately this is not a question that we can answer for another – It is pretty

obvious, when the vast majority of people who attend churches across the land speak and act that they do love the world and are world focussed rather than heaven focussed – but for us who have made such a declaration of our faith in Christ and who are involved in – if you like – **the serious end of Christianity** – searching the Scriptures – fellowshiping with believers and displaying to those around us a genuineness in our Christian walk – we need to answer this question honestly for ourselves – do we love the world and the things of the world? Are we really exiles and sojourners – a people who are away from home and “home-sick” wanting to be back with the Father – or are we people who want a bit of the Christian life and a bit of the world – who love it, hang on to it and want to enjoy it as much as we can, **but** also want the security of a belief system that gives us a hope outside of the world just in case we become derailed at some point? (When I say “serious end” please hear me aright – I am not saying lacking in joy – we above all others have reason for joy to be the very centre of our experience – indeed – we are commanded to be a joyful people – this should become practically possible if we truly believe that God is a good God Who will do what is right in all respects)

We are called to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war on our souls – this is choice & action – this is war! This is us being called to arms to fight the sin that our flesh draws us into – not Satan – not demons – our flesh. At the root of our being, this is about our dealing with our own responsibilities in sanctification – being in active service for the sake of Christ, our own Christian witness & dealing with the sin in our lives. We need to realise that we are on a stage & the world is watching the performance! The sinful world knows exactly how to judge the person who claims to be a Christian – they look at the life of the person who proclaims – words mean nothing unless they are reflected in our lives.

Study 17

1 Peter 2:12-14

12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, **14** or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

A couple of time over the last several weeks, we have taken time out to look at some aspects of practical sanctification, as Peter, in this letter, has raised particular issues and brought some really specific challenges to us, for us to consider. Well, here again, in these few verses, we have further challenges to consider.

Verse 12 – “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” – As we look at this verse we need – I think – to break it up into phrases.

- The first phrase is a challenge; “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable,” clearly this is an instruction that we need to heed – as we saw last week there is a sense in which we are like actors on a stage – not playing a part and certainly not play-acting – but – we know that the world looks at our behaviour and they judge us and they judge Christianity, the reputation of the church and of Our Lord will be based on what they see in the behaviour of we who call ourselves Christians. We need to be aware that we represent Christ and we represent the church as well as presenting ourselves; thus when we fall we damage not only our own reputation but we also damage the

reputation of Christ and of His church – therefore, we do indeed need to keep our conduct honourable.

- The second phrase reads; “so that when they speak against you as evildoers,” There are two elements of this part:
 - The first phrase highlighted the need to keep honourable conduct – so how can “they speak against you as evildoers”? What is this saying? It is saying that however we behave we will frequently be condemned by the world as those who act in ways that are evil. The people of the world will accuse us of evil – they will fail to understand why we stand apart and why we make certain choices and because they would act differently they will condemn us as being wrong! How perverse is that – see **2 Corinthians 6:3-10** in this passage Paul talks of a similar thing, the world condemning and accusing when there is not cause – why do they do that? – Consider – discuss.
 - On the other hand there is also the fact that the pagan culture will have their rules and concepts that the Christians will not agree with and will not practice – this separates them from the crowd and will be considered at best odd and at worst will bring them under direct condemnation. The question that arises for us is simply – do we stand out against the pagan culture – or do we blend in with their ways?
- The third phrase reads; “they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” Here we can see something that might seem a little odd – what is their day of visitation? And why would that cause them to change their opinion? This is about the positive effect of our good behaviour before men – it is not saying that our good behaviour will cause them to turn as I am afraid many people think it might. We know – do we not – that it is the Gospel preached that causes men to turn, and that only if the Holy Spirit has prepared their heart by changing them supernaturally. However, what it is saying is that when, and we have to perhaps add “if” the Lord visits them and changes them, then they will understand all the more and will praise God for the conduct we have shown.
- However there is another proposition that has been put forward. It that suggests something completely different: That since these churches to which Peter is writing are situated in heathen/pagan cultures, they are under scrutiny and may well be brought before some form of local heathen judgement, some form of non pagan court, condemned for being followers of Christ, but at that time their behaviour is found to be exemplary and so in the end God’s name is honoured and He receives glory and not dishonour as the heathens can prove nothing evil against the Christian but only good deeds. Either way, this is clearly about our behaviour being a good witness and bringing honour to God.

Verses 13-14 – “Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.” – These verses would be a quite natural fit with what has gone before – Peter is telling the Christians in these pagan communities that they are

not to act in a way that shows contempt for authority – even though the authority is a pagan authority. Here the view is quite specifically the Roman authorities – the Emperor and the Governors – but the message is universal – just as it applied to these folk at that time and in that situation, it also applies to us. We too are under a pagan authority – let's fully understand that the ethos of the government of this land has long ago ceased to be Christian if indeed it ever really was – but that does not mean that we can reject the authority that they have over us as citizens of the land.

When referring to “Every human institution”, this is not just talking about the government but all aspects of government such as taxation, police, the local authority and any other official authority including our employers etc. We have a responsibility to be honest, true and fair in all our dealings and not to avoid our responsibilities in any area – see Colossians 3:17-23. The only place for us to act in opposition to any aspect of the law, or the instructions of someone in authority, is if that law, or that person in authority, is demanding that we act in a way that is in conflict with the Bible and the law of God. This therefore needs to be something that we make sure we fully understand – civil disobedience is often used as a tool in our society to fight what is seen as injustice – for a Christian to act in this way is wrong. Even for us to act in private disobedience because we are not happy about the instruction of our boss or the person who has responsibility for us in some way is for us to be in sin. There is only one reason for disobedience towards the world – that is when the world tells us to act in disobedience to God – then we should stand our ground and face the consequences. But – even in those circumstances it should be evident that our conduct reflects the excellence that gives honour to God so that those who stand against us will be persecuting us for righteousness sake and not because we are just awkward, argumentative and objectionable.

Study 18

1 Peter 2:15-17

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

These next verses continue the message of the last few, where we saw Peter encouraging the Christians to confound their critics by their good behaviour – behaviour that was exemplary – beyond reproach – thereby ensuring that though there might be things said against Christians, they would not stand up to scrutiny. This week we see that argument developed even more specifically.

Verse 15 – “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.” – Pretty clear and direct – nothing to misunderstand here. The phrase “put to silence” is a Greek word “phimoō” pronounced “*fee-mo'-o*” that actually is better translated “to muzzle”. Our behaviour before men should be so good that we muzzle those who would criticize us. The expectation among the people was that these weird people who followed this Way – the Christians – would not be likely to be obedient to local traditions and so would be a cultural problem, not making good citizens but (as Adam Clarke puts it) “make bad subjects”. Good behaviour would gag these critics leaving them with no proof to back their prejudicial attitude.

Verse 16 – “Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.” – This reflects something that was seen as a problem then and continues to be a problem today. One of the catch phrases that had become popular in the churches was the statement relating to freedom in Christ – if you recall we found this had been a problem in Corinth that Paul had spent time addressing – the issue was that for many Christians they had

taken this concept of freedom in Christ to a level of misunderstanding that had left a door open to abuse in the form of licentious behaviour – we have seen that the issue had become a major one in Corinth – that was not necessarily the case here in these areas that Peter is writing to in this letter, though there may be odd pockets of the problem, but Peter is making it clear to the recipients that they are free in Christ but that freedom is not available to them as a smoke-screen to hide behind as the hypocrites do, rather, they are to live as servants – more correctly he is saying live as slaves – it is that word “doulos” bond-slaves – slaves of choice – to the living God.

This word “doulos” crops up a lot in the New Testament – a person who was sold into slavery in the days of the patriarchs would serve for 7 years and then in the seventh year, he would go free – however – if he chose, he could remain the slave of his master by becoming a bond-slave by choice – he would have his ear pierced to indicate that he had given himself into his masters house as a slave for life because of his love for his master (see Deuteronomy 15:12-17). That is what is on show here – that devotion to the Lord that places in the hearts of His followers the deepest desire to be obedient to Him and to serve Him out of a matter of willing choice – that is also what was meant by both James and Jude when they wrote their letters to the churches and introduced themselves as bond-slaves, when both of them were half brothers of Jesus. Paul also referred to himself as a “doulos” – bond-slave of the Lord. They did not count their blood relationship of as much worth as their choice to be enslaved to the Lord that they loved. Is that our sense of our relationship with the Lord?

Verse 17 – “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.” – This is a useful little quadruplet of commitments that we could take on board for our own lives! Let’s just take the remainder of the time this evening to consider these four things and discuss them together:

1. Honour everyone – consider others before our selves – see Philippians 2:1-4

2. Love the brotherhood – those who are our brothers and sisters in faith – recall the words of Jesus in John 15 and John in his first letter

3. Fear God – this is something that is so often rejected in the church – we should fear God – (phobeō *fob-eh'-o* From [G5401](#); to *frighten*, that is, (passively) to *be alarmed*; by analogy to *be in awe* of, that is, *revere*: - be (+ sore) afraid, fear (exceedingly), reverence.

4. Honour the Emperor (Those in authority – in government)

[Study 19](#)

[1 Peter 2:18-23](#)

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. **19** For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Over the study of the recent verses we have seen Peter moving through aspects of how we, as the children of the living God – and as we have previously pointed out – we who are joint heirs with Christ of the inheritance that He has bought for us through His death and resurrection, how we should respond to other people in various situations in life. We finished of the last study with the quadruplet from 1Pe 2:17 “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.” Which we spent some time discussing. This week Peter move us along in this process to look at the relationships that we might encounter in other situations.

Verse 18 – “Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.” – First of all the work place. We looked at the word “servant” and re-confirmed that this is the word “doulos” best translated “bond-slave”. Here we see that Peter is showing us that our positive response to those to whom we are accountable is not just a good idea – it is our God ordained responsibility – and this is not just limited to those situations where our masters are good to us, but even when they are unjust.

Verse 19 – “For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.” – And here is the reason – “it is a gracious thing”. Tough though it might be – we are called to work diligently but not only that to also be gracious when we are treated badly even though we work diligently – however unjust it may seem to be. These two verses make it quite clear that biting back at those who direct us in the work place is not an acceptable way of behaving as representatives of the Lord. For my part – I am very aware that this is an area that I was not so good at – I confess before you that there were times in the work situation that I made my impatience very clear over things that I did not consider wise, even to the point of acting sinfully in my responses to my shame.

Verse 20 – “For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.” – This verse is pretty self-explanatory – it reminds me of the exhortation of the repentant thief on the cross in Luke 23:39-43, where he said to the other that their punishment was “due reward” for their behaviour but Christ’s was not. Witnessing this grace in the Saviour brought that man to repentance and Salvation. God used the innocent suffering of Christ in that situation to bring one of the elect to redemption. What do we know but that He may chose to do the same with any one of us using us when we suffer without just cause but are gracious witnesses of Him in that situation

Verse 21 – “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.” – The Lord Himself is our example – we are called to follow His example – just let’s look at the next 2 verses and then we’ll consider the implications for us today. We have to face trials in order to learn to face trials in the right way – we need to be asking for the wisdom to act in the way that the Lord has shown us as He has called us to face those trials – no one else – He could prevent the trial in a moment!

Verse 22-23 – “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” – Throughout the life of Jesus, never once did He sin – He was pure and holy through every experience – yet He was abused repeatedly – often He was rejected, frequently He was defamed by the words of the spiritual leaders of the people, but not once was that abuse justified. Let’s just look again at the trial of Jesus – Matthew 26:57-27:35 – the outstanding factor throughout this sequence of trials, all of which were both illegal and falsified, was that Jesus, no matter what was said or done either to or against Him, never reviled those who were reviling Him. He answered only a few of the questions and not once did He rebel nor did He defend Himself against the injustices of the process. When

Jesus – who was at all times innocent – was condemned by men, He never reacted in His own defence, but simply trusted God the Father – His Father – and we are to take this same Jesus as our example, for so says Peter to every one of us.

