

# **Studies in 1 & 2 Peter**

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# 1 Peter 1

v. 8—This verse is set in the context of trial and suffering. These, if endured, will be to the glory and praise of those who are triumphant at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 8 now begins by sins, “You have never seen Him, but you love Him; even though you do not see Him you believe in Him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy.” “Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

v. 9—When Peter speaks of salvation in verse 5 he refers to our complete emancipation from everything that is earthly. We have not experienced this but will do so when Christ raptures us home.

In verse 9 Peter is reminding them that in another sense they had already received salvation, the salvation of their souls. It was a present reality.

By faith we appropriate this. See Hebrews 11:1—“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

v. 10-12—The prophets who prophesied about this salvation, searched and inquired diligently of the Spirit as to the time Christ would suffer and the glory that would follow.

According to Peter it was revealed to them that the things they wrote about were not for themselves, but for us. Through the gospel which has been preached and by the revelation of the Holy Spirit these mysteries from the OT have been revealed to us. The angels desired information about these things.

v. 13—Wherefore! Consider the circumstances. On the one hand the sufferings and trials; but on the other hand, the revelation of the salvation in Christ.

Circumstances are apt to get one down. Hence the exhortation “gird up the loins of your mind.”

Brace your minds; be alert, fix your hope unchangeably on the salvation and grace to be brought unto you when the Lord returns. One of the tragedies of the Christian life today is our lack of thinking. Peter exhorts us to think, be alert, and hope for the blessed hope.

v. 14—We are exhorted to be obedient children. We should leave the habits of our former life.

v. 15—The reason we should leave our former beliefs is because God is holy, Who has called us. Therefore, we should be holy in all our conduct and manner of living.

Every spiritual believer should aspire to become more holy every day that he lives.

v. 16—This verse presents the ultimate for us. It should read: “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” When Christ comes to rapture us all earthly traits will go. We will be changed, “our body will be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Philippians 3:21. We will be holy in the absolute sense.

v. 17—And if you address as Father, etc. This verse reminds each believer that our Father is judging our life impartially. Therefore we should conduct ourselves in the light of His all-seeing eye.

v. 18-19—Redemption by blood. In these verses Peter sweeps away every vestige of reason that they might have to cling to their Jewish faith. He says distinctly that

we are not redeemed with silver or gold. Our redemption is through the precious blood of Christ.

v. 20—He was chosen for this task before the world was, but in the end of the age He was manifested for this purpose.

v. 21—He not only is the slain lamb, but He is also the resurrected Christ. He was crucified in shame, but God resurrected Him and gave Him glory.

v. 22—Our souls are purified by obeying the truth. The outcome of this purifying is that through the Spirit we love our fellow-believers with unhypocritical love, or sincere affection.

Then comes the injunction, “see that you keep on loving each other fervently from a pure heart.”

v. 23—The new birth. We are not “born again” of corruptible seed. See John 11:12. The new birth is a mysterious affair. See John 2:8. The Holy Spirit is the active agent in the new birth. The Word of God is the seed He uses to produce new life.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” Romans 10.

The Word of God is a comprehensive term and certainly would include the message of the Gospel. This Word is incorruptible and abideth forever.

v. 24—In contrast to the eternal nature of the foregoing, we have the transient nature of man.

v. 25—Peter winds up his treatise by reminding us that the Word which has been given to us in the gospel endures forever.

# 1 Peter 3

Verses 1-7 describe our conduct in relation to matrimony.

Verses 8-22 describe our conduct in a general way.

v. 8—The word “finally” suggests that all doctrine should issue in conduct. Each believer has definite conduct obligations to fellow Christians. Believers should seek for unity of mind. While we may not be of the same opinion in some matters, we should be one in our loyalty to Christ. The nearer we are to Christ, the nearer we will be to each other. We should sympathize with one another. We should love as brethren, be tender-hearted, and courteous to each other.

v. 9—Not only has the believer an obligation to fellow believers, he also has an obligation to those who are his enemies. Every believer has those who are opposed to him, who would injure him by word and deed (especially God’s servants). What attitude should we take? We are forbidden to return evil for evil, or insult for insult. On the contrary, we should pray for their blessing, we should leave all in God’s hands who will recompense in due time. Peter says, “Unto this you are called,” meaning, God expects us to “bless and curse not.” If we do this, “we will inherit a blessing.”

