



PT Butler

Bible Study Notebooks

Study of 1st & 2nd PETER

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

chapter	page	chapter	page
1	2	1	36
2	9	2	39
3	16	special	47
4	23	3	52
5	30		
		bio	60

These Bible study notes are provided for your use in the preparation of teaching the holy scriptures. They were meticulously prepared over many years to serve the Kingdom of God and aid in the growth of Christians of any age. Please use them in combination with prayer and diligent study to promote the clear and honest declaration of God's word.

Companion student handouts are also available to aid in classroom participation. You have permission to reproduce these materials for your Bible school programming.

©PTButler

TEACHER'S NOTES, 1 Peter 1:1-25

Prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

Christians are sanctified (called, set aside, designated, dedicated, reserved) FOR OBEDIENCE TO JESUS CHRIST! But, guess what! OBEDIENCE TO JESUS CHRIST WILL BRING SUFFERING IN THIS WORLD. The pivotal verse of this entire first epistle from Peter is 2:21 “For to this (suffering unjustly) you have been called...” The Holy Spirit uses his divinely inspired word to call us, to “sanctify” us, to be obedient slaves for Jesus Christ. Do that, and we will suffer (1 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 4:12-19). So, we must “gird up the loins of our minds (prepare our minds to use them) in order to reach the goal God has for us, obedience to Christ, and the suffering he allows us to endure along the way. Anyone who thinks he can get through this world as a Christian without suffering doesn’t understand the New Testament (see Matt. 5:11-12; John 15:18-25; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3; 8:18-25; Heb. 10:36; James 1:2-4). This applies to Christian children, teenagers, adults—rich or poor, celebrity or unknown. The church has a tremendous responsibility to discuss, understand and communicate the reason (so far as scripture goes) for suffering. SUFFERING IS WHERE WE LIVE, EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR! Not the patriarchs, not the prophets, not the apostles, not even Jesus, was immune from suffering for righteousness’ sake! The Christians under the Roman empire (A.D. 100-450) did not live in a “protected, miraculous, spear-proof, arena-proof-bubble” exempted from suffering just because Jesus was their Lord! OBEY CHRIST AND SUFFER—TO THIS WE ARE “SANCTIFIED” (i.e., DESIGNATED)!

But “suffering” is not the end of the story! By God’s great mercy we have been born again (Gr. aorist active participle anagenesis, “regenerated, re-born, made again”) to a living hope (Greek, elpida zosan, lit. “a hope that is alive”). Lots of people “hope” in things that are doomed to be “dissolved” (2 Pet. 3:10) or in things that have no historical evidence they exist. Our hope is guaranteed, verified, authenticated and proved beyond any reasonable doubt, by the historically, eye-witnessed, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! We hope for something beyond the suffering and dissolution of this world. Our hope is alive—it does not and cannot die—it does not fade—it cannot be futile. It is by the fact of the resurrection that we “know” or “believe” we have been born again. Jesus’ Lordship is proven by factual evidence—not on his promises or his commands. His authority to promise and command obedience to attain this new birth rests upon his Lordship—not upon evidence. We “know” when the our new birth has taken place when we “know” we have complied with his commands (1 Jn. 2:24; 3:24; etc.). We don’t necessarily have to “experience” some hysterical, ecstatic, subjective feeling—though we probably should “feel” joy, thankfulness and praise once we have complied with his command to be immersed for the forgiveness of sins and the new birth (Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 2:38; 22:16, etc.)—simply because Jesus has the authority to give what he says he will give! We believe Paul’s promise, that when Jesus died, our “old man” died (2 Cor. 5:14-21) and that if we are in Christ we are “new creatures.” Our “new birth” is due to what Christ accomplished and which we are given, by God’s mega-mercy, when we “trust and obey.” Plus, through this hope in an inheritance which is imperishable (because Christ is imperishable Heb. 7:15-28), we may be

guarded by faith through all the suffering that comes our way. WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE OF BEING A “NEW CREATION,” WITH AN ETERNAL DESTINY, WE ARE VULNERABLE—to despair, disobedience, destruction.