When we feel that we have been wronged, do we respond in like manner to our Lord? When reviled, when suffering, when threatened, do we remain in a place of graciousness and peace? Or do we revile in return? Do we consider that this is one of those tests that the Lord God brings across our path to test us in order to enable us to grow, or are we too busy defending ourselves and our situation, or rejecting the treatment that we have received from those who attack us, naming it and/or them as unjust and reacting against them in ways that show our failure to trust God, display our weakness and evidence our sinful hearts? I confess that all too often I fail in this – How are you doing?

Study 20

1 Peter 2:24-25

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

The challenges of the last study were direct and it is my guess that each one of us had to face some degree of repentance over past situations and even perhaps over learned behaviours. I know that I was personally challenged by the things we learned and the things that we discussed.

As Peter has been doing right from the start of this Epistle, he continued directing our thoughts back to the Lord Jesus Christ, both as our example and as our means of salvation. Now as we finish of this chapter he continues on exactly the same tack – reminding us of the facts relating to salvation through Christ. It is my plan tonight to focus on these two verses and take time to absorb them and the implications before we move on to follow the path that Peter takes us on, as we move on in the letter over the weeks ahead. Peter has been dealing very directly with matters of sanctification – Christians dealing with sin in their lives – these challenges apply not only to those he is writing to then but to us also, it is right and healthy for us to focus on the cost of our salvation and the unparalleled wonder of God in our redemption – with that in mind – as being among those who are the truly redeemed, we must surely bear in our hearts the deepest desire to be obedient to the Lord of our salvation with all willing co-operation. Our response to the Lord's commands should be in love and gratitude for His work for us.

I plan this study tonight to be a slightly different kind of study – one where we will spend some time quietly contemplating some key scriptures

Verse 24 – “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.” – Let's look at this verse phrase by phrase:

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree,” – He bore our sins – once for all time He – that is Jesus Christ – bore our sins – all of the sins that we committed before we became Christians – every single one of them – but not just those – He also bore all the sins that we have committed since becoming Christians and all that we will commit in the future – do you hear that – every time that we – as God's children choose to sin today and tomorrow – that sin is one that Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken our punishment for. In His innocence – punished for your sins and mine – It begs the

question – how many more sins should I ask Him to carry for me? When am I going to stop placing punishment upon Him?

The use of the word “tree” here is an important usage – it is a traditional usage to refer to a cross of execution as a “tree”, but it points us back to the passage in [Deuteronomy 21:22-23](#) “**And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance.**” The Lord Jesus Christ carried that curse for you and me!

Why? – “**that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**” This reflects the passage in [Romans 6:1-13](#) from Paul. This verse and that passage in Romans beg the twofold question – Have we died to sin and do we live for righteousness?

“**By his wounds you have been healed.**” – Does this remind you of anything else in the Bible? Turn to [Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12](#) and I’ll take a time to gently read through this passage – while I do I ask you all to sit and listen and consider what is revealed by the passage and what this passage and the situation that it depicts, has accomplished for you and your life. [Read – Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12](#)

Verse 25 – “**For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**” – Again this terminology takes our mind back to other passages – so often Jesus is referred to as the Good Shepherd and so often we who follow Him are referred to as His sheep. Indeed, Jesus used the analogy in His own parables. In the manner of the evening I want us to spend some time just meditating on Jesus as the Good Shepherd and us in our role as His Sheep. [Read – John 10:2-15](#)

Chapter 3

Study 21

1 Peter 3:1-2

1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Last week we covered an introduction to the subject matter of this part of **Chapter 3**, noting the relationship of the section in context with the letter reading from **2:13 to 3:9** and from that we saw the way that Peter was drawing the Christians, to whom he was writing, to patterns of behaviour that would honour God and build the reputation of the church and of Christ in every situation of the social structures of everyday life – as a citizen of the location under the given authority, Rome, the Emperor, and the local officials – as servants or slaves towards their masters – as wives towards their husbands. The key being that the mode of behaviour should not be one that used their “freedom in Christ” as a smokescreen for being dishonourable and sinful but rather that their behaviour should be praiseworthy and be honouring the reputation of the Lord.

This week I intend to start the verse by verse study of this section of scripture and as I said last time – we will go at the right pace to enable the true understanding and application of the text to be grasped and applied. With that in mind I believe that we should take time over these two verses tonight and discuss them and the implications in some detail:

Verse 1-2 – “Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct” – As we saw last time this is not a standalone statement, rather it is a continuation of a theme. We saw that the Apostle Peter had addressed those he was writing to, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, showing them they had a responsibility to respect & obey those who had responsibility for & an authority over them. To the citizen, their responsibility was to respect & honour the national & local government; to the slave or servant – bond-slave really “doulos” – their responsibility was to respect & honour their master; to the wife, their responsibility was to respect & honour their husband. In each case this was not about preference or bias, it was about maintaining order in society, recognising roles in the nation, the community, in the work place & in the home, thereby ensuring that the relationships were correctly & effectively structured & defined. In this regard the churches cry of “freedom Christ” was not to be an excuse for disobedience, disorder & disrespect, but was a reason for showing honour so the name of Christ would not be defiled by the wilful disobedience of those who claim Christ as their Lord.

Now then – we need to get down to this particular specific case – the relationship between husbands and wives – and Peter is dealing with both, but firstly deals with wives since that is a cause for much public scorn. In the society of the day it was generally the case that the only openly dominant women were those who represented the pagan female priesthood – the priestesses who used their gender as a means of holding sway over men through religious prostitution. Married women were subject to the headship of their husbands honouring them as having the overall responsibility in the home. For Christian women to use “freedom in Christ” an excuse for being independent and dominant, was not only against God’s law, it was also an affront to the pagan society and was the cause of even greater persecution in a situation where persecution for the Gospel was already a problem. **The Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5:10** notes that we are blessed if we are persecuted for righteousness sake, however – we need to understand that we are not blessed when we are persecuted for behaving in conflict with God’s law and people object to our behaviour! That is what was going on here. We need to note that the woman is subject to her **own** husband – not other men – even the Elders – above her husband, even if he is not saved, he is still her head.

One of the issues was that if a women had become a Christian but her husband had not, the women would cause dissention in the home – by trying to bully their husbands into believing by nagging and then by using their supposed “Freedom in Christ” as an excuse for not being obedient to their husbands, even behaving as though they were single

with regard to dress and appearance in public. We see from [Galatians 5:20](#) that dissension by unholy behaviour is one of the sinful works of the flesh.

It is, therefore, against this background that we find Peter addressing the wives. He makes it clear that the order that is honouring to God is one that recognises the God given role of headship of the man in the marriage ([see 1 Corinthians 11:3](#)). He makes the point that it is by godly honouring behaviour towards their husbands they show example to them that will point them towards God – even those who do not believe. The non-Christian husband will be much more likely to be open to listen to the message of salvation in Christ if it is not presented to him as a challenge to his role as head of the home but is rather presented as an example of a gentle and kind spirit, truly showing the fruit of the Spirit. Also if the husband is a Christian, then when he is sharing life with a wife who acts as she should towards him, he will increasingly recognise his responsibility to love and care for her as the Lord calls him to do, recognising that is his responsibility before God. If however his wife refuses his God given authority, then he is not likely to be motivated to step up and fulfil his role under God.

This is all the more emphasised by the behaviour of the wife who does not conduct herself in a “pure” way – many translations use the old fashioned word “chaste” – this is about presentation and behaviour in the world. Appearance and conduct; This is not necessarily suggesting immorality, though of course that would be included, but it is talking about the **impressions given** by the way that the wife appears in public and the way that she behaves. An incorrect understanding and application of the term “freedom in Christ” simply destroys the reputation of the individual and equally destroys the reputation of Christ and the church in the world. If we have any doubts about that, then all we have to do is go up to any person in the street and ask them about their opinion of the church, or open a newspaper. In this generation, the appearance and behaviour of people who call themselves Christians has destroyed the credibility of the church and all but destroyed the reputation of Christ. If we walk into the average church – the appearance and behaviour of those who name the name of Christ are often completely worldly, and when those same people get into the home or into the world the situation does not improve – it usually gets worse. We are called to a different way – a way of order and respect – a way of honour and obedience – a way that bring praise to God.

[Study 22](#)

[1 Peter 3:1-9 Introduction](#)

This is a passage that presents us with some instructions that might be hard for some folk to swallow – a difficult subject and one that I know many of you have been waiting for over the last few weeks. It is one that will take more than one study to complete and I want to ensure – as far as I can – that I cover it as properly as I am able, so we are not going to hurry. This week I am really just going to introduce the passage, so before we even think about breaking the reading down and looking at the specific content to discover the depth of the application I want to do 2 things

The first is to remind us of the subject matter of last study – It was the cross – we looked – if you remember – at the requirement stated in [2:24](#) that we should be “dead to sin and alive to righteousness” – a reflection of Paul’s teaching found in [Romans 6](#): We also looked at the Suffering servant of [Isaiah 52 and 53](#) recognising the deep pain and love that God has shown to us in the substitutionary death of Jesus as He took the full fury of the wrath of God against sin upon Himself on the tree – becoming accursed by God for our salvation: Then finally we meditated on the Scriptures relating to Christ as the Good Shepherd from [John 10](#) – His love for us – His protection of us – and how we as His sheep **WILL** hear His voice and follow Him – not wandering off into areas of danger – but staying close to the Shepherd. The point of this being that when the Lord says that we should behave in a particular way then it is our loving duty to obey Him and not to be like the world, who, when they hear the commands of God scream **NO!**

The second thing I want to do is to read this passage to you as we should read it – in full context. One of the major issues with the way that people handle Scripture is that they take verses and passages out of context and then apply them in ways that do not reflect the truth of the Word, but rather, they fit the agenda of the presenter in proving the debating point that he or she is making. We have agreed many times before that this is wrong – we know that it is wrong – and yet this passage has been treated in an “out of context way” for years both by those who would choose to do that for their own purpose and also by the innocent person who, with good heart and good intentions study the passage, but simply, using the breaks and separations that we have become used to in our text and translations. In doing this – the key link and probably one of the central points of the text before us is often missed or misunderstood.

Let me explain:

If we look at verse 1 – how does it open? – “Likewise” – or in some translations “So likewise” – Likewise is another word like “Therefore” – it’s purpose is to link what is about to be said to what has gone before. Because of the chapter break, this passage is very rarely associated to the previous chapter except on a kind of vague link which does not do the job. To truly get the message of this opening passage in chapter 3 we need to go back and re-read the verses from **2:13** and removing the break that has been placed there in our Bibles, remembering that these chapter breaks were never there originally. We could go right back in order to get the full context picking up from the beginning of the letter and reading through the whole thing – but I believe the purpose will be accomplished by reading from **2:13**, straight through to **3:9**

So let me read that passage to you **2:13-3:9**:

1Pe 2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

1Pe 2:14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

1Pe 2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

1Pe 2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

1Pe 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

1Pe 2:18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

1Pe 2:19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

1Pe 2:20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

1Pe 2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

1Pe 2:22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

1Pe 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

1Pe 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

1Pe 2:25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1Pe 3:1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,

1Pe 3:2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

1Pe 3:3 Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—

1Pe 3:4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

1Pe 3:5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,

1Pe 3:6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

1Pe 3:7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

1Pe 3:8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

1Pe 3:9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

In the first century AD, in the pagan cultures of the Middle East it is fair to say that in most cases, wives and slaves were of almost the same rank in society.