Many of us totally underestimate the government of God in our lives. His eye is ever upon us. When we bless our enemies, the Lord will bless us in this life and in the life hereafter.

“To return good for evil is God-like.

To return good for good is man-like.

To return evil for evil is beast-like.

To return evil for good is devil-like.”

Verses 10-12 are a quotation from Psalm 34.

v. 10-11—In this context the truth expressed is rather startling. Longevity and prosperity are apparently acquired by bridling an evil tongue. By turning away from wickedness, by searching or pursuing after peace. Pursuing after harmony and quietness from fears, agitating passions, and moral conflicts.

The pursuit of these things, plus the acquiring and practicing of them, apart from spiritual benefits, will bring health, long life and prosperity.

v. 12—“The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous.” For protection and guidance, He gives watchful care.

The “righteous” are those who do not render evil for evil, and those who bridle an evil tongue. The Lord’s ears are also open at all times to their prayers.

On the contrary, “the face of the Lord is against those that do evil.” Those who walk in the ways of the world, returning evil for evil, insult for insult, and who possess an unbridled tongue.

From verse 13 we come to an entirely new section of the epistle. It runs from 3:13 through 4:6. It could be entitled, “Patience in suffering for righteousness’ sake.”

v. 13—Peter says that, generally speaking, when we zealously follow good, none will harm you.

v. 14—He makes provision for the exception. If you do suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed indeed.

Do not be afraid of the threats of your adversaries, nor be disturbed by their opposition. This was good advice for those strangers scattered abroad for their faith.

v. 15—"Sanctify the Lord God in your heart." The lordship of Christ is in view here. If in persecution, the Lord reckons it is for our good. We honor Him as Lord. Because Christ is Lord in our lives we should live above our trials and express a hope for the future, and when asked by anyone why we can do this, we should be able to give a logical reason for our hope.

v. 16—"Having a good conscience."

A good conscience is basic to all godly living, and the answer to the hope that is in us. How do we obtain a good conscience? By acknowledging the lordship of Christ, by following the Lord, by doing that which is right, our unjust accusers will be ashamed.

v. 17—It is better to suffer unjustly for doing right, if that should be God's will, than to suffer justly for doing wrong.

v. 18—Put to death in the flesh, made alive by the Spirit.

v. 19-20—These are controversial. What we believe they mean is that Christ preached to the people of Noah's day by the Spirit. See Genesis 6:3. Their spirits are now in prison. Mention what He did not do. Purgatory, restorationism, universalism.

v. 21—This verse is also used to teach that salvation is by the ordinance of baptism. Ephesians 2:8-9 says that salvation is through grace by faith. If water baptism had power to save Paul would have written about it. In fact, Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel." 1 Corinthians 1:14-17.

The meaning as I see it at the moment is, the ark, a type of Christ, saved Noah and his family through the water of the flood. Believers are saved though that which baptism figuratively speaks, the death and resurrection of Christ.

That baptism does not save is taught in the words, “Not the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh.” It is rather the answer of a good conscience toward God. He asks us to be baptized to have a good conscience before Him, so we should obey Him in baptism.

### **1 Peter 3, from Verse 18**

v. 18—Peter has been talking about suffering. Those to whom he was writing knew all about suffering, they had been scattered abroad in persecution and were enduring untold suffering on account of their faith.

In verse 17 he reminds his brethren that it is better to suffer for well-doing if this be the Lord’s will than for evil-doing.

Verse 18 is a perfect example of this principle: “Christ also has suffered the just for the unjust,” etc. His suffering was not for His own sins. He was just, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. His suffering was different from our suffering because His was atoning. “To bring us to God.”

He was put to death in the flesh, but He was made alive by the Spirit. See Romans 8:11.

v. 19—By which (or whom—the Spirit) He went and preached to the spirits in prison. The question, “When did the Spirit (of Christ) preach to the spirits now in prison?”