A faith that is not tested is worthless. A faith not tested is of no use. It gives no protection, no hope for fulfillment. Untested faith produces nothing. It is a sham, a fake, mere words, and dead as a doornail! God allows suffering and affliction to test our faith in him and his promises; to see if our faith is GENUINE (Greek, hina to dokimion, literally, “in order to prove” see Gen 15:6; 22:12). If God knows everything, why would he have to “test” our faith to see if it can be proven? FOR OUR SAKE! It is we who need to know if our faith is genuine. It is we who need help to focus our faith. A “divided,” “double-minded,” faith is insincere, false and frustrating. God allows suffering so believers may decide where their salvation is (2 Cor. 1:8-10). It is we who need to have God’s approval and his recognition. God allows suffering and affliction so that those believers who endure may receive praise and glory and honor from God at the revelation of Jesus Christ. At Christ’s 2nd coming, all the faith believers have exercised in the face of suffering will be vindicated in the presence of those who did NOT endure! An unbelieving world will see and acknowledge that those who suffered in faith for the sake of Christ were right all along! (Phil. 2:9-11). Believers must “gird up the loins of their minds” (i.e., get mentally ready) to learn and understand that our testing is only “for a little while.” No one is excluded from this testing of faith through suffering. Everyone must suffer some trial. Peter says there are “various” (Gr. poikilois, “manifold, many”) trials. Not everyone suffers the same trials—but all who believe will suffer the testing and trying of their faith one way or another! Even the Perfect Man had his faith tested through suffering (Heb. 5:7-10).

I have never seen Christ! You have never seen him! Actually, and probably more realistically than with fleshly eyes, we do see him by faith (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18; Heb. 11:1-3). And we are more blessed because we believe without having seen him with physical eyes! (John 20:29; Rom. 8:24-25; 1 John 4:20). NOW, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO LOVE CHRIST WITHOUT EVER HAVING SEEN HIM? God pours his love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us—God shows his love for us (Rom. 5:5-11; 1 John 4:19) in HISTORY where his Holy Spirit has entered into the “seen” activities and events of time and space!—Many people have tried to express their love for Christ in songs, poems, cathedral buildings, paintings, books, sermons, personal testimonies—but in the final analysis it is UNUTTERABLE! (2 Cor. 9:15). Thank God, we have the help of the Holy Spirit to intercede for us with sighs too deep for words (Rom. 8:26). Remember how the disciples “disbelieved for joy” at seeing Jesus with their physical eyes? (Lk. 24:41). Yet Jesus said to them, those who have not seen him with physical eyes and have yet believed, are more blessed! This kind of talk is enigmatic, to say the least, and “foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:18ff) to most of the world in every age. But our joy in believing in an “unseen” Christ is that we know we are obtaining (Gr. komizomenoi, present-tense-participle, “we are continuing to obtain”) our salvation as the outcome (Gr. telos, “goal, aim, end-result”) of our faith (1:9). AND THE

PROPHETS REALLY DID PREDICT THE SUFFERINGS AND GLORY OF “MESSIAH” (CHRIST). You may find some of those predictions in Isaiah ch. 53; Daniel 9:24-27; Micah 5:2ff; Luke 24:44-47. The OT prophets were captivated by what they wrote—they scrutinized every detail—they had deep longings to know what and whom they were writing about. The OT prophets endured extreme suffering just to predict things which were not for them to be able to enter into as we have.

One would think the angels saw what came to us through Christ long before we did! But that must not be true. What we have come from heaven----things we could never have found out by ourselves—things glorious, eternal and things. God does not “hold a conference” with angels and ask them for their input, nor does he reveal to them everything he does! The angels “crave intently”(Greek, epithumousin, a compound word, literally, “to desire upon desire”) to know why and how God loves humans so much he would send his own Son to redeem them! God didn’t do that for angels! Peter also used the Greek word parakupsai, translated, “look” and literally means, “bend forward”—it is a compound word of intensity. So, let us “gird up the loins of our minds,” put them to work to know these **PRECIOUS AND VERY GREAT PROMISES GOD HAS MADE TO US IN CHRIST** (2 Pet. 1:3-5) which will give us a divine perspective on all of life. God knows what he’s doing with suffering and obedience, and he tells us what he’s doing! Angels are not God’s advisors or confidants, they are his servants and ours (Heb. 1:14; Psa. 34:7; 91:11; 103:20-21). Jesus told his disciples things angels never heard (John 15:15-16). The angels do not know when Christ is coming back to the earth (Matt. 24:36)—they will be as surprised as we will be!

