

PREFACE TO 1 PETER COMMENTARY AND WORKBOOK

I first started these commentary-workbooks years ago when I was preaching for the old Gragg Avenue congregation in north Memphis, Tennessee and the topics then were taken from Paul's letter to the Romans. However, my second effort never came until nearly forty years later while teaching the great book of Job at Forest Hill, Germantown, Tennessee, home of the Memphis School of Preaching. I have since finished one on James and now this one on 1 Peter. If God is willing, I will try to do this for all the books I teach from now until my death, and am starting one on Jeremiah that will cover my class this year at Forest Hill.

Each chapter of the workbook has its own series of questions to be used as study guides and are inquiries taken from the workbook commentary itself and not made up from the original Bible verses; although I have tried, accurately as possible, to follow the Bible text in my comments. Hopefully, the questions themselves will gender discussion in the classroom setting.

My darling Dorothy has suffered through surgeries and infections for several months now, and has improved somewhat. As always, I am dedicating this work and all my labors to her, after dedicating such efforts to the Lord. She is my light and my second best friend next to the Godhead. My prayer is that all such works as this one will give Him the glory.

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1 PETER: AN INTRODUCTION

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AUTHOR

The author, without exception, was the apostle Peter (1 Peter 1:1; cf. 2 Peter 1:1). Peter's father was Jona (Matthew 16:17) and his business partners were Andrew, James, and John (Matthew 1:18-22). The author's hometown was Bethsaida (John 1:44), but he moved to Jesus' headquarters, Capernaum (Matthew 8:5, 14). Peter was married (Matthew 8:14-15; 1 Cor. 9:5). He was chosen as an apostle (Matthew 10:2) and is listed first in the lists of those ambassadors for the Lord (Mark 3:13ff.). Peter is well remembered for his betrayal of Jesus (Luke 22:54-62). In fact, women brought the news of Jesus' resurrection, and Jesus questioned Peter's love for Him (John 21:15-17).

Peter was privileged to preach the gospel, along with eleven other apostles, on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 (Acts 2:11-41). This former fisherman was also privileged to open the gospel doors to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). Peter often would be persecuted and beaten (Acts 4-5). However, this former betrayer of Jesus had been "begotten . . . again unto a lively (living, K.M.) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

PILGRIMS

Peter wrote: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and *pilgrims*, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11, emphasis added). Folks who are travelling need a strong Leader (1 Peter 1:1, 21; 2:21) and Peter's audience got a "letter from home" about their Leader (1 Peter 1:6ff.).

Pilgrims who belong to Christ had good news to bring with them (1 Peter 2:11-12; *See the study worksheet on pilgrims following this commentary section.*) and their hearts were to be pure (1 Peter 1:2; 5:7).

Christian pilgrims must trust their Leader (1 Peter 1:13; 21), for they are a “chosen generation” (1 Peter 2:9); they must also love each other (1 Peter 4:8-10), and be law-abiding citizens of this world (1 Peter 2:13-17). The world of lust wars against God’s children, but they remain loving of all and humble toward all (1 Peter 2:11; 3:8-11; 5:6), for they are just journeying here to a final destination (1 Peter 1:4-7).

HISTORICAL SETTING

John Mark (the gospel writer of the material that bears his name) was with Peter when he was in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). Mark had been with Paul in Colosse about A.D. 62, and the young missionary was, at that time, about to go into Asia Minor (Colossians 1:10). When Paul was in prison in Rome, the second time, he asked Timothy to bring Mark with him who was still in Asia Minor nearly four years or so since his arrival there (2 Timothy 4:11). [Timothy was in Ephesus at that time.] So Mark could only have been in Babylon around A.D. 62, at the latest, to have been with Peter when he wrote this epistle.

Also, Nero’s persecution began about A.D. 65, and the above factors and the known historical time for Roman cruelty, puts the writing of the epistle between A. D. 62-67, and most likely around A.D. 64. Peter penned that he was in “Babylon” when he wrote, yet this place has been argued against for ages. Some think the term

is figurative of Rome or Jerusalem. But, a word *must* be considered literal unless the context gives adequate proof of being figurative.

Claudius Caesar had slain his wife in order to marry Agrippinna, mother of Nero, and Claudius then adopted Nero. Nero also poisoned his step-brother, Octavius, and ascended to the throne. Nero later murdered his mother, wife, and any others he thought would interfere with his reign.

KEY VERSE

Many see 1 Peter 1:16 as the key passage of 1 Peter, but to me the message of the apostle is best illustrated by 1 Peter 1:13—“Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Those to whom Peter first wrote were facing severe persecution unto death, and they needed to be reminded of the sweet sound of hope, joy, and love from the Christ. [Paul, from a dark, damp Roman prison, wrote to the Philippians and used the term, joy, twenty times!] Persecution should cause Christians to look beyond this life.

DESIGN OF THE LETTER

Peter set out to exhort his readers to faithfulness in the face of death. In order to encourage those who were under such a threat, Peter reminded them of the “true grace of God” (1 Peter 5:12). Therefore, every point of teaching from the apostle should be considered as truth, including his teaching on baptism (1 Peter 3:21). Those first-century Christians had nothing to fear in death, for they were faithful, baptized believers, and had obeyed the “true grace if God.”

CONCLUSION

Peter is often referenced as the apostle of hope, and the latter sobriquet is based on chapter one, verse three. It is obvious that the living grace of hope was centered in Peter's mind, and that he employed hope as the comfort for those Christians facing persecution and even death. Peter even reached out to his apostolic brother, Paul, and the former insisted that the two held the same faith (cf. 2 Peter 1:15). Peter further showed that he was familiar with Paul's Galatian letter and the Judaizers, but Peter sided with Paul, not the heretics (1 Peter 2:16). Peter also insisted that the gospel he had preached, penned, and praised was the "true grace of God."

1 PETER: AN INTRODUCTION
[WORK SHEET]

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. The book is a _____ epistle.
2. The author is _____, 1:1 and 2 Peter 1:1.
3. The author's father was _____ [Matthew 16:17].
4. The author's hometown was _____ [John 1:44].
5. But the author moved to _____ [Matthew 8:14-15]. This latter verse shows us that our author was _____. [See 1 Corinthians 9:5.]
6. The author was one of the original twelve _____ [Matthew 10:1ff; Mark 3:13ff,] His name is first in all of the lists.
7. He became _____ when he followed Jesus after His arrest, and our author _____ the Christ, but then our author _____ bitterly [Luke 22:31ff.].
8. Women carried the news of Jesus' _____ to our author [Mark 16:7].
9. The author was able to express his _____ for Jesus [John 21:15-17].
10. Peter was privileged to have his first gospel sermon recorded. Where is it located in scripture? _____
11. Peter was given the privilege of opening " _____ " [Acts 10-11].
12. Peter was often _____ and _____ during his early ministry [Acts 4-5].
13. The key word of this epistle is _____. To me, the key verse is _____. The need for this letter was the _____ faced by first-century Christians. [_____ was in power in Rome!] By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Peter was able to _____, offer them the _____, and to encourage them to _____. This letter was written about A.D. _____ or _____. Where Peter was when he wrote the epistle is not known. Perhaps 1 Peter 5:13 is a clue?