Verse 20 gives the answer, “When the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.” Through Noah, the Spirit of Christ preached to the people before the flood whose spirits are now in prison. “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Genesis 6.

Consider now the phrase “eight souls saved by water.” Upon this phrase and the following verse those who believe in the doctrine of “baptismal regeneration” lay great emphasis. They say baptism is essential to salvation. Such a theory clearly denies the great salvation passages—Ephesians 2:8-9, etc.

Lack of baptism did not keep the repentant thief from going to Paradise. If water baptism has power to save, surely Paul would not have written, “I thank God that I baptize none of you but Crispus and Gaius, for Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel”—1 Corinthians 1:14, 17.

v. 21—The first phrase in this verse is difficult to understand. Noah and his family were not saved by water. They were brought “through” water by the ark. These things, says Peter, are types or figures of our experience today. Believers are saved through Christ and Christ alone.

The flood separated the godly from the ungodly, so one baptism separates us from the world and is the outward expression of our salvation in Christ. Our baptism typifies what Christ has done in actuality for our salvation. The word “save” in our text is not salvation in its fullest sense. It seems to imply that when we are baptized we are saved or cleansed from a bad conscience. In other words, Christ expects us to be

baptized and in doing so we cleanse our conscience by obeying.

The culmination of Christ's suffering is His glorification.

v. 22—Peter, like the other apostles of the first century, was strong on the resurrection of Christ.

A description of His final glory is prefaced by the phrase, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God," etc.

The truth expressed here is known to His children but of which the worldling is ignorant.

1. Christ is at the right hand of God. The place of highest power and glory. Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, 10:12.

2. His exaltation displays His supremacy—"angels and power being made subject unto Him."

In His ascension Christ passed through the realm of the prince of the power of the air—Satan (Ephesians 2:2). He also triumphed openly over that demonical empire—Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 1:19-23. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him," etc.

Man gave Him the lowest place on earth. God has given Him the highest place in heaven. He is crowned with glory and honor.

## 1 Peter 4

v. 1—The word “forasmuch” links the theme of chapter 3 with the first six verses of chapter 4.

Peter reminds his brethren who were suffering for Christ that he also suffered while here in the body. We also must be prepared to suffer. Then Peter drops another of his had-to-understand statements, that the one who “suffers in the body has ceased from sin.” What he means by this is that where we have the mind of Christ and we patiently suffer and resist all temptation in an effort to please God we are kept from sin.

v. 2—In this condition the believer no longer spends his life pleasing his human appetites and desires, but he lives to do the will of God.

Two kinds of life are suggested here:

1. The will of the flesh—fulfilling its lustful desires.
2. The will of God—which could include suffering.

v. 3—Two periods of time are also mentioned:

1. “The time part of our life.” During this time we lived as the heathen did. Described in the remainder of the verse.
2. The second period is suggested in the words “the rest of his time” from conversion. This is the remainder of our life on earth, this should be under the control of the Holy Spirit and be for the glory of God.

v. 4—The worldling cannot understand this kind of life and even pass judgment on the believer.

v. 5—Those who slander believers for their godly living will some day be judged by God.

Judgment for all men is certain:

1. The judgment seat of Christ.
2. The judgment of “the living nations.”
3. The judgment of “the great white throne.”

v. 6—Because of these judgments, says Peter, the Gospel is preached to them who are dead in sin, so that they may be saved and life for God upon the earth.

## 1 Peter 5

In reading through Peter's epistles we cannot help by being impressed with the fact that they are of a pastoral character. Evidently Peter remained true to the commission he received from the Lord to "feed His lambs and sheep."

These elders to whom he wrote were true elders. They were mature, spiritually-minded brethren. They already were doing the work of an elder. They were not appointed by men, but raised up by God the Holy Spirit. Acts 20. They were men who had distinguished themselves in service, and were singular in character and repute in spiritual things.