There was a problem that was beginning to rear its head in the societies that needed to be addressed – both slaves and wives, in the church were beginning to use the term “freedom in Christ” as a licence for behaviour which was wrong, they were beginning to become rebellious against the authority that was responsible for them, disputing the rights of the master and the husband respectively, and reviling against them both in private and in public – much as we see in society today with employees trying to rule the work place and wives trying to rule the home. This is similar to the problem that existed in Corinth that we have seen before. In addition, with the wives, there was the beginning of a move to dress and present themselves in public, in a way that was not quietly respectful to the marriage, but rather was reflective of the more brazen aspects of the pagan culture and was thereby at risk of making Christian women appear to be loose, badly behaved and irresponsible. We need to be aware that this can so easily reflect the attitudes that are present in the culture of today and to consider for ourselves how we should respond biblically to this.

Note that Peter has been talking to slaves in the previous chapter and now as he turns to this next chapter he picks up the theme that he started previously in chapter 2, by stressing that wives must recognise the authority of the husband – that this was a godly order and one to be maintained. It was important for him to make this clear as the risk of **even greater persecution** was in view as these Christian women were beginning to **flout what was the local custom** and also what was given as the godly order, thereby **bringing disgrace upon the name of Christ** and the reputation of Christians. However, there is an important point made by his general discussion, this was that **husbands in Christ** had a responsibility to soften the way they acted within the Christian marriages – referred to in verse 7 – by showing honour to their wives in an understanding way and **not to treat them harshly** as though they were slaves. This would then mark them out as different from the pagans but would not bring shame but rather bring praise to the name of Christ.

Study 23

1 Peter 3:3-4

Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— 4 but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

I don't want to move far from where we have been studying over the last few weeks – with the visit of Paul Washer, some of the matters that we had previously considered came under further expansion from his ministry to us and so tonight I simply want to give space for further discussion of the issue of the way that women should behave and appear in the public forum and in their situation at home – particularly in those situations where their husband is a non-believer. It is significant – I believe – that the people who are able to attend tonight are the very people who are dealing with this situation at home and so I hope that this time will be of particular benefit as we consider the passage and this text in particular.

Verse 3 – “Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—” – We live in an age when the fashion press – the influences of the media and the high street all press the woman of the day to dress to emphasise their bodies and to draw attention to their gender. These words from the Holy Spirit given through the Apostle Peter are words that would be well heard today and be as well to be applied in the context of daily life. It is not just about the way that the ladies wear their hair – given the clothing styles of the time of this letter, the way that they would wear their hair was a fashion statement that would signify much about their standing in society, but today that is only a small part of the situation. Today we need to consider not just the hair but also the choice of clothing, style, emphasis, cut, length and fit are all designed to draw men's eyes to the figure and to emphasise the curves of the body and the encourage the attention of the passer-by and the person who stops to talk.

Don't misunderstand what I am saying – men have a responsibility to behave honourably towards women – but the men of the world have no heart to do that, so for a woman of God to allow herself to be dressed in a way that would encourage those looks is for her to be in sin. The temptation that is placed before even the men of the church is an unnecessarily sinful choice. It would be equally wrong for a man to dress in a way that draws attention to his body, but that does not happen with the same prominence – particularly among Christian men – yet for some reason it is still the case that women dress in an unwise way.

Clothes, hair, jewellery – all can draw attention to the body or to the face – Paul Washer made the statement in one of his sermons that everything that a woman wears should draw a man's eyes to her face and never to her body. Think about the tightness of jeans – the cleavage of tops the closeness of the fitting of all clothes, the sleeveless items of summer, the swimwear. All of these things can seem to be innocent but yet cause temptation and draw men's eyes to parts of the body that are not for their eyes! The only person who any woman should share her body with is her husband where complete freedom is as it should be, but no-where else and with no-one else should that be allowed.

Verse 4 – “but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.” – This is the point. If you are to be a witness to your unbelieving husband then the way that is going to happen best is for you to be the best wife possible for him and the most attentive to him. No other man – just him. Within the bounds of what is godly behaviour – he has no right to ask you to do anything that is in conflict with the law of God – but care for him in everything and if he asks you to do anything that would not compromise your Christian faith then do it. Win him! Win him with your love and your attention – he will not respond well to your complaints or to your attempts to bully him into being the man you want him to be – he will only be persuaded by the desire in his heart to please the woman who pleases him and loves him as he wants to be loved. This is not about becoming a door mat – it is about becoming loved and appreciated by the man to whom you have made

your vows of marriage. If you cannot love him then you are in sin against your vows. God tells us to cleave to one another – He says that the two shall become one – yet we live in a generation where the two fight daily to retain their independence and live life as separately as they possibly can. Reverse the trend – this is practical stuff – Peter talks to the men later – but for now he is talking to the women who profess Christ and his instructions are clear.

Study 24

1 Peter 3:5-6

5 For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Still pressing on with the way those Godly wives should relate to their husbands – and as we have already seen, this section is looking not only at the situation with regard to being with husbands who are by the power of the Holy Spirit within them trying to walk in righteousness with the Lord – that would make it a bit easier to handle – but this includes those situations where the husband is an ungodly man – perhaps a much more difficult situation to resolve!

We have seen that several things have already come out from the Holy Spirit to help and guide the women in these situations under the direction and pen of the Apostle Peter:

1. Be subject to your own husbands
2. Don't be subject to some-one else's husband
3. Be quiet – not trying to persuade them to your belief by your words – (you cannot nag them into your will)
4. Win their respect by your respectful conduct
5. Also by your pure (or chaste) conduct
6. Don't dress yourself in faddy fashions with fancy make-up and hair, and fashionable jewellery and clothing
7. Attractiveness is not on the outside but on the inside
8. Let your beauty be of a gentle and quiet spirit – which is precious in the sight of God

Now the passage goes on with a couple of verses that are designed to emphasise the above points:

Verse 5 – “For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,” – If we look back in Scripture there are many examples of such women; Sarai (later known as Sarah - explain) Rachel, 2nd wife of Jacob, Ruth the Moabite woman, Esther the niece of Mordecai, and Mary the mother of Jesus, to name just a few, but the Holy Spirit only uses one particular example to illustrate His point through the pen of Peter – we'll come to her in just a moment, but before we do let's just notice what is said in this verse:

The Holy Spirit is making the point that the things that have been listed above are the ways that “holy women” use to adorn themselves – that’s quite strong! He goes on to say that this “adorning” was made apparent by them “submitting to their own husbands”. This is pretty huge – Peter describes these who adorn themselves thus as those “who hoped in God” – perhaps that is the whole point.

If we look at the opposite traits to the ones listed, what we see is the definition of a woman who does not have their hope in God but rather has their hope in their own sexuality or their own appearance or some other form of power play to control their own situation and destiny. Trying to control or rule their husbands, taking authority from someone else, perhaps the attitude of non-Christian acquaintances or the media, or nagging their husbands, or being disrespectful or wilful or wonton, or by dressing to attract the opposite sex or to gain the appreciative or envying looks from others – either other men or perhaps even to gain the envy of other women. These are the actions of an unholy woman whose hope is in their own behaviour and their own appearance, and not in God!

Verse 6 – “...as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.” – So here we see the example that the Holy Spirit has chosen to use to make His point – Sarah the wife of Abraham. This verse is one that is likely to cause some debate – is the Apostle saying that a godly wife should call her husband “Lord” – well, no, I don’t think that is the point at all – the point is that Sarah was both publicly and privately obedient and respectful, not argumentative or overbearing – she was more concerned with pleasing both God and her husband than she was with manipulating the situation to ensure that her husband pleased her. She was the one who enabled and equipped him by being the wife that the Lord required her to be – and if you notice going back into her life in Genesis – she was one who had her deepest prayers answered by the Lord in response to her obedience to her husband and to God. The admonition to all Christian women then, must come as no surprise – it comes in 2 parts – the first part – **“And you are her children, if you do good”** – the second part – **“And you are her children, if you... do not fear anything that is frightening.”** – An interesting comment! Why would He say that? Can we assume from this that Sarah did not fear anything that is frightening? Clearly Sarah faced all kinds of trials – all kinds of difficulties and at time she faced dangers too – the wife of a nomadic man in an unknown, and at times hostile, land facing strangers, and at times even the possibility of threats to her or her husband’s life – yet what we see is a woman who trusted God with her life and was obedient to her husband – even when at times he showed his own weaknesses in the face of perceived danger.

The question then remains – not are you going to call your husband Lord, but are you a godly wife and a wife who has placed her hope in the Lord – or are you one who places her hope in her own ability, her own persuasiveness, her own appearance, her own power? That question is one that every woman – every wife – has to ask herself – it is, surely, one of the tests of Godliness – because that is exactly what is said here in these words.

We often see women that are incredibly busy in the church doing what they believe to be the will of God – acting in some kind of ministry or fulfilling some duty “on behalf of either God or the church, but the question stands – are they doing the one thing that God has asked them to do – fulfil their godly responsibility to submit to their own husbands? Sarah is named as one of the heroes of the faith – are you one of her daughters?

[Study 25](#)

[1 Peter 3:7-8](#)

7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

We have been looking with the guidance of the Apostle Peter – at a variety of relationships in order to see how we should react and how we should behave. The Holy Spirit – through Peter – has been focussing throughout the middle part of chapter 2 and through to verse 6 of chapter 3, on the way we should behave towards those whom God has placed over us to take responsibility for us – as we have seen – he has deal with citizens in relation to the authorities of government and judiciary – employees in relation to employers – all of us in relation to Christ – and wives in relation to husbands. In each of these areas he has been primarily focussing on the behaviour of the one who is subject to authority rather than the one in authority. And he has made the point that the behaviour shouldn't change even if the one in authority is unkind or unfair. This was a tough study when it was looking at civil categories but when it moved to the wife with the husband it became tougher still – but the words of Scripture are clear – so we have no excuse for ignoring the commandments of the Lord in this.

Now this week the focus shifts – Peter has covered the issue of the unbelieving husband in the marriage relationship, however now he switches to the believer. Peter clearly has no authority over the behaviour of the unbeliever, but he does have something to say to the believing husband in this context.

Verse 7 – “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” – The husband has the responsibility to head up the household under God – we have seen that in so many different Scriptural passages, but here Peter talks directly to the husband about the way that they behave towards their wives. The responsibility that they have before God is huge – we see that in **Ephesians 5:25-33** – but here in this verse we see a very specific responsibility – that of the husband treating the wife well. Perhaps it could be argued that this is an unnecessary admonition for the Apostle to make – but yet clearly that is not true since the Holy Spirit does not waste His time. So what is the instruction actually saying?

In this direction, the husband is instructed to be in submission to the Lord to fulfil the responsibilities that the Lord Himself has ordained for the way a husband in the Lord should love, care for and respect his wife, providing for her needs – not grudgingly but out of a willing heart. The guidance in **Philippians 2:3-4** to prefer the needs of others, applies to every human relationship – all the more then do they apply to the marriage relationship. As we have already seen, the love that Christ has for the church is a sacrificial love and this is the model of the love that a husband should have for his wife. There must be no sense of slavish authority, or lustful brutality; rather there must be consideration in all things and a desire to please his wife even that over-rules any desire to please himself at her expense of discomfort.

It is vital to recognise that there is no sense of one partner in the marriage in any way superior to the other. The fact is that there is complete equality in the love that the Lord has for both male and female – but He has ordained different roles – and in addition He has ordained different physical make up – this results in differing physical and emotional strength and reactions to a variety of situations and we each have a duty to recognise the responsibility that this places on us in relation to the way we respond to each other. Generally this would mean that the husband has the responsibility to protect and to provide and to support her in any way that is necessary for her well-being, this may include such things as ensuring that she is able to fulfil her responsibilities by the provision of access to finance and trusting her ability and wisdom in the areas of her expertise. Not being over-bearing or controlling, but respecting her and supporting her when she is dealing with matters that are hers to deal with, ensuring that both husband and wife are fully in tune with regard to family matters and children's discipline so that there is no conflict in the way such things are handled – particularly in front of the children. This is important – there must be complete unity of practice with regard to children or the end result will be dissension and disunity and the children will be confused and will become disobedient and devious playing one parent off against the other.