PILGRIMS [2:11]

14. We are pilgrims here: 1:1, 21; 2:21. We need a strong _____.
15. We are pilgrims here: This epistle is a _____ letter from home [1:6ff.].
16. We are pilgrims here and as we travel we have _____ news [2:11-12].
17. We are pilgrims here and our _____ must be _____ [1:2; 5:7].
18. We are pilgrims here and must, generally have _____ behavior [1:14-16].
19. We are pilgrims here and _____ the directions of our Leader [1:13, 21].
20. We are pilgrims here and we _____ [1:22; 4:8-10].
21. We are pilgrims here, but we leave _____ [2:9-10].
22. We are pilgrims here and are _____ abiding [2:13-17].
23. We are pilgrims here and can be targeted as _____ prey [2:11; 3:11].
24. We are pilgrims here and are _____ [3:8; 5:6].
25. We are pilgrims here and travel as _____ [3:12-13].
26. We are pilgrims here and can get _____ 3:12; 4:19].
27. We are pilgrims here and must be _____ [4:8-10].
28. We are pilgrims here and must be _____ for his journey [5:8-9].
29. We are pilgrims here and must _____ at times [5:10-11].
30. We are pilgrims here and always _____ our Leader [3:15-17; 4:16].
31. We are pilgrims here and will _____ on the way [4:12-17].
32. We are pilgrims here and should _____ other pilgrims [4:10-11].
33. We are pilgrims here, but we seek a _____ [1:9; 4:19].

1 PETER CHAPTER ONE: [VERSES 1-25]-- STUDY COMMENTARY

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

Our author is Peter, the former fisherman, but later an apostle of Christ, and Peter's name in Greek (*petros*) means "little stone." The latter Greek word is different from the one Jesus used when He said, "upon this **rock** I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18), for that was *petra*; that foundation rock is Christ and His deity (1 Corinthians 3:11). Caffin noted about Simon, now called Peter by the Lord, that: "he must have prized that name as the gift of Christ, reminding him always of his confession (Matthew 16:16, K.M.)" (Pulpit Commentary, 1 Peter, 1).

The term, *apostle*, is transliterated from *apo* (away from) and *stello* (sent). The record is that Peter's being sent from Christ to preach originated with the Lord (1 Peter 1:1). Great emphasis is given in the Bible about suffering and the resultant glory (Job; Luke 24:26-53). Peter faced much suffering, as foretold by the Lord (John 21:18-19), and the apostle will mention suffering fourteen times in the letter and glory twenty-six times. [It is the case that when each original apostle died, including Paul, no one was elected to replace that one, for he was still "in office" as a foundational authority (Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 2:20). Judas lost his position when he betrayed the Lord, and another had to be elected to take his place (Acts 1:15-26). There was no need then, nor is there one now, to add any new apostles to the number mentioned in scripture.

PETER'S ORIGINAL READERS

Chapter one contains the description of their status as faithful Christians. For it did not matter where they *were* as “scattered strangers,” or *what* was happening to them from their persecutions; they were saved (1 Peter 1:1, 7-9). As one preacher put it, “they were travelling from the cross to the crown” (notes from Winfred Clark). Note that their salvation was a result of God’s planning (1 Peter 1:2) and that plan of “election” included conditions (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). The saved then, and now, are part of God’s eternal plan (Ephesians 3:11) that He foreknew, and are set apart or sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the Word obeyed (John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:22). And, only the blood of Christ could accomplish such a plan (Hebrews 9:22). [The nations mentioned in verse one seem to indicate that the recipients of this letter were mostly from a Gentile background, who at one time were *strangers* from the Mosaic covenant (Ephesians 2:12), but now were strangers in the sense of being removed from their homes. Being faithful meant they were not strangers to God.]

The salvation of those persecuted folks was provided by God’s mercy (1 Peter 1:3-4). One could not possibly do enough to be saved, and God’s mercy is, thus, wonderfully mandatory. Because of His mercy we have hope and home (1 Peter 1:6ff.). Note that Peter was “begotten again unto a lively (living, K.M.) hope by the resurrection from the dead.” When Peter thought that his Master was dead and gone, the apostle said: “I go fishing” (John 21:3), but when he saw Jesus resurrected, Peter went to work “feeding the Lord’s sheep” (John 21:15-17). He had a new, living hope! Peter, as are all faithful Christians, was headed for an incorruptible inheritance in heaven because Jesus walked out of a tomb!

The salvation of those first-century brethren was preserved by God, and this fact was comforting, but also conditional. Their faith, as ours, must remain steadfast until the end (cf. Revelation 2:10). The prospects of heaven gave hope (1 Peter 1:7). Therefore, no situation was hopeless for those Christians, in spite of their trials, because of their trust in God (1 Peter 1:8) and in view of their coming victory over death (1 Peter 1:9).

EVEN THE ANGELS WERE, AND ARE, INTERESTED IN MAN'S SALVATION

Old Testament prophets wrote about the coming Messiah, but are pictured by Peter as often inquiring about what they were inscribing, because the prophets were *interested*, sincere and diligent in their search for understanding about what the Holy Spirit was telling them concerning the suffering of Messiah and His future glory (1 Peter 1:10-11; cf. John 5:39; Isaiah 53:1-12). Even the angels wanted to know about the mission of Messiah that would not occur in those ancient prophet's lifetimes (1 Peter 1:12).

The statement "which things even the angels wanted to look into" helps one understand Ephesians 3:10. The record there, penned by the apostle Paul is that the unveiling of God's plan, culminating in the church of Christ, was proof to the angels that God's wisdom is the church. "To the intent, that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The angels, when viewing the church on earth, were able to see the perfect conclusion to God's eternal plan to have one church for all people. Such an effort required providential control of centuries, nations, and history to produce such an effect!

In the next statement, Peter wrote that the ancient prophets often asked the Holy Spirit what it was they were penning (1 Peter 1:11). The prophets thus knew that the voice they were hearing was from heaven and that what they were writing was a holy message; they just had to know what the prophecy meant and the answer was that it was not for their times, for the prophecy was about the Messiah's coming and that His crucifixion that would occur later in history (1 Peter 1:12; cf. Acts 26:22-23). [Even the apostles, themselves, could not understand the crucifixion before it occurred; Matthew 16:22-23.] The Old Testament prophets were told that their messages were for the Messianic age (cf. John 5:39); that the Holy Spirit gave the New Testament writers the new message, and that even the angels in heaven desired to know such things!