Peter approaches his exhortation with humility. He does not appeal to his apostolic authority, nor does he put himself above the other elders. However, he does strengthen the exhortation by mentioning that he was a "witness of the sufferings of Christ." He had learned much from the example of the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. Peter also mentions that he will be a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. He had had a preview of that glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.

There was special need for this exhortation to the elders because the flock was being attacked by the hostile world.

v. 2—Feed, tend, shepherd the "flock of God." It is the elders' responsibility to feed the "flock of God" with the "Word of God." The word "tend" really means to shepherd the flock. Pastoring is a gift from the risen

Christ. This goes beyond feeding and would include care, protection, and leading—in fact, anything for the flock’s welfare. Isaiah 40:11.

Peter then instructs the elders how they were to discharge this responsibility. “Willingly,” not reluctantly or by “constraint” or compulsion. Nor was it to be for financial gain. But of a “ready mind” and a willing heart.

v. 3—This is an important verse. There is no room in God’s economy in the church, for domineering, self-centered, selfish leaders. Those who would shepherd or oversee the flock must, of necessity, be examples to the sheep. Then he is in the position to exhort, admonish, and rebuke.

v. 4—A shepherd should not look for praise in this life. Their ministrations may be unrecognized and unappreciated by others. But when the Chief Shepherd appears the faithful elder receive a crown of glory, which will never fade. The epistle opens with a fadeless inheritance in chapters 1-4, and closes with a fadeless crown.

v. 5—“In like manner.” As the elder/undershepherd is submissive to the Chief Shepherd, so should the assembly be to their elders. Peter exhorts especially the younger to submit themselves unto the elders. If this godly precept is followed, much trouble will be avoided. In addition to this, Peter exhorts us all to clothe ourselves with “garments of humility.” This is in contrast to garments of pride and vain glory.

Pride is a roadblock to all spiritual progress. He gives His grace to the humble.

v. 6—We are exhorted to humble ourselves before God, and at the proper time God will exalt us.

v. 7—While we are awaiting God's proper time for our blessing we have to make a definite commitment of our cares and anxieties to Him. See Phil. 4. God is not an indifferent spectator of His children's sufferings. This exhortation was particularly comforting to the strangers scattered abroad.

v. 8-9—"Be sober." Although we have been exhorted to cast our cares on God in verse 7, this does not mean that we can go through life detached or disinterested. Neither should it make us indifferent or indolent. We must think clearly and be alert, trusting God at all times, because the adversary the devil is pictured here as a roaring lion, prowling about, attacking and seeking victims whom he may devour.

v. 9—How do we resist him? The Word! By putting on the "whole armor of God"—Ephesians 6.

v. 10-11—Suffering was part of life for these dear ones. But as usual in Peter, alongside the suffering there is God's sufficiency and grace. And there is the glory to follow.

v. 11—This part of the epistle closes with an outburst of praise and adoration. "To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

v. 12-16—Peter mentions two brethren here. Sylvanus wrote the letter for Paul. Marcus was probably John Mark.

v. 13—"The church" could also be interpreted, "She that is in Babylon." Some think that this could refer to Peter's wife, or to some prominent sister in the church.

These The benediction—"Peace be with you all that are  
in Christ Jesus. Amen."

## **Introduction to 2 Peter**

The authorship of this epistle has been questioned more than any other NT book. The internal evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of Peter authorship.

1. The writer claims to be an apostle (1:1—3:2). This narrows the authorship to one of the twelve apostles.
2. The writer claims to have been on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord Jesus (1:16-18). This narrows the authorship to one of three men.
3. The writer states that this is his second epistle to the people addressed (3:1).
4. The writer had seen Christ in person (1:16).
5. The writer refers to the Lord's prediction of His death (1:14).

## **Purpose in Writing**

The second epistle was written for a different purpose than the first epistle. The first was designed to encourage and comfort believers under severe persecution. The second was to warn them against false teachers and their doctrine. The Lord's suffering is not mentioned in the second. The first was written to console. The second to warn. In the first we have much about suffering. In the second there is much about error. In the first epistle Peter was concerned about persecution that came from without. In the second epistle he is concerned about errors within.