Peter points out that they are to be considered “heirs with you of the grace of life” – this is not necessarily saying that the wife is saved – just like the references to husband in the earlier part of the chapter, this is suggesting that they may

simply be heirs of the common grace of life rather than actually being Christian sisters in the Lord, but that does not alter the husbands responsibility. Whether the wife is a Christian or not – the fact remains that the Christian husband must behave towards her in this specified godly way, or he will be subject to the discipline of the Lord, the first part of which is that the Lord will not hear his prayers, or at best they will be “hindered”.

Verse 8 – “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” – This verse then, rounds up all that the Apostle has relayed from the Holy Spirit in these specific areas, at least for now, with the general direction to all believers in whatever situation, and relating to whatever relationships they may be considering – to behave in the correct way that brings honour to the Lord Himself through good and godly witness. What are the key traits? Unity of mind; sympathy; brotherly love; a tender heart; a humble mind: This surely reflects aspects of the fruit of the Spirit from **Galatians 5:22-23**. Unity of mind – peace and faithfulness, not causing dissension, disharmony and unnecessary division; sympathy – echoes all through the fruit; brotherly love – seen in love, patience, kindness and others of the list; a tender heart – patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness; a humble heart – again echoing throughout much of the list of the fruit of the Spirit.

It matters not what the relationship is or at what level – whether it is built on the social, the workplace, the marital, or the familial, in every one of those situations the same formula is laid down – it does not matter whether the other person is a Christian or not – our behaviour should still always reflect that which is godly and honouring and brings no shame to the term Christian, the reputation of the church or to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Study 26

1 Peter 3:9-12

Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. **10** For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; **11** let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Last week we had a verse that started “finally – well along with the qualities that were listed - namely unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind, we have a continuation into this week’s text and the direct instructions about the way we should respond to reviling and then Peter takes us back into a Psalm for the remainder of these verses

Verse 9 – “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.” – This echoes so much of that which has gone before – as we have been looking at the relationships that we have with others, particularly those in any authority over us – we have seen this instruction out worked in practical terms – and why would we not? After all – this is a direct reflection of the example that Our Lord Jesus Christ gave to us during His trials leading up to His crucifixion, as we saw in **verses 21-25 of chapter 2**; let’s just re-read those verses. We are called to bless those who revile us – this is no more than we have heard in many other scriptures – it begs the question – why do we have so much difficulty applying it to our lives? Look at **Luke 6:28**, for the words of **Jesus** and **Romans 12:14** for the words of **Paul**, now **here** for the words of **Peter**. Are we getting the message? Why, as Peter suggests, would we be the ones to receive a blessing in this situation? – Because that is exactly what the Lord Himself has promised in the Sermon on the Mount **Mat 5:11** "**Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.**

Verses 10-12 – “For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; 11 let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.””-

This is a quote from the Psalm of David:

Psa 34:12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?

Psa 34:13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.

Psa 34:14 Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Psa 34:15 The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

Psa 34:16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,

This also – in part is reflected by the prophet Micah - **Mic 6:8** He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Basically this is a theme that runs right throughout Scripture. It is God’s instruction to men and women in every generation who claim to be His children. However - it is not the natural way of behaviour for any of us – when we feel that we are under attack we defend ourselves often we do so by going on the offensive and attacking the one who is attacking us. I know that this is the natural reaction for all of us, I know that it is my natural reaction, but it is not what God calls us to do – or Christ – or the apostles or the prophets of old; they all agree with the example that Christ Himself gave us and that is what we are called to do.

If we are obedient in this then our Lord will hold us before His eyes and open His ears to our prayers – wow – what a promise – but equally we need to recognise that if this is true – then the opposite position is also true – Namely:

If we are not obedient to the Lord in this aspect of our lives, then He will not hold us before his gaze and His ears will not be open to our prayers. Scary!

Let’s just consider the implications of this for us:

- How do we react when we are told that we are wrong in the things we choose to do?
- How do we react when we are told that we are wrong in our reaction towards others?
- How do we react when we buy goods that turn out to be damaged or ineffective?
- What about the occasions when a company that we have ordered something from fails to deliver?
- What about when they deliver something that is faulty?
- How do we react when we have a situation where someone lets us down?
- How do we react when someone annoys us?
- What about when Scripture exposes something wrong in our behaviour?

These are the everyday situations that we have to face – they are not life threatening – what about when they are life threatening? How would we cope with that?

Jesus tells us not to revile those who revile us, but to greet evil with good – how do we stack up against His instructions to each one of us?

Study 27

1 Peter 3:13-16

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?

14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

The last verses that we looked at together, gave us the chance to look at our personal responses to other people when things don't go so well – the worldly way is to fight back – to fight our corner – to defend ourselves, often by going onto the attack. Basically, the way that our evil hearts would often deal with reviling is to revile in return – exactly what Peter tells us not to do – and Paul – and Christ – and King David – and the Prophet Micah – and – we stopped looking after that, recognising that it is a concept that is throughout Scripture. It is not for us to act that way. Our model is Christ Himself who, when He was reviled, He did not revile in return (2:23) but rather He entrusted Himself to the One who can be trusted in all things. Now – this time – we are looking at some possible consequences of that:

Verse 13 – “Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good?” – This sounds like a reasonably logical argument from Peter! However uncharitable a person might be towards us or towards Christianity, if the action we take in every situation is to do good, and we are zealous for what is good, then it is unlikely that we will be condemned for that action. There are of course those folk who cannot be pleased by anything we are prepared to do because they want us to be in partnership with them in their evil deeds – one of the reasons why the Apostle Paul stresses that we should not intentionally set out to be yoked with unbelievers in any endeavour or any deep personal relationship, because children of Satan and children of the Living God, will never find agreement in the detail of behaviour. When anyone finds themselves in that situation by the turn of events it dictates that we need to follow the advice that he has been giving over the last chapter and a half. However, these situations aside though, it is unlikely that we will suffer for good deeds at the hand of any unredeemed person who benefits from those good deeds or from unredeemed onlookers. (Let any offence only be for the sake of the Gospel)

Verse 14 – “But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled” - Nevertheless – it might happen that someone turns against us and attacks us or reviles us – and if this does happen – we need to recall the words of Peter regarding Jesus – that He – that is Jesus – entrusted Himself to the Father – we need to hear this – all of us – me, for sure – we do not need to take up arms against those who attack us verbally or in any other way – but rather, we need to trust God and trust that He will deal with the situation for His glory, but as for us – we need to deal with these situations in a way that honours Him, and by not responding in the ways of the world. As has been said – we may be the only Christian that the offender ever encounters – if our response is the same as the world's we have done no good at all, and not appeared to be any different to anyone else in the world! And – if our suffering is for righteousness sake – in other words – we have behaved in a Christ-like way but then suffer as a result of this – we will be blessed – so we shouldn't be fearful or be troubled! We shouldn't be fearful? – Have we yet realised that **no-one** can do anything to us unless God allows it? Not violence, nor abuse!

Verse 15 – “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” – Can we get hold of this – do we see? By acting in the same manner as Christ and not paying back folk who are mean towards us, we turn their eyes towards the Lord, even if they do not want to look that way – they have to deal with the reality that we are different – that then gives us the opportunity to seal the deal by sharing the reason for our hope, but with gentleness – not with belligerence or pride, or in an overbearing way. Sharing in this way may lead us into persecution – or not – but we know that the Lord’s will be honoured by this behaviour, and He may even use it within His purpose of the salvation of one of His chosen children. Either way, what it does do, is to “heap coals on their heads” – as we see the passage in **Romans 12:17-21** and in the next verse too.

Verse 16 – “having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame” – That passage in Romans is confirmed again by this verse from Peter. At the end of the day, the person who is acting unreasonably towards you and me – or who is abusing us – has to deal with his or her own conscience. Yes – they might be temporarily able to squash that feeling of guilt, for now, but it will only be for now even if they do manage it, but in the long term they have to face themselves for real, and in the end they will have to face the Lord. Unless they confess their sins and are repentant over them before God: They will face their just punishment for eternity. If by our Godly behaviour they have their consciences pricked, as I have said, it may be that this situation is the very one that God planned to use before the beginning of time, for the conversion of one of His children to Himself, and you or I may be the person used by the Lord in this wonderful outcome, if we are obedient in the way we respond.

Study 28

1 Peter 3:17-20

For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

We have had a sizable break – probably one of the longest breaks that we have had for the three years since the group started, so it is probably right to just do a quick resume of where we were last time we were together. We looked at the following passage: 13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Remember that we have been considering how we should behave in situations where we are in relationship – perhaps with non-believers – either in government, society, employment or marriage and this passage rounds it off with the encouragement to behave well and be full of hope and joy even in difficult circumstances and to be able to share with others the reason for that hope. The focus has therefore partially been on the potential of our being persecuted or suffering for our faith or for the Gospel in some way. Therefore, it is in that context that we can look at the verses before us tonight.

Verse 17 – “For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.” – This verse links directly to what has gone before and is perhaps the concluding punctuation mark on the previous statements. As we have already seen – if we suffer for behaving badly there is no merit in that – we are simply getting our just deserts, but

when we suffer for righteousness sake – that is different – then we reflect that experience of Christ and we stand together with Him in His suffering – remember the words of Jesus in the sermon on the mount [Mat 5:10](#) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Verse 18 – "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit," – Here again we see Peter drawing our attention to the work and the experience of Christ as our example. However, there is something else that is presented here – notice the last part of the verse – Christ was put to death in the flesh – but made alive in the spirit. There is a process of transition here that holds something for us to look at in Christ. He was killed on the cross – put to death in the flesh – but that is simply the flesh and had no negative effect on Him or on His spirit – this is nothing related to the Holy Spirit – this is the spirit of the person of Christ - His spirit within Him was made alive – there is here a promise for us who are in Christ Jesus too – though we may be put to death – or we may simply die "in the flesh" that is not something that has any effect on our spirit but simply the threshold of life from flesh to spirit as we too will be made alive in our spirit until the resurrection and the inheritance of our new physical bodies.

Verse 19-20 – "in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water." – These are a couple of verses that cause folk to trip up and cause confusion in the theology of false teachers – so I want to spend a little time to just make a few points clear here – points that relate to the work that was completed by Christ after His death and before His resurrection.

Firstly we need to understand that Christ "proclaimed to the spirits in prison" – starting point then is the question; what spirits are in prison? We know this one from previous studies – spirits in prison are "bound evil spirits" – demons – the ones who have not been allowed to remain at large ([see Luke 8:31](#)) – these are imprisoned in the abyss, sent there in bonds ([Jude v6-7](#) and [2 Peter 2:5-6](#)), because that was the punishment that was meted out to them at the time of their disobedience back in the days of Noah ([Gen 6:1-8](#)). Their plan and objective was to ruin the human race by creating a hybrid demon/human form through stepping out of their sphere of authority – the Bible says – by taking human form and taking and raping human women. – Christ was prophesied as being a child who would be "the seed of a woman" what better way than to defile human women so that they were no longer simply human but were part demon and so prevent "the seed" the God-man from being born.

God was patient during these days and did not act until Noah had built the ark – an effort that took him 120 years. Once the ark was completed and the family of Noah had been safely ensconced therein – then the flood gates of heaven opened on the earth killing all remaining mankind – they were both sinful in the extreme and defiled by the demons and at that point, the demons who had acted in this way, defiling humanity, were cast into the abyss immediately, both as a personal direct punishment and as a warning for all times to other demons never to act that way again. Those people who God saved at the time of the flood, Noah's family, were saved through water – the flood water – which having destroyed the evil enabled Noah and his family to begin populating the earth again with human beings under God's rainbow covenant never to flood the earth again.