Because of the fact that those Christians had the complete message, they were to prepare their minds for the persecution they faced, and do so with great fortitude (1 Peter 1:13). Every Christian must, with intense thought, reflect on the glory of his hope and the extent of his responsibilities, all the way to the end of his life. Realizing that when they get to paradise nothing that happens here matters, is a great and sobering fact for the faithful who act as "obedient children" (1 Peter 1:14a). Those who give in to worldly worries and lusts are acting like sinners and not like God's children (1 Peter 1:14b).

God's children, facing persecution or not, are to be as holy as they can be in life, for the One they serve is completely holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). The Father judges rightly according to every man's works, and one of those "works" is faithfulness in the face of death; for one is to fear God not life (1 Peter 1:17). The basic fact that

motivates the Christian is that he is redeemed by the Christ's precious blood, which is far more valuable than anything the world has to offer (1 Peter 1:18a). [There really is no human language to express the glory of the atonement on the cross.] A former life, even that taught by preceding generations or parents is never better than obtaining salvation from the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18b-19). How precious is the blood of Christ that was the price that purchased our salvation?

The plan to save man by the blood of the God-man, Jesus the Christ, was in force *before* God created the world (1 Peter 1:20a; cf. Acts 2:23). The Word came to earth, was named Jesus, and gave Himself as the propitiation for mankind (John 1:1; Matthew 1:21; 1 John 2:1-2). All of the foregoing events were made known in the last dispensation of time known as the Christian age (1 Peter 1:20b). The knowledge of the cross and the glory God gave to the Christ are the leading factors in the Christian's obedience to the Father (1 Peter 1:21). The Christian's soul was purified when he obeyed the gospel truth that was revealed by the Holy Spirit, and the result was an unpretentious love of fellow Christians (1 Peter 1:22).

The new birth is achieved by obeying the gospel of faith, repentance, confession of the deity of Jesus, and baptism in water in order to the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 17:30; 1 Timothy 6:12; Acts 22:16). Jesus called the former actions as a birth of "water and Spirit" (John 3:3-5). One who obeys the gospel becomes a New Testament Christian and is said to be "born again" by obedience to the message (1 Peter 1:23). Unlike denominational teaching that one becomes a Christian and then is "born again" to receive some miracle indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Peter insisted that one became a Christian *when* born again (1 Peter 1:23-

24). And, all of the actions to become a Christian were commanded by the gospel or word of God (1 Peter 1:25).

CONCLUSION

A Christian's hope is God-provided, God-protected, and practical even in the face of death. The fact of the cross and its redeeming nature are sobering and factual to God's faithful. The born again are obedient children of a gospel plan that was predetermined, predicted, and performed by deity. How glorious is such a plan!

1 PETER: CHAPTER ONE (VERSES 1-25)—WORKSHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. The author is _____, whose name means _____.
2. The theme of chapter one is that the disciples are _____, for they are traveling from the _____ to a _____. See Luke 24:24-26, 44-46. They are a _____ people in spite of _____ they are, and _____ they are suffering.
3. Their salvation was _____ of God (1:2).
4. Their salvation was _____ by God's _____ (1:3-4). Note that the statement in verse one about _____, was usually applied to _____.
5. Their salvation is _____ by _____ (1:5). This latter fact is both _____ and _____.
6. The fact of being saved gives reason to _____ (1:6-9).
7. The gospel of salvation was _____ in the _____ (1:10-11).
8. The good news was _____ by the _____ (1:12).
9. The gospel _____ a Christian to _____ properly, by inspiring _____ hope (1:13) and, therefore, the gospel is _____ in its effect.
10. The gospel message _____ on _____ (1:14-15).
11. The gospel message _____ for the Bible (1:16).
12. The gospel message _____ in one's life (1:17).
13. The gospel message was _____ by the _____ of Christ (1:18-20).
14. The gospel message _____ our great _____ as being in God (1:21).
15. Salvation has a prerequisite in _____ (1:22).
16. Salvation is _____ by the _____ of God (1:23-25).

What is election as taught in the Bible? What is the foreknowledge of God, and how does it not interfere with man's will?

1 PETER CHAPTER TWO [VERSES 1-25]—STUDY COMMENTARY

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CHRISTIAN GROWTH IN VIEW EVEN IN TIMES OF PERSECUTION!

Because Peter's readers had been born again, (1 Peter 1:23), they had some things to "put off" in a determined way, as indicated by the Greek verb tense (1 Peter 2:1a). Note that those Christians were not yet sinless, but they were saved; in fact, they never would reach sinless perfection (cf. 1 John 1:7-10). But, neither would they "continue in sin" (Romans 6:1-2). That is, as God's children, they were to work to eliminate a sinful life-style and/or sinful attitude; this was a life-time effort and is still a worthwhile effort for modern children of God (1 Corinthians 15:58). Christians are to put off the old man, and put on Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:8-10; Romans 13:14).

The sins mentioned in verse one, here, are the opposite of the "unfeigned love of the brethren" (1 Peter 1:22). Peter listed ***malice [kakian, evil disposition]; guile [dolon, craftiness; an artificial demeanor]; hypocrisies; envies [zelos; bad feeling that another has what we should have]; and evil speakings [katalalias; bad uses of the tongue against another; compare a backbiter]*** (1 Peter 2:1b).

Note that the evils mentioned are closely related to each other and each arises from an evil disposition toward another (cf. 1 John 4:20; Ephesians 4:22-31).

Instead of manifesting an evil attitude (and these folks were being persecuted, remember), one should desire to know the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2). A preacher once told me that he held back the 'meat' of the Word, because his brethren were only ready for the 'milk.'" He had the idea that some passages were

meat and that others were milk. There are no such ideas in God's Word, and who would decide such anyway? There are "milk" and "meat" Christians (1 Corinthians 3:1-2), I suppose, in terms of what each needs to know, but, if a part of God's Word were held back, by some preacher or teacher, when would anyone learn anything knew? Peter said the *whole* Word of God was to be wanted in similar fashion to an infant's craving for milk.

Some try to use Jesus' statement to the apostles: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12) as proof that some things should be held back in teaching, but He was speaking to a group of men who had not received the fullness of the truth as yet (John 16:13). People learn at differing rates, but no one can be the arbiter on what part of God's Word should be held back, and what part should be taught. Such a view might find the teacher skipping parts of verses! Teachers are to use the entire Word when instructing (2 Timothy 4:2).

There is an "if" that provides the motivation to desire God's Word (1 Peter 2:3; cf. Psalm 34:8). If the Christian is spiritual enough to perceive God's gracious act of salvation found in Christ, such knowledge should impel an interest in studying the Bible. Those who do not want to do such perusal are those who have little, if any, love for the Author! Note at 1 Peter 2:4 the words, *as unto*, are in italics (KJV), and that means they were added to the original text by the translators. In this case, I am persuaded that the added terms take away from the meaning and thus the sentence would be: "To whom coming, a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." Who could deny how wonderful was the gift of God's Son for the salvation of mankind? Peter says there were men who did (and do so), but those

who know and love what He did find Him *precious*, as already did the Father Who sent Him.