All second epistles have a special bearing on the last days and instruct true believers how they should stand

in the face of increased apostasy and departure. 2 Timothy is a good example of this.

## **Time of Writing**

Peter was an old man and was thinking of death as predicted by the Lord. John 21:18-19.

v. 1—Simon Peter mentions his two offices. A servant—bondslave; an apostle—sent one. He was a gift of the ascended Christ to the Church.

Most tenderly he addresses his readers, the same to whom he sent his first epistle. He mentioned their precious possession: faith. This they received at their conversion “through the righteousness of God,” etc. Through the value of the work of Christ.

v. 2—This benediction of grace and peace would come through the full knowledge of God, etc. The word grace here denotes blessing. Peace is that which is produced through communion with God the Father and Son Jesus Christ. See Phil 4.

v. 3—In intimate “knowledge of God” produces blessing and peace, Peter also says that through “divine power” we have life and the expression of that life is practical godliness. God has called us to holy living by glory and virtue. We should be in life what He is by nature.

v. 4—Not only have we received divine power and full knowledge, but we also have been given exceeding great and precious promises. The reason for having received these promises is because we have become “partakers of the divine nature.” So then, we should show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness, etc. See 2 Corinthians 3:18.

That is the positive side. The negative side is that we escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. A consideration of these things shows us the wonderful legacy that has been given to the believers.

v. 5-7—Show us the development of the divine life received: the abundant life. Because of who and what we are we should make every effort to add to our faith the following virtues:

1. Faith is basic to all relationship and fellowship with God. All virtues issue from faith. Each of these elements is the sod in which the others grow.

2. From faith comes virtue. The qualities of Christ demonstrated from cleansed lives.

3. Knowledge. Read the Bible to acquire knowledge.

4. Temperance—self-control. Self-control over the body and mind. Temperate in all things.

5. Patience. Self-control is power over that which is within. Patience is power over that which is without.

6. Godliness. This embraces reverence and god-likeness of life.

7. Brotherly kindness.

8. Love. This is the climax: Love for God and love for our brethren.

The thought here is not that as time goes by the believer should add one of these qualities and then sometime later add another. All these virtues should be constantly present in each life. Peter lays great stress on Christian living.

v. 8—The believer who shows these virtues in their life will bear fruit and will never be idle nor unfruitful. In seeking after Christ, He in turn will produce this life in us.

v. 9—Those who lack these qualities are spiritually blind and oblivious to the fact that He has been cleansed from his sins.

## 2 Peter 1

Verses 5-7 describe for us “the abundant life.” Peter then says that if these virtues or excellencies abound in any believer he will never be idle nor unfruitful as he advances toward full knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 9—On the contrary, any believer who does not possess these qualities lacks sight, “being blind.” He lacks foresight (“he cannot see afar off”) and insight (“he has forgotten that he has been purged from his old sins.”

v. 10—Rather than being blind, be more active or eager to make sure of your calling and election by displaying or practicing these virtues. When these excellencies are displayed in a believer’s life it assures him of God’s calling and election. We will never stumble, that is, we will never doubt that God has called us.

v. 11—Any believer living the abundant life, displaying these eight virtues, possessing an ever-increasing knowledge of Christ and rejoicing in the certainty of their calling and election shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. See Hebrews 11:24-26.

v. 12—Peter says to those to whom he wrote, “You may know these truths but I mean to keep on reminding you of them.” One of the chief opiates of Satan is to instill forgetfulness into the hearts of God’s people. For this reason God’s servants must constantly remind God’s people of the great truths of our faith.

v. 13—Peter is drawing to the close of his life. As long as he is permitted by God to remain in the body he is

determined to stir them up and put them in remembrance of the doctrines of the faith.

v. 14—Peter makes reference here to his martyrdom. He says that this was shown to him by Jesus Himself. See John 21:18-19.

v. 15-18—Peter recalls the Transfiguration experience. He wants to leave a record of these things for posterity. This is Peter functioning as an elder, “Feeding the flock.”