[Study 29](#)

[1 Peter 3:21-22](#)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22](#) who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Last time we were together we looked at the way that Peter reflects the work of Christ in declaring the victory to those spirits in prison from the time of the flood. We looked at who this might be and concluded that they were the ones referred to in **Genesis 6** the demonic spirits that stepped out of their realm of the world of spirit into the realm of humanity so that they could defile the human race by sexual interaction with the “daughters of men” to produce a half breed demonic form from whom no Messiah could come and who could not themselves be redeemed. There are other interpretations that suggest the Christ preached the Gospel to a lost generation of men humans who were given a second chance following the flood – this interpretation conflicts with the scripture in **Hebrews 9:27**. “**And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment**”. Tonight we are going to look at just a couple of verses at the end of **chapter 3** that again have been misunderstood at times, but have also been used by those who have chosen to pervert scripture for their own purpose

Verse 21 – “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” – The first and probably the most important fact relating to this verse is that **Peter is not stating that the act of baptism save anyone**. It may not appear that way when we first read this in the English translations but once again this displays the inadequacy of English not error in the Scripture. The words that we read as “**which corresponds to this**” or in other translations “**like**” or “**like figure**” – the Greek word is “**antitupon**” which means more closely, “**antitype**” *that is, a representative, counterpart*. So baptism, Peter states, is “**a representative counterpart**” of the means of salvation, the means being, that of “**being in Christ**”. Noah did not actually enter the waters of the flood – he and his family were saved by being “**in the ark**” and not being in the water but were carried through the water by the provision of God just as we are saved by the provision of God in Christ, and baptism – which is **not** the washing of the body to make it clean, as Peter goes on to say, is **not** the means of our cleansing but is “**a representation, a counterpart**” that illustrates our salvation in Christ as the “**arc of our salvation**” “**...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ**”.

The idea that baptism can be the means of salvation denies the salvation by grace and replaces it with a salvation by works – which is very clearly not Biblical “**and that not of works lest any man should boast**” Ephesians 2:9. However, the demand for obedience to false teaching is often tied to the belief that you are only saved and brought into the relationship with God through entry into a particular “**so called church**” and this, they say, is made possible through baptism into that so called church – usually as an infant – thereby connecting one generation after another to a particular type of controlling or liberal religion that binds them to a false belief system. The best example of this would be Catholicism but there are other “**so called churches**” that follow a similar pattern.

Verse 22 – “who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.” – This then goes on with the more specific detail of the resurrected Christ referred to in the last verse. “**He...who has gone...**” etc: Where is Christ now? He “**is at the right hand of God**”, and will remain there until His second coming – do not let anyone tell you that they had a personal visitation from Jesus Christ who came to them in their shaving mirror or on the passenger seat of their car - or anywhere else for that matter – if someone tells you that walk away from them and if someone writes it in a book, close the book and throw it away; Jesus will not come to anyone in any physical form or even as a spirit, but He has stated that He will come to the earth again when the time is done, in His second coming when He comes in glory, not before.

He is currently in heaven and will remain there “**with the angels, authorities and powers having been subjected to Him**”. At the moment it is the “**angels, authorities and powers who have been subjected to Him**” – What are these? Angels – fairly clear, authorities and powers though – who are they? Well – they are not just vague descriptions of groups of people, these are ranks of angelic beings in the heavenly realms that are referred to elsewhere in Scripture – they are not referring to earthly beings like governments etc – at this time in history the earth and those who are in authority are not yet subdued to His rule and so is not yet subjected to Him. The human authorities are certainly appointed to their task by the Lord, but they are not yet in a place of obedience to Him. We are told to respect and obey authorities that God has placed over us as we saw in the last chapter and in Romans 13:1, but that does not mean that government is subjected to Him or else why would governments pass laws that conflict with God’s law and why would there be evil

regimes? God allows – even appoints governments – but they are human and of the earth in its fallen state and so they act in evil ways, so we have to discern what is right for us as Christians and what is not, and be certain to stand firm on those things that are right and reject those things that are not. This is likely to bring persecution, but that reflects what we have been talking about in verse 17 of this chapter as we saw last time we were together. However, these authorities and powers referred to here are spiritual forces. If we look briefly at [Ephesians 6:12](#); “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places”; we see these powers of the heavenly places referred to again but these are the evil ones in “this present darkness” that we wrestle against with the power of the Holy Spirit in us, they are not the ones actually in heaven with the Lord – the equivalent ones in heaven with the Lord are already subject to Him. While He was in His incarnate form on the earth, He was subject to them to a degree, dependent upon them (see the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11; but the ones here are evil and will be dealt with in the end at and following His return.

Chapter 4**Study 30****1Peter 4:1-3**

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, **2** so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

New chapter new challenge – well – not completely new but for sure a big challenge to each one of us.

Verse 1-2 – “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.” – On first glance this sounds like a tall order! Whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin? – Really? What is this saying?

John MacArthur says:

Therefore in the light of the triumphant suffering and death of Christ, Peter's readers should also be willing to suffer in the flesh, knowing that it potentially produces great triumph. Suffered in the flesh. A reference to Christ's death on the cross. The same way. The Christian should be armed (terminology that realises a battle) with the same thought that was manifest in the suffering of Christ, namely that one can be triumphant in suffering, even the suffering of death. In other words, the Christian should voluntarily accept the potential of death as part of the Christian life. Peter would have the opportunity to live this principal himself, when he faced martyrdom. Has ceased from sin. The perfect tense of the verb emphasises a permanent eternal condition free from sin. The worst that can happen to a believer suffering unjustly is death, and that is the best that can happen because death means the complete and final end of all sins. If the Christian is armed with the goal of being delivered from sin, and that goal is achieved through his death, the threat and experience of death is precious. Moreover, the greatest weapon that the enemy has against the Christian, the threat of death, is not effective.

Matthew Henry says:

The strongest and best arguments against sin, are taken from the sufferings of Christ. He died to destroy sin; and though he cheerfully submitted to the worst sufferings, yet he never gave way to the least sin. Temptations could not prevail, were it not for man's own corruption; but true Christians make the will of God, not their own lust or desires, the rule of their lives and actions. And true conversion makes a marvellous change in the heart and life. It alters the mind, judgment, affections, and conversation. When a man is truly converted, it is very grievous to him to think how the time past of his life has been spent. One sin draws on another. Six sins are here mentioned which have dependence one upon another. It is a Christian's duty, not only to keep from gross wickedness, but also from things that lead to sin, or appear evil. The gospel had been preached to those since dead, who by the proud and carnal judgment of wicked men were condemned as evil-doers, some even suffering death. But being quickened to Divine life by the Holy Spirit, they lived to God as his devoted servants. Let not believers care, though the world scorns and reproaches them.

The point here seems to very strongly be that we should be a people who

1. Avoid sin as far as we can by our behavioural choices – and

2. Avoid the behaviour choices that may not be sinful in themselves but place us into temptation – and
3. Consider avoiding those things that give the possible appearance of being sinful even if they are not.

However – we need to avoid the “adding of additional boundaries” to grace – that is what the Mishnah did through the legalism of the Pharisees – this is not about making rules for others but judging ourselves correctly.

Edmund Clowney highlights Paul's argument from Romans 6, indicating that Peter is talking about our union with Christ in His death and resurrection bringing us to that spiritual situation of being dead to sin, but alive to righteousness in Christ Jesus. [Romans 6:8-12](#)

(These three are each different and each have merit, but one thing is clear – this is not about desiring suffering in order to bring about some form of purification – which is what was understood in the extreme error of Catholicism – flagellation – self harming for the sake of punishing the flesh)

Verse 3 – “For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry” – Here Peter makes it clearer – the time is gone by – in this context as we have seen before, for the term “Gentile” we should understand that Peter is talking about the ways of behaviour of Pagans in a Pagan society – those who have no Christian motivation only the flesh-driven desires or the sex-driven false religions. We might push this aside on the basis that these pagan religions do not apply to us, but be careful, there was the other part too – the flesh-driven desires. By nature every one of us is flesh-driven – we seek to do that which gratifies our own wants – the nature of mankind is selfish by default and so we can very easily find ourselves driven by our own desires rather than the desires of the Holy Spirit at work within us. Here Peter talks specifically about a list of things that we might quickly dismiss, but before we do let's just stop and recognise that these things represent a far wider range of sins and selfish desires than just the ones mentioned.

[Study 31](#)

[1Peter 4:4-7](#)

4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Last time we looked at the responsibility that Peter gave to us through the Holy Spirit, to consider ourselves dead to sin and as Paul says in his letter to the [Romans in chapter 6](#) - alive to righteousness. We also noted that the rejection and potential persecution of the world could only bring the maximum sanction of death, which for the elect, was not something to fear, but rather something that would bring the victory for which we strive. Thus no sanction at all - rather a benefit with nothing to fear, since that would bring us to the perfection that we seek. The text this week carries on from that looking first at the way our godly choices will confuse the world.

Verse 4 - "With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you;" - The reality is that the world cannot cope with the idea of us being different, finding us odd and unacceptable - my guess is that we have all felt that experience. We know - don't we - that men and women of the world hate God because their deeds are evil - they might say that they believe in God but the reality is that the god they believe in is not the God of the Bible, it is a god of their own making that approves of their behaviour. So rather than come into the light of God through faith in Christ, they display the truth that they love the darkness and the evidence is that they remain in the darkness - the fact is that when they are then confronted by someone who loves Christ and lives in the light of Christ, it is they who are offended and they hold us up as ridiculous and odd, often accusing us of being cultish and being religious maniacs or fanatics who have stopped living in the real world. Their purpose is to make us conform to the world and so satisfy themselves that our hope is without foundation and therefore irrelevant, because in the final analysis we do not stand under their intimidation. **Discuss.**

Verse 5 - "but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." - Their chosen life position is to be exposed, if they remain in that rebellious state against God. They will come to judgement - see **Hebrews 9:27**. How ever long they live - their rebellion will only last for their life time, then they will face the consequences of their rejection of God when He removes His hand of grace from them, judging them for the evil that is their natural state. Anything good in them disappears at that time and what remains will hate God eternally, facing the just desert of that hatred. Salutary - but this is something that we need to deal with - mankind is responsible for their rejection of God against the revealed evidence of His being and in breaking the first commandment from their birth to their death and beyond into eternity - being unrepentant - they will be punished for that and all other sins for eternity also.

Verse 6 - "For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does." - This can be a difficult verse to get hold of but let's work through it: Peter is reminding these Christians that the gospel has previously been preached to those who at this time are "dead in Christ" those who have died either naturally, or as a result of the increasing persecution that is being suffered by Christians in a world, that has been growing ever more hostile towards them. The point is that these folk have already been judged by the world and found to be "cultish, odd and unacceptable" just as Peter has been talking about in the earlier verse, but though they have been thus judged "in the flesh", that is an irrelevance to them, as it should be to the rest of us, since now - in their present state - these who have gone are actually alive in their spirit, not hopelessly dead as the world thinks, but alive with the Lord, being correctly "judged" as His elect, and free from condemnation through the precious blood of Christ.

Verse 7 - "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers." - The use of the word "end" is relating not to finality, but to the completion of the goal as is always the case in the New Testament writings. The result of this realisation then is that for them - and for each one of us - the hope that we have and the assurance that we have is given to us in Christ and thus we need to hold firm to that and faithfully contend for the Gospel and strive for that perfection that is our hope and our potential through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit - not that we will attain it fully in this life - in the flesh - but that we know that we will attain it in the life to come that is ahead for each one of us.

Study 32

1Peter 4:8-11

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Last weeks Study was an adventurous 4 verses - adventurous for me - and this week we are going to attempt the same.