Those who find Him precious are the new priests of His kingdom (1 Peter 2:5). As living stones in the new temple, or church of Christ, they are the only ones who can make spiritual offerings to God (cf. Acts 2:38-42; cr. Hebrews 2:12). More than seven centuries before He came, Isaiah prophesied that the Christ would be the “cornerstone” of all things pertaining to salvation in the church of Christ (Isaiah 28:16). Those who believe and obey the Son of God are never “confounded” or “put to shame” by their knowledge of and obedience to the true Savior (1 Peter 2:6). Therefore, He is the Head to all true Christians, and never is their allegiance given to any pope, cardinal, human priest, or denominational pastor (1 Peter 2:8). The ancient Jews wanted a military messiah, and the Greeks thought it foolish that a “god” could die, but “Unto us which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Christians are a “chosen generation” (cf. Isaiah 43:20); a “royal priesthood” (cf. Exodus 19:6; LXX version); a “holy people” (cf. Exodus 19:6); a “peculiar people” (a “people for God’s own possession,” ASV) (1 Peter 2:9). Christians of all nations are one kingdom, under one King, separated from the world of unbelief; their tasks are to “show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Revelation 5:10). New Testament people are the “people of God” and no others are (1 Peter 2:10). New Testament Christians are “aliens” to this world (1 Peter 2:11; See the study on pilgrims just after the introductory study.) Note that Peter insisted that “fleshly lusts war against the soul,”

which doctrine heretics deny who argue that what one does in one's body does not affect the soul, for once one is saved, say they, he is always saved (cf. Romans 6:12).

Christians must be good influences in their communities (1 Peter 2:12), and they must obey the laws of those communities which laws do not conflict with obedience to God (1 Peter 2:13-14; Acts 5:29). It should be that the unbelievers in any community cannot bring accusation of illegal activity to the doorstep of a Christian (1 Peter 2:15). [Recall right here that the communities then were persecuting the faithful.] No Christian can abuse his freedom in Christ by treating anyone else, even the persecutors, with malice (1 Peter 2:16). The command is that all other people must be respected, though they are unbelievers lost; the brotherhood must be loved; [See the special study on the latter point at the end of this chapter.]; God must be feared and human leaders must be respected (1 Peter 2:17). See 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

Peter saw no difference in respect from a Christian toward a good or bad slave owner (1 Peter 2:18). Such a principle would apply to relationships with employers, and the result of enduring would be that God would find the mistreated Christian who persevered in faith without complaint or blaming God, worthy of thanks from heaven (1 Peter 2:19). If one suffers because of his own wrongdoings, that one cannot expect to be blessed by God (1 Peter 2:20). "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22).

Christ left the only perfect example of how to endure suffering (1 Peter 2:21). See Isaiah 53:7-8. Jesus is the *hupogrammon* (over-writing, translated *example*) Who is to be copied in the ways of enduring suffering. [I was given a "letter pad," when in

grade school, that had beautifully formed cursive letters at the top of the page. On the lines below I was to learn to form those well-done letters by copying them. I noted on my old pads that the closer I was to the top of the page helped me to make the letters as they were given.} One who is trying to emulate Jesus will do better the closer he stays to the Word of God. Jesus was sinless, committed to the will of God no matter what, and willing to take our places on the cross (1 Peter 2:22-24). We were in a helpless state of sin, and only He could satisfy God's demand for justice and man's need for forgiveness (1 Peter 2:25; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

CONCLUSION

Christian "freedom" is an obedient one, to authorities, but especially to God. The first readers of Peter's letter were being persecuted and even dying because they were Christians. But, even then they were to desire the Word of God, grow thereby, and submit themselves to righteous suffering. Such efforts would receive the highest praise from heaven and bring eternal rewards to those so doing. Through all of those trials, the hope of heaven was to be held high.

1 PETER CHAPTER TWO (VERSES 1-10)-- WORK SHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. Peter's readers had been born again, but they had to "put off" what?
2. What did the apostle John indicate concerning sinless perfection (1 John 1:7-10)?
3. Paul objected to continuing in sin (Romans 6:1-2). Why?
4. The sins mentioned in 1 Peter 1 are the opposite of what?
5. What great desire did Peter want his readers to have (1 Peter 2:3)?
6. What is it that should cause such a great desire in the Christian? (The precious memory of the Christ, 1 Peter 2:4-8.)
7. Who is the cornerstone and precious stone and what kind of "stones" are Christians (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:5)
7. What did the Jews want in a messiah, and what disappointed the Greeks about Jesus (cf. I Corinthians 1:21-24)? But, what is He to a believer?
8. List the four descriptions of Christians (1 Peter 2:9). What were some Christians and what were they when Peter wrote (1 Peter 2:10)?
9. Who is the perfect example of endurance through suffering, and how is He described by Peter (1 Peter 2:7)?

1 PETER CHAPTER TWO (VERSES 11-16)—WORK SHEET

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1. The gnostics taught [and teach] that the flesh is evil, and that what one does in one's flesh does not affect one's soul. How does 1 Peter 2:11 answer such a doctrine? If what one does has no effect on one's soul, would not "once saved always saved" be a true doctrine?
2. What is the Christian's duty to the community (1 Peter 2:12)?
3. How may of man's laws may be disobeyed by a Christian [including speeding] (1 Peter 2:13)?
4. Government is God's tool for the punishment of the evildoer (1 Peter 2:14). Note now Romans 13:1-8.
5. What can "well doing" accomplish in this world (1 Peter 2:15)?
6. Since the Christian is "free" from the bondage of sin and is special as a child of God, what might be his temptation concerning the world (1 Peter 2:16)?

1 PETER CHAPTER TWO (VERSES 18-25)—WORK SHEET

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1. An employee to employer relationship principle is taught at 1 Peter 2:18. What things can be changed where you worked or work that would involve your Christian character?
2. What is the Christian's attitude toward wrong treatment by an employer or worldly person (1 Peter 2:19)?
3. Is there any blessing from God when one is suffering because of one's own actions (1 Peter 2:20)?
4. The term "example" at 1 Peter 2:20 is *hupogrammon* in the Greek. What does it mean that Christ is the "over-writing" for the Christian? How does the fact that Christ was sinless affect the concept of some children of God that they "sin every day?"
5. For what *two* reasons did Jesus die on that cruel cross (1 Peter 2:23-24).
6. How is Christ a "Shepherd and Bishop" (1 Peter 2:25)?