Peter literally wrote, *diognosamenoi tas ophuas tes dianoias humon*, “Therefore gird (bind) up the loins of the mind of you.” Metaphorically, the phrase means, “gear up, prepare, ready, condition, equip” your mind to think! The “connecting” preposition, “Therefore,” harkens back to the fact that Christians will suffer for their beliefs. So, “on account of the testing of our faith which will inevitably come, we must equip, condition, prepare our minds in order to set our hope fully on the grace that is coming at the revelation of Jesus Christ. **OUR MIND MATTERS! OUR MIND MUST BE PUT TO WORK IF WE ARE TO SET OUR HOPE FULLY ON CHRIST’S COMING GRACE! HOPE DOESN’T COME AUTOMATICALLY! WE’RE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE “POSITIVE THINKING” TRIP ADVOCATED BY MODERN “PSYCHO-BABBLE!”** We’re talking about putting our minds to work to gather evidence of Christ’s deity sufficient, beyond any reasonable doubt, to give us eternal hope. Peter is the one who wrote, “Always be prepared to make a defense (Gr. *apologia*, *apologetic*, i.e., evidential) to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you...” (1 Pet. 3:15). The Greek word *apologia* meant in the 1st century to argue or defend a case in civil court or in a debate. Jesus never intended to come to earth and ask people to believe in him without evidence to back up his claims. In fact he challenged those who saw him to look for themselves and evaluate the evidence he gave for his claims (John 5:36; 10:25; 10:37-38; 15:24). And the evidence he presented has been written down by eyewitnesses so that the world might believe He is the Son of God, and that believing they

might have life in his name” (John 20:30-31). The first thing in “girding up our minds” is to be sober (Gr., *nephontes* literally, it means, “don’t get drunk” with alcohol). Metaphorically, Peter is saying, “don’t get intoxicated with emotionalism, fantasies, day-dreamings, stupid philosophies, myths, and nonsense” (2 Pet. 1:16-21). It means most of all to be level-headed, self-controlled, logical, thoughtful, calm, well-balanced, steady, stable, and serious-minded. There is no true hope without a stable, serious, thinking mind guided by divine revelation. The second thing we are to do is “set our hope fully (Gr. *teleios*, “fully, completely, totally”) upon Christ’s grace that is coming. WE ARE SUPPOSED TO FOCUS ALMOST TOTALLY ON THE NEXT WORLD! We should be so “other-worldly-minded” that worldly-minded people will think we are “peculiar, uncommon, distinctive, exceptional.” The apostle John was told pointedly and constantly when he was in exile on the island of Patmos (slaving in the copper mines of the Roman empire as recorded in Revelation) that he was “to look up to heaven.” In other words, Christ wanted John to continually get the perspective of heaven on events in time and history! He, and the Christians of his day needed desperately to see their present and coming “tribulation” at the hands of “beastly” Rome, in the light of the next world! Any other attempt to deal with suffering in this world is sheer futility! Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross (Heb. 12:1); Paul longed to put on his heavenly dwelling (2 Cor. 5:2-5); he desired to depart this world and be in a very better place with Christ (Phil. 1:21-23); Peter looked forward to his unfading crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:4).