This passage is introductory to that part of the epistle in which Peter takes up prophetic truth. But before he takes a look at the future he finds it necessary to state clearly the absolute reliability of what he calls “the sure word of prophecy.”

v. 16—The prophetic utterances Peter had made were not the figment of his imagination. Nor had the apostles devised them. Peter says that on the Holy Mount “we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” 2 Thessalonians 1.

v. 17—Christ is now supreme in Peter’s mind. Describe the voice from the most excellent glory.

v. 18—This voice came from heaven. These events transpired on the Holy Mount.

v. 19—Because of this revelation, prophecy is more than sure—it is confirmed and guaranteed. Take heed, pay attention to it, believe it. Treat it as a light that shines in a dark place until the coming of the Lord.

v. 20—Prophecy is not a matter of one’s own interpretation. In other words, the prophetic Scriptures must be taken as a whole, not singly.

v. 21—The great truths of prophecy did not originate in the heart of man. But special men, holy men, were

chosen by God. These were then used and moved by the Holy Spirit to write of future events.

Therefore no one should interpret the Scriptures to suit their own understanding, but Scripture should be compared with Scripture.

## 2 Peter 3

This is the coming of the Lord to the earth, not the Rapture.

v. 1-2—Peter wrote to his fellow-Christians to “stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance.”

He had two things in mind:

1. That they may be mindful of the writings of the OT prophets. These predict as the first and second advents of the Lord and also foretold His millennial reign.

2. That they may be mindful “of the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior as given by the apostles.” Christ’s teachings through the apostles fulfill the spiritual promises of the OT, but they go far beyond them. He wanted them to remember that God has exalted the rejected Christ and made Him to be Head over the Church, and Chief Supreme over creation. Through Paul God revealed the Rapture. The glory connected with His return to earth is also revealed through the Lord Himself and through His apostles. The best antidote against false teachers and teaching is to be acquainted with the Word of God.

v. 3-9—The certainty of Christ’s second advent is shown. To the believer there is nothing more certain than the Lord’s coming. The prophets of the OT and the apostles of the NT, plus the Lord Himself, accept it to be an established fact. Do we? But Peter says here that especially towards the end of the age mockers will scoff at the idea.

In chapter 2 the false teachers will deny the Lord that bought them. In chapter 3 scoffers will deny the second coming of Christ. The scoffers base their denial on appearances.

v. 5-7—In taking this stand, they deliberately ignore the creation story. They do not accept the flood as a fact. They scoff at future judgment of the world and the destruction of the godless. This is not altogether surprising. “The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit”—1 Corinthians 2.

v. 8—These wicked men ridicule the second coming of the Lord. “Where is this promised return?” they say that the time factor involved proves to the intelligent mind that such an event is incredible. Peter says to his brethren in Christ, “Do not let this one fact escape you.” “One day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” “A thousand years is as a day with Him.”

Peter is not trying to bring God within the compass of human comprehension. He is rather showing that God is eternal. The age of grace seems to be a long period of time, humanly speaking, almost 2,000 years. In God’s reckoning it is not yet two days since the promise of His coming. “If I go I will come again.”

v. 9—Peter says, the Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise. The reason He hasn’t come is because He is being patient. He does not want any to perish, He wants each to have an opportunity to repent of their sins.

Verse 10 introduces us to a very interesting study. The present creation in which we live is destined to be destroyed, because it is stained with sin. Every trace of sin will be removed.

Verse 10 tells us how it will be accomplished. Note the two expressions: “The Day of the Lord” and “The Day of God.”

“The Day of the Lord” is that period which is ushered in when the Lord returns in power and great glory, at the end of the Tribulation. This “Day” will continue throughout the Millennium and will end with the dissolution of the present earth and heavens. Surprisingly Peter says that this Day will come as “a thief in the night.”

Despite the many signs that the prophetic Word says will precede the “Day of the Lord”, this day will come unexpectedly upon mankind.

Some of the signs:

1. The rapture of the Church.
2. The unconcern and apostasy of the professing church.
3. The revelation of the man of sin.
4. The great Tribulation.
5. The appearing, the ministry, the slaying, the resurrection, and the ascension of the two witnesses.