Verse 8 - "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins." - There is no mystery in this first verse of this passage, it is a reflection of the call that we see so often from the Apostle John and the very words of Christ - the call to love one another. **John 15:12** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." **1 John 3:11** "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." When we love one another as we are called to do when we are in Christ Jesus as brothers and sisters, then we are quick to forgive and forget wrongs that we do to each other (Consider 1 Corinthians 13:7). We recognise each other's weaknesses and we overlook each others sins because of that love; unlike the world who so often resort to vengeance and retaliation. We are not to mirror the world - we are to forgive. How many times? **(See Matthew 18 :21-22)** This does not override the need to expose unrepentant sin or ignore church discipline if it is required - but it does call us to be forgiving and gracious regarding one another. **(Matthew 6:14-15)**

Verse 9 - "Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." - Now here is an instruction to the saints that will be easy for some but a real struggle for others. It is often pointed out that it is a responsibility of Elders to show hospitality, but here Peter clearly states that it is the responsibility of all saints. The days of the Apostles were different to now - people journeying would have the option of inns that were basically brothels and extremely dirty and unsafe and so the saints were instructed to provide a home for brothers and sisters in Christ who were travelling - but this injunction was also broader than that - it applied to a general need to be family together and welcome one another into each other's homes for the strengthening of the body of believers. **(See Acts 2:42-46)**

Verse 10 - "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:" - this care that is shown in hospitality extends beyond that to the requirement to provide care in other practical ways to one another. God has gifted each one of us with different gifts and we should be family supporting one another by the use of those gifts to the common good. This is a call to co-operative living and mutual support. Something that works well in some churches but not so well in others. **(Consider 1 Corinthians 12:14-27)** Sometimes we don't do well because of disjointedness due to distance but more often it is due to a series of choices on the part of the saints to limit the

interaction to specific time and place situations and not to be involved with each other's lives - this is not how it is intended to be - Discuss.

Verse 11 - "...whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." - This gives us some practical illustrations for the previous comment and instruction. In the community of saints let him who can speak and teach the Word of God do so since God has so equipped him to fulfil that function. But the example goes on to include not just speaking gifts but also gifts of service - any kind of service - each using his or her gifting to the glory of God for the benefit of the saints because we are brothers and sisters in Christ. (Consider Romans 12:4-10) The witness that is seen by the world, because they see a community of people who love one another and are willing to support one another in this way, without any expectation of reward - simply because of the love we have for one another - marks us out as different from the world and glorifies Our Lord. We need to consider how we can apply this in our local situations?

Study 33

1Peter 4:12-14

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

We have - I think - over the studies thus far in this first letter from the Apostle Peter - discovered how he advises all of us - Christians through the generations - should deal with difficulties. As we have continued to see Peter, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, encouraging the believers to stand firm - to hold with joy to the hope that they have in Christ Jesus and to bear witness to that hope by the positive way that they deal with trials and persecution. Trials from those with whom they are in contact on a daily basis and persecution from the world who will not only reject, but will actively hate their faith and will reject them because of that faith and hope.

We might think that what Peter was talking about was for then, that he could not have known a world like the one that we are in today that rejects Christ and the true Christian message in favour of a form of belief that is a pick and mix variety of almost every false teaching both inside and outside the church - one where everyone has equal right to heaven because everyone one is alright in their own eyes.

Well - we are right - Peter was not dealing a church facing our type of situation at all. The type of thing that he and the followers of Christ were facing back then was not we face today - let's look at what they faced.

Verse 12 - "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you." - At this point in history the Christian Church began to come under some literally "fiery

trials" - and notice - it does not say "if" it says "when" - the rejection that they faced was the kind of rejection that could often end in them being persecuted to death - literally. Rome was in turmoil. The Emperor Nero was a maniac - he was fanatical about new buildings and wanted to build everywhere but the ancient city of Rome was in the way - so he burned it down to make way for his manic plans. The Roman citizens - a pagan people with many gods including what were called "pinates", these were little household gods that people worshipped in their homes. The burning of Rome had destroyed their homes and they were fearful that their gods had burned in the ashes of their homes in Rome and they were therefore, for the most part, both homeless and hopeless, not knowing where to direct their anger. Nero - realising the danger - decided that it would be wise to dodge the bullet of accusation himself and so he blamed the burning of Rome on the Christians - the Jews were already hated in Rome and Christianity was seen as a Jewish religious sect and so that encouraged the acceptance of this lie and the Roman citizens had turned on the Christians, not just in Rome, but right the way across the Roman Empire. Attacking and burning Christians with great enthusiasm. These brothers and sisters in Christ, that Peter was writing to, had come to know Christ through the spread of Christianity following the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem and through the missionary journeys of Paul. but now they rapid expansion of the Christian message was being "tested by fire" and many were found to be false and were dropping away - but Peter is encouraging the true believers to stand firm in the faith - hold on to their hope, and to present the reason for the hope that they had, to those who would either just tolerate them, or even to those who would be the ones who would bring persecution upon them. This was a time of great cleansing for the church - those who were hangers on soon moved away under persecution.

Verse 13 - "But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." - He is not only calling them to stand firm - he is going much deeper in his instruction to them - he is encouraging them to show joy - to rejoice - in their suffering. We have seen that Peter is reminding them of the hope that is before them - the eternal hope - the living hope - that message has been presented right from the start of this epistle and over the last couple of studies we have seen how he has brought the brothers and sisters to that point of being mindful that even if they face the ultimate judgement and sanction of the world - death - that they will be the ones who gain by that and it is no punishment at all for those who are truly in Christ. Here we see he is affirming that same concept. Christ died and following His resurrection he returned to be with the Father in Glory and for all who face death for the sake of His name the same glory awaits and that is a reason for rejoicing.

Verse 14 - "If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." - What is this saying? Insulted? That doesn't seem to fit with the context. Well it does - because what Peter is referring to is any form of persecution and the term that he uses here "insulted" could be in its broadest context - in receipt of any form of attack whether verbal or physical - but for us we need to hear what Peter is saying - that in the case of being insulted for the name of Christ - to any degree - whether verbally or violently - whether minor or major - we are blessed because we are among those who are privileged to be numbered worthy of insult for the name of Christ - those who are will be the recipients of the rewards that are due to them for standing firm in the face of persecution and will be honoured in glory for that with additional rewards that can be used for glorifying Christ throughout eternity. Remembering always that the power we have to hold on is not from us but from the Holy Spirit within us - those who are not real do not have the Holy Spirit and so they will not hold on in there, they will fall away. The Crown of Life – **James 1:12 & Revelation 2:10** – this is for enduring through trials - the reward that is given to those who face trials.

Study 34

1Peter 4:15-17

But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler.

16 Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

We have been studying 1st Peter for almost a year now - we started in March 2014, and I hope that you will agree with me that this Epistle from the Apostle Peter is a book with so much depth of teaching and such quality that it has been worth spending the time that we have spent so far in going through in so much detail. Peter brings deep theology but not just informative teaching in terms of deep theology, he also brings solid direction advice and application so that we who are God's children through the blood purchase of Christ can really get to grips with some of the more difficult aspects of living the life of a child of God in the world whether in the days of the early disciples under the persecution of Rome or in the generation that we are part of today with the pressures, temptations, difficulties and even at times mild persecutions of today. This evening is no exception as we look at these next verses.

Verse 15 - "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler." - This verse echoes some things that have already been said earlier in the letter, but here we are getting into deeper specifics again - the specifics of our personal behaviour. This is another of those verses that starts with the type of sin that is likely to affect very few and hopefully none in a group like this, murderer, so it is easy to miss the range of sin that Peter highlights. Murderer and thief - yes - I guess they are quickly set aside in the average Bible Study Group, but he goes on - evildoer and meddler - ouch - those are the ones that can hit us where it hurts if we are honest with ourselves. Again, notice that Peter is talking about "not suffering as a..." again this is making the point that there is only one basis that a Christian can have confidence of being blessed in the face of suffering and that is highlighted in the next verse and echoes what we have seen earlier in the epistle.

Verse 16 - "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name." - The blessing only comes if we suffer for the name of Christ - if we suffer as a result of our exercising our Christianity in our daily life and being condemned by the people in the world - whether they are the ones who are close to us in our family or the work place or whether it is a broader situation of persecution that comes from society, as we have seen previously in the text of the letter. But notice also the middle part of this sentence in this verse - **"let him not be ashamed"** - we have talked about this before in these sessions, I know; we have said that we must not compromise the way we behave for the sake of peace or hide the truth or hide from the truth, when it comes to the Gospel, I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 7 and 1 Peter 3 – we are told to be genuine and not to compromise for the sake of peace with the non-Christian in our lives, but here Peter says it in clear and unequivocal terms - just so that there is no mistake, we are not to be ashamed of the gospel, or of our faith in Christ, or of being a Christian - we are not to hide it - we are not to compromise it - we are to bring glory to the name of God by standing up for Christ and being counted.

Verse 17 - "For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" - This verse is salutary. But it is often taken out of context and so made to mean something that it does not mean, so tonight we are looking at it in the true context and hopefully by doing so we will grasp the true meaning. What is the Apostle saying here? Is it that God is about to start judging the Christians? - No - That is not what the text is saying! Remember the context in which Peter has been writing - the things that he has been saying earlier. He was talking previously about the way that the world, through persecution, is making their own judgement on Christians, and as we saw earlier also, he makes the point that the harshest judgement that

the world can impose is the judgement of death through execution - something that many Christians were facing as a prospect and some had suffered at that time - but that this "judgement" of the world was of no relevance to the Christian because it brought them into the place of grace and glory and inheritance with Christ, thus it was no punishment at all – more, it is something that brings a reward. That is what Peter is referring to again here - the judgement is first on "The household of God" – a potentially dramatic judgement that would drive those who are untrue to flee – they would not risk the level of persecution – therefore this “judgement” that the world is making is used by God to purify the church – those who remain to face the persecution of the world are the true ones strengthened by the Holy Spirit - the judgement that the world is bringing is on the house of God at any time purges the church and God, through the work of those who are persecuting the church, it cleanses the church out by scattering those who are not real – there is something to be said for persecution! Those who are genuine have no fear of the threat of death - but what will follow is the judgement of the world - and that will be punishment for sure. Nevertheless, there is a warning in what Peter is saying here - that among the people he is writing to in these churches in the towns and areas of the Roman Empire each person has to be responsible for ensuring that their faith is real and genuine, and they are not false, hiding in the congregations of believers, for if they are in fact people who are not true believers and are actually therefore not in obedience to the Gospel and to Christ's redeeming through His blood, then they remain in their sins and the punishment that will come upon them is the same as that of the pagans – it is something to be feared. This warning carries down through the passage of time to the present day also.

Study 35

1Peter 4:18-19

And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Last time we looked at 1st Peter we saw that the prospect for the redeemed might be bleak in terms of the level of persecution that these Christians that Peter is talking to in this Epistle were beginning to face in the earthly situation - persecution that may even lead to death - but that would then lead to glory and that there was in reality nothing to fear from man for the worst that man could do would only "speed" the saints into their eternal kingdom. There was - if you recall - the warning to any who were not real, because for them the outcome would be totally different.

These verses - the last two of this chapter - are a continuation of the last comments and are directly connected to the issue of the result of judgement on the sinner and the escape from judgement for the redeemed.

Verse 18 - "And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"" - Consider for a moment what it took to redeem the chosen from the judgement of the wrath of God - perhaps this is not something we do often enough - This phrase is a direct quote from **Proverbs 11:31** although we will not immediately see that in the English translations. Peter is quoting the exact verse from Proverbs as he would have learned it from the Greek Septuagint - it is not so easy to see for us - (**Pro 11:31 If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!**) - In both translations the point that is being made is not about the concept of it being "a narrow escape", but about it being a high price that has had to be paid in order to achieve our redemption. The cost of the Messiah becoming our substitute and being sacrificed is immense - our salvation could only be bought by the sacrifice

of God Himself coming in the flesh so that the sacrifice was a perfect one - this is not saying then that salvation is in doubt, but simply that it has taken so much - thus for those who remain sinners - consider the punishment that they will face since they have no relief from the wrath of God for their sin - as we considered a while ago - they will drink the full cup of God's wrath (Revelation 14:10 c/f Gethsemane).