1 PETER CHAPTER THREE [VERSES 1-18a]—STUDY COMMENTARY

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

It is amazing to me that even though the apostle, Peter, was writing to Christians who were probably facing death because of their faiths, that Peter still insisted that their responsibilities at home and in the community had not changed. Chapter three, of this epistle, begins with the teaching that right relationships are not altered by outside pressures when God's children are involved. A Christian's life is ruled by spiritual values and not physical ones (Mat. 6:33). Woods noted that the teaching about servants and masters (1 Peter 2:18-25) preceded the next "social element" of the relationships between husbands and wives (86, 1 Peter 3:1-7).

Viewing the world from heaven's perspective is a change in thinking for every convert to Christianity (Romans 12:2). And the home and its responsibilities are seen as conducive of salvation, if each person carries out his God-given tasks. There are definite marital responsibilities, the first of which involves the situation of a Christian woman married to an unbelieving husband, and thus this home was divided (1 Peter 3:1). [It is important here to know that the state of womanhood in the first century for non-Greeks was said by Aristotle to be deplorable—Woods 86.]

Simply because this Christian woman was married to a non-Christian did not change her need to be in subjection to him. "Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands" (1 Peter 3:1a). Note that the word *likewise* refers to Peter's earlier instructions concerning slaves and masters, and the benefit of maintaining her place with him may have an added benefit: "that, if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (1 Peter 3:1b).

The believing wife faces an obligation that may well become an opportunity (cf. Ephesians 5:22-32; where the two are both Christians). The husband may not obey the “word” or gospel right away, but he may be won if the wife does not nag (“without the word,” i.e. from her) by her beautiful life lived before him (1 Peter 3:2). The nature of her *concession* is to influence her husband for the good by her *conduct*,

Peter described her “conversation” [i.e. manner of life] by defining her outward and inward demeanors (1 Peter 3:3-4): “Whose adorning, let not be that outward adorning of plaiting of hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” Her *character* is of primary importance. Many women place great importance on their outward appearance, but to Peter a woman with a spiritual perspective would place greater importance on her spirituality. [Some wonder if it is wrong to use jewelry and make-up, but such was not Peter’s intent, for he added, “the wearing of apparel,” and it should be obvious that he was not instructing Christian women to go without clothes.] The spiritual point is that God always looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7), and the Christian wife’s perspective will always be seen in her self-control and calmness of spirit (1 Peter 3:5-6).

Her spiritual attitude will affect her husband, and if saved he will begin to show due consideration for his wife by understanding her nature and needs. He will surely cherish her and share her prayers (1 Peter 3:7). It is obvious that when the husband-wife relationship is strained, their prayer life will be hindered. [The term translated *giving* appears here for the only time in the Bible and means *to assign*,

indicating a deliberate effort on the husband's part resulting from a right relationship with God. The word *honor* here is translated as *precious* in 1 Peter 1:19!] She is only *weaker* in her physical prowess, not in character or strength of endurance; for she is a *fellow heir* of eternal life.

Peter's special instructions to slaves and the married ends with a charge to be compassionate, loving, and humble-minded toward all (1 Peter 1:8; cf. Ephesians 4:32). How one does such is listed in verses 9 through 12. Paul and Peter were on the same page when it came to attitude (cf. Romans 12:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:15), and both were echoing the Lord (Matthew 5:39). Even the Old Testament principle is the same here (1 Peter 3:10; from Psalm 34:12-16). Those desiring to continue the good life under God are to *pauo* [refrain; i.e. cease] from the wrong uses of speech, and are to *ekklino* [turn away] from listening to perverse things! After all, God is watching, and will not honor the prayers of evil speakers (1 Peter 3:12).

A principle laden with paradox is next in Peter's letter, for one doing good ***will not be harmed*** (1 Peter 3:13). Yet, Peter was writing to those being persecuted for their faiths! However, when one considers a right Christian perspective, one can trust that even if killed, paradise awaits. There is a tremendous blessing in knowing that *suffering for righteousness' sake* has a reward (Matthew 5:10). There is, also, always the need to be able to defend one's willingness to die for the faith, else one would be questioning God about such persecution (1 Peter 3:15). And, when one knows he is right with God, it does not really matter when the world mocks such faith (1 Peter 3:16), and even God has greater approval for such a Christian (1 Peter 3:17; cf. 1 Peter 2:20; 3:16; 3:18).

Jesus went through such trials, and Christians are certainly of less value than He (1 Peter 3:18). [Woods took note of the fact that “every word in this verse is vitally significant” (99).] The Lord suffered *for our sins, once [only one offering by the Perfect Lamb was enough to satisfy God’s justice], He was just, not we and He did so to “bring us to God.”*

CONCLUSION

Christian women married to unbelievers have special problems and obligations, but so do husbands (1 Peter 3:1-7). Christians have many walks of life, but they are to maintain Christian attitudes even in the face of persecution (1 Peter 3:8-17). Even Jesus suffered unjustly (1 Peter 3:18).

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1 PETER CHAPTER THREE (VERSES 1-7)—WORK SHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. This chapter begins with a discussion of _____

2. The Christian perspective taught here must be _____ in nature.
3. There are _____ (1 Peter 3:1-7).
4. The “homemaker” must make a _____ (I Peter 3:1). What is it?
5. The “homemaker” has a certain _____ and _____ (I Peter 3:1b-2). This is equivalent to something Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. See Matthew 5:13-16.
6. The “homemaker” has an _____ (1 Peter 3:3-4). What is it on which worldly women place great importance?
7. The “homemaker” has a special example to follow. How far back does the example go and what could this mean to homemakers even today?
8. The “husband” has a spiritual perspective too (1 Peter 3:7). What does this verse teach and what is the importance of this principle concerning prayer and worship?
9. Is there any difference between wife’s perspective and a husband’s in the marriage relationship?

1 PETER CHAPTER THREE (VERSES 8-18a)—WORKSHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. What admonitions followed Peter's "special instructions to "slaves and the married?"
2. Show that Paul and Peter were on the same page when it came to right attitudes for all Christians.
3. What is it that can hinder one from having his prayers honored by God?.
4. What did Peter mean when he wrote that those who are doing the good "will not be harmed" (1 Peter 3:13)?
5. How is the one suffering for Christ rewarded?
6. What is 1 Peter 3:15 teaching in the context of persecution?
7. What if one is mocked for being a Christian? And, at what point does God give approval (1 Peter 3:16-17)?
8. What are the grammatical significances about Christ at 1 Peter 3:18a?

1 PETER CHAPTER THREE (VERSES 18b-22—COMMENTARY)

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

In 1848 a preacher by the name of Jesse Babcock Ferguson, local preacher for the church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee took over the *Christian Review* magazine from Tolbert Fanning. Ferguson was both eloquent and brilliant and West added that: “he knew it” (261). West then insisted about Ferguson that: “Flattery fell abundantly upon his head, and he grew vain and proud, losing at the same time, his spirituality” (Ibid.). Ferguson changed the name of the paper to *Christian Magazine* and in April, 1852 began to set forth his views on 1 Peter 3:18-20 (West 263).