Despite these signs, blatant unbelief will so dull the senses of the deluded unbeliever that that “Day of the Lord” will be unexpected. The final event in the Day of the Lord will be the burning up of the natural creation.

v. 12—At this point the “Day of God” will be ushered in. this is the eternal state, where righteousness dwells, not reigns as in the Millennium. See Revelation 21.

There is a practical application of this truth.

v. 11—What manner of persons ought we to be?

1. Believers should be characterized by holy living and God-likeness.
2. Believers should be in a state of expectancy, “Looking for and hasting unto.”
3. Believers should be diligent to be found in peace, without spot, and blameless when Christ returns.
4. Believers should display evangelistic zeal in view of the delay in the Lord’s coming. Peter urges this and suggests that Paul does also.
5. Believers should be steadfast in the faith.
6. Believers should grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior.

Peter concludes his letter by ascribing glory and honor to the Lord in this present day and also throughout eternity.

# **The Principle of Holiness**

## **1 Peter 1:15-16**

### **The Meaning of Holiness**

Holiness in a believer denotes separation from and separation unto. In its primary sense it means separation unto God. The resultant state of this separation is separation from sin. This blessed condition makes a believer's body sacred, dedicated, hallowed and holy.

The believer, in the ultimate sense, is the temple of God. He is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and member of the body of Christ, and is bound to the Triune God, who is independently, infinitely, and immutably holy. He is glorious in holiness. Exodus 15:11.

Let us see what the OT says about God's greatest attribute. He is oftener mentioned as being holy than being almighty. Exodus 15:11; 1 Samuel 2:2; Deuteronomy 4:35; Isaiah 6.

In the presence of that awesome holiness the seraphim, creature of burning purity, cover their eyes, as if afraid to gaze upon or desecrate that absolute holiness.

On the other hand, it was the vision of the holiness of God that changed Isaiah's life and made him a great prophet. In the blaze of that unapproachable light, his eyes were anointed, his lips were made holy and became the instruments of God. The victorious Christian life and fruitful service comes after a vision of the holiness of God.

Moses—Exodus 3.

Joshua—Joshua 5:15.

John the apostle—John 13:23.

Saul of Tarsus—Acts 9.

Power is God's hand or arm, omniscience is His eye, mercy is His compassion, eternity is His duration, but holiness is His beauty.

Because God is so holy and beautiful, we all should desire to be conformed to His holiness and beauty. We are not commanded to be omnipotent or omniscient, but we are commanded to be holy. "Be ye holy for I am holy."

Beloved, our God is beautiful—He is solitary in His majesty, unique in His excellency, peerless in His perfection, and awesome in His holiness.

Such a One must be obeyed, served, revered, adored and worshipped.

In the context of the absolute Holiness of God we hear Peter say, "As He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life. Because it is written, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'" These words were first spoken to Israel. God insisted on the purity and holiness of His people.

Let us look at a few things that God insisted on and compare them with what He desires for us. They were not to inter-marry, as this would defile the holy seed.

Paul says that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. This unequal yoke extends into the marital, business, and social spheres. They were not to worship their gods.

We are urged by John to keep ourselves from idols—1 John 5:21.

They were not to commit the sins of the heathen nations. We are exhorted to have no fellowship with darkness in its many forms. They were to be a separated people.

We are urged to come out from that which is evil or has the appearance of evil, and to be separate. Perfecting holiness in the fear of God must be our aim. 2

Corinthians 7:1. those who respond to the above experience in its fullness the Fatherhood of God.

Beloved, those chosen for the New Birth are also called to a holy life.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9—Spiritual purity and holiness comes from the cleansing by the Word as applied by the Spirit. 1 Chronicles 29:5.

# **The Holy Priesthood of the Believer**

1 Peter 2:4-5

In 1 Peter 2:4-5, Peter describes the privileges the believer has in the new temple, the church, and the new priesthood. He claims, "Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." We should notice how Peter makes Christ the center of 1 Peter 2:5. This "living stone" should be understood as Jesus Himself! While He was indeed God, He also became man. He was disallowed, despised and rejected by apostate and ungodly religious men. There was not even room for Him in the inn at His birth. Metaphorically speaking, men both then and now have no room for Him in their hearts.