If you recall - last time we considered the fact that the persecution was the means of sifting and purifying the church to be rid of that which was false and this verse brings that sifting into direct view as we considered last week - the judgement is first on "**The household of God**" through persecution, thereby purifying the church so that those who remain are true - those who are indeed true are saved only through a massive sacrifice - the wicked face their justifiable full judgement. This is again therefore a series of verses where Peter confirms a basic doctrine of the Christian faith. That one we have considered before - The Doctrine of Limited Atonement.

Verse 19 - "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good." - So - to round of this section - Peter encourages and exhorts the Christians to whom he writes that they should recognise that God is fulfilling His divine purpose in the things that they are now facing - the purpose of the cleansing of the church and the judgement of the wicked, and thus those who are indeed true - should have no fear for if they are suffering now - or soon to come - that what is happening is not by chance, nor is it by the rule or power of evil over the will of God - it is only being allowed to happen because of the will of God and it is come into play to fulfil His plan and purpose. Those who are true have a hope that is beautiful and secure and therefore they should entrust their souls to the Lord who created and redeemed them (Warren Wiersbe in his commentary in this verse points out that this word "entrust" is the word that often refers to a "deposit for safe keeping" in banking terms), for He is good and the outcome for them will be good. And incidentally - just to remind us and them - while all this is going on - however uncomfortable life may be - the redeemed are called to do good - in every situation - remember - the cause of Christ is lifted by the positive response of His children - even in the face of persecution and abuse - even if that persecution or abuse comes from those who are close to them.

I believe that it is important to point out that this is not a call to remain in a situation of physical abuse - 1 Corinthians 7:11 indicates that in certain circumstances it is permissible to separate but not to be unfaithful or seek a divorce in those situations - but if there is persecution for your faith in the situation that you are in - then the instruction is to trust God and do good, even to the ones who are responsible for the abuse or persecution, since by doing so we bear witness to our confidence in God and our hope in Christ - and who knows but that we may "reap coals upon their heads" (**Romans 12:20-21 ; "To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**") and so by their own guilt the Lord may in fact bring them to repentance such that they to turn to Christ for salvation if they are among the ones named before the foundation of the world.

Chapter 5

Study 36

1 Peter 5:1-4

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

As we come into the final chapter of Peter's first letter to the saints we come to a change of tone and a change of tack. Up to now as we have seen - we have received the instructions from Peter and from the Holy Spirit as to how we - the saints - should behave in the world. In the process of doing this Peter has revealed some key doctrines to us and clarified them by the way that he has expanded the effects and consequences for us and for the world. Also he has shown us, from time to time, the example of Christ as an illustration of how we are to behave - particularly in the face of persecution. But now the focus changes, as Peter addresses the leaders of the saints in these communities in these first 4 verses. So we will try to deal with these tonight.

Verse 1 - "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed:" - Peter is now directing his comments to the Elders who have the responsibility for the flock. Firstly he establishes once again his authority to address them as an Elder himself. Notice - he is not using the term "Apostle" - the time for the Apostles is coming to a close. The Apostle John in the latter stages of his ministry stops referring to himself as an Apostle also, if we look in his letters, he repeatedly refers to himself as "the Elder". **The Apostolic era is ending!** In these last 6 decades the modern church has decided that it has the right to declare a new apostolic era which has given rise to people calling themselves apostles all over again - but scripture shows us that the apostolic age was the time of the completion of the scripture as the Christ appointed Apostles brought the doctrines of the church together and formulated the letters to the churches that are the revelation of the mysteries previously hidden and finally revealed, along with the instructions to the churches on matters of behaviour and responsibility.

As it says in Ephesians 2:19-22; the Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the church and the era, we see, is now passing away and the batten is being passed to the Evangelists and Pastor/teachers, and an Elder's qualifications must include the ability to teach. Elders are known by the various titles, all of which mean the same thing - those titles being Elder, Overseer, Bishop or Pastor - they are the same function - unfortunately - we have had this truth smudged by the traditions and hierarchies of the various denominations who have been unbiblical in taking these titles to mean **different** roles within the church, but they are not - they never were intended to be different. They are all transliterations of the same words in the original texts.

In addition, here Peter not only identifies himself as a fellow Elder but also as a witness of the sufferings of Christ - once again establishing his authority through association with Christ, therefore establishing that he knows what he is talking about when he has been showing the saints the way that Christ responded under persecution. He also confirms that he too will be "a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed" - what an assurance both for him and for us, since he has already confirmed that, for those who are among the elect, they too will be partakers of that precious hope - that living hope.

Verse 2-3 - "shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock." - Here then is the Elders exhortation from the Holy Spirit via the pen of Peter - "to shepherd the

flock" - to be their pastor - their teacher - their example - their protector - their overseer. No small task to be sure! Notice though that the function should not be an onerous task - "not under compulsion, but willingly" - In Paul's letter to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:1 Paul says that a person who "aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." So this should not be something to be avoided but grasped by those in whom God places the desire - in James 3 - James says that not many should desire to become teachers as they will be judged with greater strictness, nevertheless - the church needs elders and those who have a desire to serve in this way should be evaluated and if they are able they should be encouraged in that role. But their motives must be pure and holy and not for personal gain or for power. Not domineering - for sure there is a necessity to be solid and to be strong, when it is required, in order to protect the flock and ensure that there is a sound understanding and application of the true Gospel and of true biblical teaching, but there must never be a power game in play - Christ is the example - He was strong in the face of error and held firmly to the truth against all comers, but He was also the one who cared for the flock and was the finest example to us.

Verse 4 - "And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." - He is coming back, and when He does he will reward those who have fulfilled their role in accordance with the mandate and example that He has given - that reward - "the unfading crown of glory". Commonly referred to as the Elders Crown, one of the 5 crowns that are available that we have previously discussed when looking at 1st Corinthians 3:12-14. Here it clearly is mentioned with regard to Elders, but I believe that it is all those Christian leaders who take responsibility for the church in any way and at any level, small group or large, who will be judged and evaluated in this way by the Lord.

Study 37

1Peter 5:5-7

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

In the first verses of this chapter Peter was addressing the Elders - those to whom responsibility for shepherding the flock was given - and providing some specific guidance to them with regard to the way that they fulfil their role. Now, in these next verses the picture opens out to that flock for whom the Elders are responsible.

Verse 5 - "Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." - It is suggested by some interpreters of this passage, that this is simply Peter telling the young men to be respectful towards those in the fellowship of believers who are older than they are, but that would suggest a switch of meaning from the first verses - it might be possible I suppose, that Peter could have been following a line of thought that comes from word association, but frankly that is very unlikely because of the word that he actually uses which is not just a word that refers to an older person in general - the word in both cases is in the Greek "**presbuteros**" which is the word for that we discussed last week - the word for Elder/Pastor/Bishop/Overseer - it is the word from which we get the English word presbytery which means a body of Elders that lead a church and led to the name of the denomination known as the Presbyterians, so it is hardly likely that Peter was making any change in the focus. The more likely interpretation then is that those who are not Elders, but younger in the faith and in the fellowship of believers - alluding to the fact that the Elders were usually chosen from

among the older men, those with a greater experience and a maturity - remembering what Paul said not appointing those who were young in the faith so as to ensure that they did not become "puffed up" (2 Timothy 3:6) - these younger folk are here instructed to accept the Elders as their authority for their spiritual lives since the Elders are the ones who will be answerable to God for the leadership of the flock.

Humility - that elusive quality that once achieved is gone as soon as recognised! The most useful aid to humility is a real awareness of the truth, that without the work of Christ, we are all just filth fit for eternal destruction. I am reminded that Jesus made the observation that it is only those who are sick who need a doctor (Mark 2:14-17 paraphrased) - not those who are well. He was being sarcastic in the extreme when He said this to the leaders of Israel because they considered themselves to be righteous and in no need of a saviour.

Verse 6 - "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you," - Any who think too highly of themselves should beware - God brings to nothing the pride of mankind - but in humility, come before God and before each other and in due time the Lord will bring us to His place of glory and exalt us as those whom He has glorified (see Romans 8:30).

Verse 7 - "...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." - Then we have this beautiful verse that encourages us to cast all our anxieties on God. We have spent so much time over the months considering the might and majesty of God, and looking at some of the doctrines, that we have at times struggled with, that it is easy perhaps to lose sight of the wonder of this loving and gracious God, who has reached into our world and rescued us from the destiny that we deserve. This God whom we serve and who we seek to understand, is so inadequately described by the words of the recent song that we sing at times, that lists some of His attributes - Who is like our God – "Holy and intimate, Tender and strong, Patient and powerful....." "Mighty and innocent, Jealous and kind, Sovereign and merciful...."

This God that we serve and seek to understand is a God who cares for us so beautifully and so inexplicably, that we can cast all our anxieties on Him! We have no cause to be anxious over anything - as His chosen children we can trust that He will deal with every situation and every circumstance in accordance with His most perfect plan. Even when we walk a rocky road in this life - and let's be real, there are times when the road is very rocky indeed - we can be completely at ease in the knowledge that He is working out His perfect plan, the one that will bring glory to His Name and will bring His blessing to us as His children in the timing that is His – either here on this earth or in glory - that is for Him to decide - but it will happen, as we see in the wonderful promise that is given in Romans 8:28. This is not a guarantee of comfort in this life - but for sure it is a guarantee that the end result will be to our eternal benefit and to His glory.

However, there is something that we must be fully aware of – Peter in these verses is still talking to the elect of God – he has not switched. Sadly, the words of this verse in chapter 5:7 and those in Romans 8:28 are so often inappropriately quoted to people who are not Christians, as a placebo, when they are going through tough times. That is a wrong usage – these are words of assurance and encouragement to the children of God, those who are redeemed through the blood of the Saviour – they are not for general use – they are the comfort that is given by the Lord, to His true children, when they are in trials – they are nothing at all to do with the non-Christian.

Study 381Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

9 Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

After the comforting words of the last verses that we studied last time we looked at 1st Peter together, this week we have a slightly different tone - but an equally important one for Peter to bring to us as he draws this letter to a close - just as Peter is writing to the elect of the regions of the Roman Empire and through the God breathed Word is supporting and comforting them, so too the Holy Spirit writes to us in the church today with His words. The outworking of the trials that we face are different from the ones that they faced in their time - but that does not alter the situation with regard to the place from which the trials and persecutions come, nor does it alter how we should respond.

Verse 8 - "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." - We need to be alert - aware - not fooled - not ignorant of the situations that we face. "Be sober-minded, be watchful." So often as we go through our daily lives living in this familiar world we find ourselves following the same patterns of behaviour and responding in the same way to circumstances that crop up repeatedly, without stopping to consider what is actually going on, or even considering whether our response is correct. Instead we simply respond in the same way as we have previously! **But should we?** Consider the situations that we might include in this - some ideas - the tedious phone calls - the negative response from a family member - the same old "same old" at work - the banter with the friend that often follows the same or similar pattern - perhaps the habitual routine when dealing with someone that gets upset, perhaps situations where our own routine gets upset. How do we respond?

We are creatures of habit and often the habits that we develop involve responses and reactions that are perhaps not as they should be - we are being tried - facing a trial - and we don't even realise that we are doing so because it is just part of life's rich pattern. This verse calls us to be sober-minded - what does that mean? We need to deal with every situation that arises with our eyes open recognising just what is going on and checking how we respond to see that our responses are the responses that truly reflect the Christ-like character that should be coming from us. The trials are allowed by God and are part of our process of sanctification - and I believe that we will continue facing the same trials over and over again until we learn how we should correctly deal with them. God is gracious and the desire of His heart is that His children grow in their pursuit of holiness, so why would He remove a trial that is designed to hone our sanctification before that honing work is completed?