Ferguson wrote that the language conveys the idea that “Christ by his spiritual nature, or by the Spirit, did preach to the Spirits of the invisible world. And as if to include all, the apostle refers to those who died in disobedience in the days of Noah, which would make his language equivalent to all the dead; which he afterwards confirms by declaring that in order that Jesus Christ might be the judge of the dead and living, the ‘gospel was preached to the dead’—to those now dead--- not ‘in the flesh,’ ‘now in prison’ (Ibid). Alexander Campbell immediately responded in the *Millenial Harbinger* [Vol. I. No. 5, May, 1852], by calling Ferguson’s error a “posthumous gospel” (West 263). [Ferguson eventually apostatized into spirituality (West 264).

The commentary here is a brief look at the passage of 1 Peter 3:18b-22, itself, and a denial of a “second chance” gospel for the dead. It is the case that all souls in hell are all believers, and lost forever (Matthew 25:46).

EXPOSITION

The first words of 1 Peter 3:19 are *by which* and the pronoun refers to the Spirit mentioned in the last part of 1 Peter 3:18: “being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” [Note; there are no definite articles in the original language before *flesh* and *Spirit* and the verbs are aorist, indicating a definite, one-time action on the Christ, both His flesh and His Spirit. Jesus’ Spirit, as ours, was not affected by death (cf. 1 Timothy 3:16; “manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit”).] The living Spirit of the Christ is eternal (John 1:1) and He, therefore could preach, somehow, to those “spirits in prison” during the time that Noah prepared the ark. God said that He would tolerate those “spirits in prison” for just 120 years as Noah worked (Genesis 6:3). Note very carefully that when Peter wrote this the imprisoned spirits were *then* in that state, but were not at the time the eternal Spirit of the Christ preached to them (1 Peter 3:20).

The American Standard Version at verse 20a reads: “That aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God (120 years, as above, K.M.) waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.” The *spirits then in prison* had lived *aforetime* when Noah lived. Note that God’s *longsuffering* was concerning those of that day described as full of “wickedness. . .and that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). But, when Peter wrote they were in *prison*, i.e hell!

Since the Godhead has always given man the task of preaching, how did the Second Person of the Godhead preach to the ones living before the flood? The answer to the foregoing question is given by the apostle Peter himself: “And spared

not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a *preacher of righteousness*, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:4; emphasis added). Imagine preaching for 120 years and having only seven converts, and those from your immediate family: “wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20b; cf. Genesis 7:13). [The literal meaning of *wherein* is *in which* and Woods thought it meant *in the ark*, 102?]

Water, used in scriptural baptism for the remission of sins is not for the cleansing of the body, but for the rebirth of the soul (1 Peter 3:21). Peter is emphatic that only in the act of immersion is one saved! [Woods noted several likenesses between salvation in the ark and the soul’s salvation from sin, 103: (1) The waters of the flood carried the ark to safety, as baptism carries one from being lost to being saved (Mark 16:16). (2) The flood’s waters separated the saved from the lost, as does the water of baptism (Colossians 1:13). (3) The flood destroyed the evils of the ancient world, and at baptism God removes all past sins (Acts 2:38).]

Baptism is the “answer (ASV, *interrogation*) of a good conscience toward God.” In baptism the one being immersed seeks to present a good conscience before God (1 Peter 3:21b), and baptism’s benefits are because Jesus, Himself, was resurrected (1 Peter 3:21c).

The resurrected Christ now sits as King of His kingdom and at the very right hand of God (1 Peter 3:22). He is now the authority over all creation (cf. John 12:48; Matthew 28:18-20).

CONCLUSION

If the spiritualist were right, and he is not, how would he answer the inquiry as to why the Lord would give a "second chance" only to those who lived in the time Noah was preparing the ark? Too, why do all other passages on the soul's destination reveal no relief forever for the wicked? Certainly Peter would not contradict all of the plain passages on judgment.

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1 PETER CHAPTER THREE (VERSES 18b-22)—WORKSHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. What happened in Nashville in the 1800's concerning a preacher named Jesse B. Ferguson?
2. What would a "second chance" gospel be and mean?
3. What is the significance of the fact that there are no definite articles before "flesh and Spirit" at 1 Peter 3:18b? What is said here about Jesus' Spirit?
4. What is meant by the phrase, "spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:19)? When were they in "prison?"
5. When did the eternal Spirit "preach" to those mentioned in 1 Peter 3:20?
6. How, in reality, did the Second Person of the Godhead preach to those living before the flood? See 2 Peter 3:4-5.
7. What is Peter's emphatic statement about baptism (1 Peter 3:21)?

[1 PETER CHAPTER FOUR (VERSES 1-6)—STUDY COMMENTARY

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

Peter continued his exhortations, based on the fact of the suffering of Christ (from 1 Peter 3:21b-22), to those Christians who, themselves, were being persecuted (1 Peter 4:1a). Those children of God were to “arm themselves” with the same motives (mindset, K.M.) that sustained Jesus in his trials on the cross. Woods wrote: “This armor consisted in an unwavering faith in the righteousness of his (sic) cause and patient resignation in whatever might befall him here” (107).

“For he that has suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (1 Peter 4:1b) is a clause that was meant to describe the motives of those righteous followers of Jesus who faced martyrdom. The statement indicated to them that their faith to continue to the end was not an evil, but indicated how strong they were in not giving in to the lusts of the flesh in order to survive. “That” (1 Peter 4:2a) connects to the words “arm yourselves” in verse one. Those facing martyrdom are doing the will of God and not dying in vain (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). The phrase, “the rest of his time” is what is left of his life before death.

Enough time was spent in sin, and now it was time to live for God (1 Peter 4:3). [Lasciviousness is outward, unbridled lust; lust is evil, inward desire; excess of wine is drunkenness; revelings are wild parties; banquetings are drinking matches and idolatries are orgies.] All of the foregoing sins were/are loved by the Gentiles, but Christians have to quit such things. Woods penned: “The tense of the verbs in this sentence is significant. ‘Past’ is, in the Greek, a perfect participle, and ‘have wrought’ a perfect infinitive, declaring that the period under consideration had been

terminated and closed. The statement is one of irony, and means enough time, and more than enough, had already been given to ungodly living such as was generally characteristic of the Gentiles of that period" (108). Note that the Gentiles (i.e the world, K.M.,) are said to have "walked" in their sins; thus Peter indicated that they went eagerly going from sin to sin!

The baptized ones now needed to understand that their old "friends" who were still in the world would surmise that Christians were very strange for not associating in the former sinful activities (1 Peter 4:4). The phrase here at verse four, that is translated "run not," indicates that when those Christians were in the world, they were "eager" to sin by "excess in riot" [Greek: a "whirlpool of sin," K.M.]. Their former worldly associates, who were still practicing filthy sins, were now "speaking evil of them" as "goody, goody, two shoes" when they became God's children and terminated their former lustful activities (cf. James 2:7). Perhaps those first-century Gentiles became unfriendly, bigoted and anti-social, wondering why these Christians did not approve of their wicked life-styles. [Many in America today are saying that Christianity is a quaint but out-dated philosophy.]