Peter begins by describing how in God's sight, the Lord is "chosen and precious." (1 Peter 2:4) Why is He precious and chosen in God's sight? He is chosen as the Living Stone because there is no other! In God's purposes and plan He is indispensable, the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is also precious because His value to God is inestimable and beyond computation. The Lord Jesus is the indispensable and incomparable one in God's plan for the church and His plan of salvation. He is the living, precious cornerstone in every generation. Quoting Psalm 118, Peter goes on to say, "Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." (1

Peter 2:7) Not only was He perfectly suitable to meet God's demands against sin, He was the only one who could meet man's need. He was the only sure foundation upon which to build the Church.

In 1 Peter 2:5, we are also introduced to the concept of "spiritual houses" in contrast to the inanimate temple, which is a building of beautiful but lifeless stones. While there are obvious contrasts between the temple and the church, there are also similarities. The main one is that the Temple is the dwelling place of God on earth - Jesus - and the church is the dwelling place of God on earth today. Who then are these living stones dwelling in the church today? Ephesians 2:19-22 addresses this. Paul says, "You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." This means that believers themselves are also living stones, built into a spiritual house, to become holy priests.

Let us consider the fact that in Old Testament times, the priesthood was restricted to the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. However, even the normal priests were not permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest could enter within the veil and be immersed in the Shekinah glory of God, and this is permitted only one day of the year on the Day of Atonement. In our new relationship with God, changed by Christ coming to Earth, all believers are priests and have immediate access into God's presence day or night. Their purpose

as holy priests is to offer up spiritual sacrifices rather than the animal, bird, and meal offerings specified by the Law. We should gather around Christ, by the Holy Spirit, in order to serve God.

Let us look at these “spiritual sacrifices” that are acceptable and pleasing to God, through Christ Jesus, in more detail. (See 1 Peter 2:5) Hebrews 13:15-16 gives us some direction about the nature of these spiritual sacrifices and the scope of worship related to these. We are told, “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Hebrews 13:15) Then we are reminded that these spiritual sacrifices involve good works as well as the sacrifice of possessions by sharing. We are told, “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (Hebrews 13:16) We also know that this sacrifice involves our whole body and being. Paul teaches us in Romans 12:1, “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” Paul also teaches us that the service to others is a priestly spiritual offering to the Lord.

In Romans 15:16, Paul says, “I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” How are our offerings made to be “acceptable” to our Lord? 1 Peter 2:5 tells us that it is through Jesus. Mary Bowles Peters, in her hymn, *The Holiest We Enter*, writes, “To all our prayers and praises, Christ adds His sweet perfume, and love the censer raises, these odors to consume.” In other words, our offering may be imperfect and flawed, but as it passes through the Lord Jesus, He sets it in order and

makes it acceptable to the Father. Beloved, what glorious news this is for us who, in our sin, cannot offer anything perfect to Him. He makes it acceptable and pleasing to our Father for us!

Peter continues to draw our attention to some other privileges that believers have today. In 1 Peter 2:9, he says that we are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” God had originally intended for Israel to fulfill the role of being a chosen nation and royal priesthood, but they failed miserably. Israel is plagued with unbelief and disobedience throughout the story of the Bible. During this present age of grace, the Church is privileged to occupy these distinct positions.

We are a chosen generation. Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:4, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” We are also a royal priesthood called “to proclaim the praises of Him” to the world. (See 1 Peter 2:9) As holy priests, we go into the sanctuary of heaven by faith to worship. As royal priests, we go into the world to witness through the Gospel. We can see a great example of this through the story of Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi. As holy priests, they prayed and sang praises to God. As royal priests, they preached the Gospel to the jailer. (See Acts 16:25-34) Lastly, Peter here is telling us that we are a holy nation, God’s special people. The last part of 1 Peter 2:9 shows what we must do with our lives. We should “proclaim the praises of

Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9) Beloved - let us go forth as priests to this world proclaiming what the Lord has done for us!