So - where do these trials come from - well - God certainly allows them - but as we have considered before - the means of God's fulfilling of His perfect plan in this is the action that is meant for evil purpose by the devil, by Satan himself - he is the worker of evil and the tempter of mankind. It is him who brings adversity and motivates others to bring us into that place of failure. Does that mean that he is the one who can be blamed for our sin? No - it is us and only us who have to face that responsibility - we live in a world that diagnoses sound reasons for wrong behaviour and wrong responses - usually relating to a person's history or circumstances - psychology desperately attempts to make no choices sinful - only identifying the sinner as a victim of circumstances - but this is not true - it is in fact part of the curse

of Romans 1:18-32. The sin of men and women - and of children - is his, her and their responsibility and no one else's - and until we each recognise that fact there will be no growth and no sanctification.

Yes - Satan motivates the temptation - but the choices that we make that are sinful choices are our choices not his.

So - we need to be alert - awake - aware, because Satan is presenting temptations before us day by day - moment by moment - and if we are not open eyed, then we will simply fall headlong into the same sins over and over again.

There have often been things said that reflect these sort of things- that if we do something once - it is an event - if we do it every day for a week it becomes a habit - if we do it for a month it is a behaviour and for more than one month it is a way of life after that it is a short step to becoming a character flaw

Once this happens then we are on a slippery slope - as it was said by one preacher I listened to recently - we do not fall into sin - we invariably slide into sin by repeatedly allowing ourselves to slip over the same things and steadily slipping further each time. Remember - **"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."** Therefore, be sober-minded and watchful.

Verse 9 – “Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.” – We each have the responsibility to resist Satan – in fact to resist the temptation to slide into sin – we have the means (1 Corinthians 10:13) the question remains however – do we have the will to resist? Everyone faces these challenges – there are those who believe that sanctification is fully in the hands of the Holy Spirit and so all we have to do is trust God and He will grow us to be more like Jesus – in His own good time and dealing with things as and when He chooses – but this verse makes it very clear where the initial responsibility lay. It lays with you and me – it is up to us to resist the devil and to stand firm in our faith. But Peter reminds us that we are not alone in this endeavour – we stand with those who are true brothers and sister everywhere – in every part of the world, and we face not only the same temptations but also we have to face the persecutions that are ours to bear as God works out His plan.

Study 39

1 Peter 5:10-11

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

11 To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We read these 2 verses last week when I read 8 and 9 just to keep the context and likewise we should consider them in the full context of 8-9 this week as we look at these 2 verses in particular

As I said last week as an introduction, verse 10 is not a sticking plaster for all kinds of ills - it has been incorrectly used that way on multiple occasions and I am very aware that there are many times that verses like these are taken out of the context and applied in situation where they simply do not fit the bill – situations where they are wrongly used to suggest that there is a promise of earthly healing for those who claim to be Christians, tends to be the most common

misuse – or even in situations of financial hardship - places that they were never intended to apply. This is something that we need to be very careful to avoid in our interaction with others.

Scripture is a wonderful tool when used correctly - but when used incorrectly it is not only very wrong, it is an abuse of God's Word - we need to study to learn how to use Scripture correctly ourselves, and we should never be afraid to challenge its incorrect usage.

Verse 10 - "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." - So just by way of a reminder - the verse before have been discussing the need to be on our guard, alert, sober-minded, because Satan, our enemy, is roaming around seeking whom he may devour. We need to guard ourselves against temptation and be aware of trials that we face and the persecutions that come upon us - be diligent, be alert and be aware - strive to walk in the right manner and resist the devil by standing firmly in our faith in Christ - being in the Word and ever increasing our understanding of the standards of righteousness that mark out a true Christian walk, working in co-operation with the Holy Spirit as we grow more Christ-like day by day - avoiding those sins that come from following frequently followed patterns of behaviour - but instead we should look afresh at the daily situations that we face in order to be able to see more clearly where the devil is laying temptation before us to encourage us to slip and follow the desires of our flesh , desires of our eyes or the pride of life (1 John 2:16).

It is therefore in the context of these things that Peter brings these words to our ears. We need to recognise that life, walking the path of right and doing battle with the trials and temptations that we face, is not an easy course to take and though the Holy Spirit is our constant strength and the Encourager, who resides within us, the battle is one that we have to be committed to and very much involved in – this is front line action - choosing to overcome sin by our willing determination to invoke the strength of the Holy Spirit and co-operate with Him to discover more and more how to stand in the face of temptation – how use the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God as a precision weapon, an instrument to enjoin battle with sin and deal with trials and persecution as we overcome those things in our lives that we face every day. Of course – that begs the question – do we want to change to honour the Lord and be obedient, or is our walk about being satisfied with where we are – content not to pursue the holiness that we are called to strive towards?

In this context then, we only have a "little while" to suffer - we are here but only for what is a fleeting moment by comparison to the eternal future that we have before us, eternity to be in that place of perfection with Him, when we will no longer have either the trials or temptations, nor will we have persecution or rejection to deal with any longer.

We have been called to the "eternal glory in Christ" by God Himself and what we have before us is so vastly superior to anything that we can imagine here on earth that we can have, not only peace in the hope of our future, but also a joyful anticipation as we await the consummation of all things - the eternal hope that is ours in Christ - the redemption of our bodies (**see Romans 8:22-25**). In that situation, at that time, we will be the recipients of the blessings outlined in this verse, for Christ Himself will restore us, confirm us, strengthen us and establish us for ever once we are with Him.

But that is not the only promise - there is the future one - the one that we saw at the beginning in 1:3 "the living hope" of glory, but here we see something else too - here we see there is a promise that come to us as we face the problems of the life we are now involved in - for when we face those difficulties squarely and honestly with the power of the Holy

Spirit at work within us, standing firm as we saw last week "firm in our faith", then we will also experience the strengthening and encouragement of Christ as he will "restore, confirm, strengthen and establish" us in the things we do and grant to us the uplifting delight of the knowledge of His, restoration, confirmation, strengthening and sound establishment in Him, upon Him and with Him day by day as we continue in the battle on that front line. We sometimes question if we will have what it takes to stand in the face of persecution – by His strength we will if we are obedient to Him and stand.

How do we know this? - Because of the truth of the next verse:

Verse 11 - "To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." - God is Sovereign - Christ is God made manifest - Christ is Sovereign - because through Him all things were made and without Him nothing was made that has been made - **see John 1:3 and Colossians 1:11-23** - read these verses and consider.

WHATEVER LAYS AHEAD WE FACE IN THE POWER OF CHRIST AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HE HAS DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS!

Study 40

1 Peter 5:12-14

By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

13 She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.

14 Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Here we are then at the final 3 verses in the first book of Peter. The wisdom and advices of the Holy Spirit expressed through the pen of Peter and the priorities that Peter had laid on his heart for this epistle have been declared and written down for the elect exiles of the dispersion in the areas that Peter is writing to, under the direction of God through the power of the Holy Spirit; writing the letter to those Christians in the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. But as we know - since this is one of the treasures of the New Testament canon of Scripture - not just for them, but for us also. As we come to these concluding 3 verses we meet some people who we should perhaps spend a little time considering and that is my intention over the last study periods of this letter.

Verse 12 - "By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it." - As Peter has worked through this letter Silvanus has acted as Peter's amanuensis, a kind of secretary - a recorder of the words and helper - not quite a co-editor, but not completely without input either. Silvanus is someone that we have a considerable amount of information on. But we might better know him by the other version of his name, Silas.

In **Acts 15** we meet Silas - a brother in Christ who was sent along with Judas Barsabbas from the Council of Jerusalem to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch with the advices and ruling of that council that the gentiles were not required to become proselyte Jewish converts so over-ruling the heresy of the Judaisers. Later, Paul took Silas on his second mission journey that included Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Athens as we see in **Acts chapters 15 - 17**. This of course included being thrown in prison in Philippi and the miraculous local earthquake that freed them from their bondage, leading to the conversion of the prison guard and his family, who then joined with Lydia in establishing the church in Philippi. He also accompanied Paul on one of his trips to Corinth since Paul referred to him teaching there in his 2nd letter to them (**2 Corinthians 1:19**)

Peter declares in this verse that the purpose of this brief letter is for "**exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God**" and for certain as we have looked at the context and content of the letter we have found that this is the case.

Right from the start Peter declared what we now refer to as "the Doctrines of Grace", confirming that rebirth, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, is an initial requirement before a person can come to obedience in Christ, and even before that He affirmed the doctrine of election. In deed as we have gone through the letter, there have been so many of the key biblical truths that Peter has brought to us and explained for us so that we can have no doubt about the validity of these doctrines, and then - having taken us on this journey - Peter makes this final exhortation to us; "**Stand firm in it**" - leaving us in no doubt about our responsibility to hold to the truths of these teachings even when they are unpopular in the culture and even in the culture of the church such as we see today.

Verse 13 - "**She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son.**" - This would seem to place Peter in Babylon on the face of it - but that is not the case - the true town of Babylon famous as the centre of Nebuchadnezzar's Empire was by this time a ruined small garrison town, a place where - as far as it is know - Peter, Silvanus and Mark never went together, so this must mean something else.

Remember that at this time there is incredible persecution - the ancient city of Babylon represented all that was evil - also recognise that the Roman Emperor, Nero, has become manic in his hatred of Christians - finally add to the picture that the church is often referred to in Scripture and in the Apostolic time as the bride of Christ and so carries the gender identification of a female. So; "**She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings**" is a coded phrase that is designed to protect the people involved and it means - "the elect of God who make up the Christian church in the city of Rome" sends you greetings.

The last phrase of this verse refers to Mark - "**and so does Mark, my son.**" - this is a study all of it's own, and one that I love to do so perhaps we could take a few moments and indulge my personal delight by looking at this a little more closely.

This is a young man who crops up all over the place in the New Testament. Here, as Peter refers to him as "my son" we know him to be referring to him as a spiritual son in the Lord. We know too that Peter collaborated with this young man in another endeavour, but before we get to that let's go back to the beginning.

Marks Gospel 14:42-53 - Gethsemane - a young man ran away naked and timid. The boy - it has been suggested that this may have been the boy of the household where the last supper took place and he had followed Jesus and the disciples into the garden having been in bed, he quickly grabbed his sheet and wrapped himself in it to follow them when they left - intrigued as most young boys are.

Acts 12:1-17 - The prayer meeting was at Mary's house - John Mark's mother's home - by this time he will have been a little older - but still a young man

Acts 12:25 - Paul and Barnabas take this young man on their first missionary journey with them - what an adventure for him!

Acts 13:13 - Mark could not keep going - we do not know why - he was young - perhaps scared - perhaps homesick - but whatever - he goes home and leaves the men.

Acts 15:37-40 – There was a dispute between Paul and his friend and co-worker, b

Barnabas over John Mark that led to a split. Barnabas takes John Mark and they go together to Cyprus to minister there - Paul refuses to trust Mark at this stage and takes Silas as we saw earlier

Colossians 4:7-11 - Paul encourages Mark - he is restored in the mind of Paul - but also we see why Barnabas took Mark's side - he is Mark's cousin

Philemon 1:19-23 - Paul commends Mark to his friend

2 Timothy 4:9-15 - Paul in his final days not only has forgiven Mark but now refers to him as being a blessing to him in his situation - Mark is now fully restored

And here in the text in **1st Peter** we see that Peter is calling him a son.

What is the other endeavour that Peter and John Mark embarked on together? - The writing of the Gospel of Mark the precious experiences of Peter the Apostle edited and composed by Mark through their collaboration. That is why the story of the boy running naked is only found in Mark's Gospel - because he was the only one who knew about it happening.

What a wonderful young man - not strong - but certainly chosen and though with faltering steps he was not one who hesitated to move forward, he pressed on trusting that God would direct him and correct him – no sitting on the sidelines waiting for big signs as to which way to go – rather, by his pressing forward, he served the Lord, served the Apostles and served us too in amazing ways and I for one am looking forward to meeting him.

Verse 14 - "Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ." - And finally Peter encourages us all to be affectionate together in the Lord showing His love to one another as true family in Christ should, and he closes by invoking the peace of God upon all of us who are in Christ - all of us then and down through the ages right through to now and beyond into the final days of this age until we all meet together from all generations as we come together in glory. Amen

The End