Peter continued with: "Who shall give account," and the "who" are the blasphemous worldly described in verse four (1 Peter 5a). [The church of Christ also has in its membership those unwilling to serve their fellowman, and as such will also be judged as "goats" (Matthew 25:31-46).] The worldly are pictured by Peter as giving an account for bringing the righteous into their own judgmental thoughts (Peter 5:b). The "living and dead" is a phrase that is inclusive of all men, whether their bodies are living or in the grave. The judgment day is a universal doctrine and

in one way is comforting knowledge to Christians; for they know that those mistreating them will give an account of such abuse to Jesus at the time of the final judgment (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10).

1 Peter 4:6 is a controversial verse among the commentators, who differ on what it meant that the gospel was preached “also to them that are dead.” First of all the reason that the gospel was preached to the “dead” is that it is the exclusive power from God that can justify all who have lived, live, or will ever live (Romans 1:16). This “end” or “goal” of such preaching is the universal and constant teaching of scripture.

When Peter wrote the epistle, those to whom the gospel was formerly preached were then “dead,” but while they lived as obedient children of God, they were subject to the same abuse from the worldly that Peter’s present readers were. Those “dead” cannot be those mentioned at 1 Peter 3:19-20, for they lived during the time of Noah before the gospel of Christ was preached, and those antediluvians knew only the Patriarchal law.

CONCLUSION

One being persecuted for being a Christian is in great company; his Savior’s (1 Peter 4:1). It is comforting to realize that Jesus knows about persecution, and that He is with those so abused. And, the abusers face an eternity of hell!

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I PETER CHAPTER FOUR (VERSES 1-6)—WORKSHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. On what doctrinal fact did Peter base his exhortations to persecuted Christians (1 Peter 4:1)? What is the Christian's "armor" in facing trials and how does such motivate today?
2. How is it that one who suffered in the "flesh" has "ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1b-2)?
3. Describe the sins Peter mentioned (1 Peter 4:3) that are to be terminated when one becomes a child of God.
4. What attitude should the Christian expect from his former worldly friends, and how should God's child react (1 Peter 4:4)?
5. Describe what Peter must have meant by "excess of riot," and why would unbelievers think it strange that Christians are not involved in such (1 Peter 4:4).
6. Who are the dead to whom the gospel was preached (1 Peter 4:5-6)?

1 PETER CHAPTER FOUR (VERSES 7-19)—COMMENTARY

Keith A. Mosher, Sr..

Peter, in startling words, wrote: "But the end of all things is at hand" and then proceeded to instruct concerning proper perspectives for his persecuted readers (1 Peter 4:7-19). The majority of commentators are of the opinion that Peter referred to the judgment day as the "end of all things." However, because two-thousand years have elapsed since Peter penned the latter statement, it is contended by some that he was in error about an imminent second coming of the Christ, as were all the apostles (Woods 111). Other commentators, who are attempting to soften the blow of accusing an apostle to be in error, have noted that, with God, a thousand years is but as a day, so Peter could say the judgment day was "at hand" (Ibid. cf. 2 Peter 3:8).

If one were to take the view that the apostle was in error, one would be denying divine inspiration for him (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). And, to take the second view of a day equaling a thousand years, is to misinterpret 2 Peter 3:8 as literal, when in the context Peter was affirming that the passage of time does not affect God's keeping His promises. Some think that sine the text of 1 Peter was written for a specific time and place in which Judaism would receive the final death blow in A.D. 70, the "end of all things" is the end of Judaism (Woods (Ibid.)). There is one alternative meaning for Peter's statement and that is "at hand" could mean "near as compared to eternity," for Peter's readers were facing death for being followers of the Christ (cf. Hebrews 9:27).

In view of an end at hand, those Christians, and the concept is applicable to all children of God today, were to be steady in mind (*sober, seeing things in a proper perspective*) and were to “watch in prayer” (1 Peter 4:7). Peter was instructing them to preserve their theological sanity regardless of being persecuted; they were to look to eternity with a sound mind and *watch* by doing the will of God coupled with prayer.

During the time of vast martyrdom, Peter still insisted that those Christians were to have fervent (heated) love [as the love of a girl and boy] for one another (1 Peter 4:8; cf. Romans 12:11). Love does not absolve another of his sins [James 5:19-20], but if we love someone, we will not magnify their faults (cf. John 14:15-24; 1 John 2:3-5). When we have fervent love, we want to serve rather than condemn; therefore we should ask ourselves; if someone close to us sins, what will we do? And, a responsibility to strangers is found in the word translated *hospitality* in 1 Peter 4:9; a duty that is much emphasized for loving Christians (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Timothy 3:2). It is hard to convert someone without being thought of as a friend and since the early church met in the homes of one another, without love early Christianity would have struggled to exist.

Another proper perspective, even during times of persecution, was to *use* their miraculous gifts [apply to talents today], for serving others is *the* most important thing at judgment day (Matthew 25:31-46).

1 PETER CHAPTER FOUR (VERSES 7-19)—WORKSHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. What did Peter write was *at hand* in his day (1 Peter 4:7a)?

2. What do the majority of commentators think Peter meant by the above?

3. Some commentators think Peter made a _____ here concerning the

_____.

4. Some commentators use 2 Peter 3:8 here to say what? _____

5. What are the answers to the above ideas? _____

6. What seems to be Peter's meaning? _____

6. List the things those persecuted Christians were to practice, even though they faced death for their faith.

a. _____ (1 Peter 4:7b).

b. _____ (1 Peter 4:8).

c. _____ (1 Peter 4:9).

d. _____ (1 Peter 4:10).

e. _____ (1 Peter 4:11).

7. What is it that should not be *strange* to a Christian (1 Peter 4:12)? _____

8. Persecuted Christians *partake* of what (1 Peter 4:13)? _____

9. What are at least three blessings that come to persecuted Christians?

a. _____ (1 Peter 4:14a).

b. _____ (1 Peter 4:14b).

c. _____ (1 Peter 4:15).

10. What is the primary motivation to remain faithful to God when being persecuted (1 Peter 4:16-19)? _____

11. For what things should a Christian never suffer (1 Peter 4:15)?

1 PETER CHAPTER FIVE (VERSES 1-14)—COMMENTARY

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

As Peter closed his first, inspired epistle, he listed a number of commands in addition to the precepts taught earlier in what is called chapter four. Peter's readers had been admonished to be faithful in well-doing, even though they faced severe persecution (1 Peter 4:1ff.). *Therefore*, the elders, the young, and all others had specific duties given. The apostle's first order is to the elders (1 Peter 5:1-5).

The eldership is the delegated body that, corporately, carries out the expediting of God's commands, when, and only when, the specifics necessary to obey were not ordained by God. For example, the Lord's command is to assemble (Hebrews 10:25) on the first day of the week (Acts 20:6-7), but the time to meet on that day is not given. Elderships, because there is an edict to assemble and that on a specified day, are delegated the authority to decide what time the congregation should assemble (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:7). If there is no command behind a decision elderships make, they are ordering their own opinions and have no delegated authority from God in their decisions and are *lording it over God's heritage*, which heritage is the church (1 Peter 5:3).

It is also the case that elders are to take the oversight [the American Standard has *tend the flock*] of those *which are among you*; that is, elders cannot oversee two congregations (1 Peter 5:2a). Each local group, then, is autonomous (1 Peter 5:1a). Such a plan from God is of the best wisdom, for if one congregation apostatized, it would not take another with it. The body of Christ on earth has only one Head, Who is in heaven (Ephesians 1:20-22). The eldership has only delegated

authority and not inherent authority as *heads of the church* for the inherent authority [Greek, *exousia*] belongs only to the Lord. Also, no single elder has any delegated authority for such decision-making is located only in the eldership (cf. 1 Timothy 4:14). In a class at Memphis School of Preaching in 1973, the instructor, Richard Lee Curry said: "An organization depends on its leadership; as the elders go, so goes the church. But, we train preachers and appoint elders."

The verb *tend* [ASV] in 1 Peter 5:2 is translated *pastor* at Ephesians 4:11 and is there conjoined with teacher indicating the work of the earthly leaders. They are to *feed the flock of God* [Acts 20:28], thus they have the delegated authority to hire preachers, assign teachers, and oversee all materials in the teaching programs. It is interesting that Peter described himself as a *fellow elder* [1 Peter 5:1], and not as a pope or metropolitan bishop of some kind, as some claim in today's professed world of sham religion.

Elders must not take on the work of bishops, if forced to do so by some feeling of "have to," nor to seek the office for some financial reason; to desire the work of an elder is the first qualification (1 Timothy 3:1ff.), but the desire to lead must be from a Christian heart according to the will of God and not from some sense of heavy duty (1 Peter 5:2b). Elderships are to be obeyed by brethren, but only when the elders work in their exclusive, delegated area of authority. The leaders bear a huge responsibility, for they watch for the souls of those in their charge (Hebrews 13:7). The "Chief Shepherd" [Christ] will one day honor faithful elders (1 Peter 5:4).

DUTIES OF THE "YOUNGER" AND OF ALL MEMBERS

Corresponding to the duties and privileges of the elders, the younger church members are *likewise* to be submissive to God and the older members, which would include the eldership, since the Greek terms for *younger* and *elder* are plural here (1 Peter 5:5a). It is the case that, perhaps, Peter used the terms in their ordinary sense, however, as did the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 5:1-2). God wants the aged to be respected, and for all members to follow the terms of submission and service as clearly stated in 1 Peter 5:5b. Woods noted that the terms “Gird yourselves” are from one Greek word, *egkomboomai*, that derived from the tying of a knot and was used of the knot in the apron of a slave. So Christians were “To tie on humility like a slave’s apron.” (128-129). Peter’s inspired reason for such humble service to others was that “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5c; cf. Proverbs 3:34).

The act of being humble and submissive begins with one’s attitude toward God (1 Peter 5:6). The “hand of God” is usually a biblical reference to God’s providential workings, and in His time He will exalt His children who humble themselves to His will (cf. Matthew 23:12). A submissive attitude toward God is also needed when His children are beset with anxious moments and grievous afflictions (1 Peter 5:7). Those Christians who failed to deposit their cares into God’s providential hands, were faced with a powerful enemy who could defeat such proud folks (1 Peter 5:8). The sober or calm mind is at peace with God and content with this life and is in a position to resist the evil one (1 Peter 5:9a; cf. James 4:7). The Christian knows that everybody suffers, even God’s children, and he is not going to give up on God and follow the devil just because of some trials (1 Peter 5:9b).

As Peter closed his letter of hope for those facing martyrdom, he prayed that the **God of all grace** would be praised for His getting them through their suffering and for taking them into glory; which faith would establish them in enduring the trials (1 Peter 5:10; cf. 2 Corinthians 4:17). God should always be praised for His providential care (1 Peter 5:11).

This epistle was carried by Silvanus to the scattered Christians, (or he was Peter's "secretary" and carried it also; cf. Romans 16:22), to whom Peter wrote (1 Peter 5:12a). [See Acts 15:22, 32, 40; Acts 18:5; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:19, for Silvanus or Silas.] Note that Silvanus carried the **true grace of God** contained in the letter, and thus all that Peter wrote has a divine stamp of approval (1 Peter 5:12b). Peter wrote of suffering, but such affliction did not eliminate obedience to God, and this is the true grace of God.

CONCLUSION

Peter wrote that his epistle was from the *church* in Babylon, but there is no noun in the Greek corresponding to church; the term is the feminine she or sister that is stated (1 Peter 5:13). Since Peter mentioned his *son* [in the faith], Mark, [singular; see Acts 12:2; Colossians 4:10], it seems plausible to assume that the apostle was thinking of a sister in Christ at Babylon and not the whole congregation. More importantly, Peter says, by divine inspiration, that he was in Babylon when he wrote, and perhaps the sister was his wife (1 Corinthians 9:5). [Some have tried to make Babylon figurative of Rome as in Revelation 17, but Peter wrote long before John penned the Revelation.]

The epistle emphasized that Christ, the living hope, was the primary answer to suffering and persecution. But, one was to do right regardless of suffering from the world, or from government, or masters, or mates, or enemies, and the child of God was to live a life that was above reproach in the world and in all relationships.

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1 PETER CHAPTER FIVE (VERSES 1-14)—WORKSHEET

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

1. This first epistle of Peter's admonished the readers to be _____ even though they were being persecuted (1 Peter 4:1ff.).

2. Elders carry out the expediting of what? _____

3. What are elderships said to be doing when they start ruling in the area of their own opinions? _____ (1 Peter 5:3).

4. What is the implied meaning that elders are only allowed to take the oversight of those "among" themselves (1 Peter 5:2a)?

5. In what way do elders **rule** the congregation (Hebrews 13:17)? _____

6. What **authority** does a single elder have? _____

7. The verb, **tend** (1 Peter 5:2) in the American Standard Version is **oversight** in the King James Version and is applied to the elders, bishops, pastors [all the same office] of the congregation. What does this imply about the doctrine of the local group?

8. What are the "duties" of all other members of the congregation? _____

9. Who, perhaps, was Peter's amanuensis [secretary] and also did carry this letter to the dispersed Christians (1 Peter 5:12)? _____ What do we know about him? _____

10. Where was Peter when he wrote this epistle and, perhaps, who was with him there (1 Peter 5:13)? _____