The first prerequisite for holy conduct is overcoming one’s former ignorance! (1:14). People conduct themselves relative to the character of the “God” they know and worship! MOST OF THE WORLD IS IGNORANT OF GOD’S HOLINESS! Peter admonishes Christians, “...as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves...” So, Christians need to learn about God’s holiness! The OT prophets spent most of their lives, energies and resources preaching about the holy character of Jehovah---THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL! Israel had deserted God and his holiness for the dead and wicked gods of the heathen. If you want to see the holiness of God functioning in the flesh, in the world, LOOK AT THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST! Learn how Jesus was “in the world, but not of the world.” When it comes to “being holy as he is holy” God is impartial. He will not show grace or favor to anyone because of wealth, fame, influence, gender, seniority-in-service, or nationality. He cannot, and will not, show grace to any two-timing, two-faced, double-minded, indecisive, so-called “disciple.” The second prerequisite for developing holy conduct, is godly fear, 1:17. This is not the fear that causes cringing paralysis. IT IS THE FEAR THAT CAUSES AWESOME RESPECT AND INSTANT OBEDIENCE! The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Fear is a proper motive for persuading men to believe in God (2 Cor. 5:11). Fear is the proper motive for doing God’s will rather than the will of wicked men (Matt. 10:26-28). Jesus said his disciples should fear God when suffering comes their way and that fear will overcome the temptation to lose faith in God when persecuted. Part of the purpose of suffering is to produce the proper fear of God in human beings—which in turn produces holy conduct! The third prerequisite for developing holy conduct is to understand the preciousness of our ransom price, 1:18-19. The ULTIMATE price was paid for our escape from Hell. All the gold (at \$340 per ounce—just a ton would amount to about \$11 million) the world contains, or ever contained, heaped together with all the silver the world ever

contained, in one huge mountain, cannot compare with the INESTIMABLE VALUE OF CHRIST'S LIFE POURED OUT TO "BECOME SIN FOR US." All the blood of millions of animals, rivers of oil, barrels of myrrh are but paltry insults compared with Christ's blood poured out in vicarious atonement. No fallible human substitute could satisfy an Absolute God's justice. Only the holy God himself, willingly taking on human nature, living out the human nature with infallible, sinless perfection, laying down his soul in suffering the second death, could produce our ransom. HOW PRECIOUS IS PERFECTION? DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING PERFECT? HOW EXQUISITE, ABSOLUTELY RARE, COSTLY, PRICELESS, BEAUTIFUL, UNREPRODUCEABLE IS THE PERFECT???? Paul calls it the "inexpressible, indescribable, unutterable" gift (2 Cor. 9:15). LET US PUT OUR MINDS TO WORK ON THESE THREE THINGS FOR HOLY CONDUCT! "The sufferings of this present world are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Jesus Christ came to time and space and earth FOR OUR SAKE! Actually, everything God does is for HIS SAKE, which ultimately turns out to be for OUR SAKE! If that sound's like double talk read Isa. 48:9-11; Ezek. 20:9,14,22,44! If God does not ACT TO MAINTAIN HIS ALMIGHTINESS, HIS ABSOLUTENESS, HIS TOTAL SOVEREIGNTY, we have no hope that any of his other claims or promises will be fulfilled! So, even when Jesus came into the world it was FOR GOD'S SAKE! Jesus proved God's faithfulness to keep his word—all the promises of God find their "Amen" in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20; Heb. 6:17-20). BUT, AMAZING GRACE, THIS TURNED OUT FOR OUR SAKE!!! In Christ, God "sought us and bought us!" We were not seeking him, until Christ came seeking us. God is the "Hound of Heaven" (Francis Thompson's poem). We are his first, by right of creation. He made us and can unmake us—we belong to him, totally. But we are his second, by right of redemption. He "bought us back" from ourselves, and from hell! We are not our own, we have been bought with a price, so we are to glorify God in our existence! (1 Cor. 6:20). God ransomed our souls and our bodies (1 Thess. 5:23; Acts. 20:28; Rev. 5:9). He has not just redeemed us, but redeemed us to be a kingdom and priests, and to reign with him. GOD BOUGHT US "LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL"—HE HAS THE RIGHT TO TELL YOU TO THINK AND "FEEL" AS HE WANTS, BECAUSE YOU BELONG TO HIM!

We may have confidence in God because he HAS PROVED his reliability to us and all the rest of the world. First, God destined Christ before the foundation of the world, i.e., God has always, from the beginning of creation, had a merciful plan to reward and vindicate man's suffering in this life. He knew man was going to have to suffer to become the "bride" God could take pleasure in and so man could take pleasure in God. So, God determined to reward that faithful suffering with atonement and eternal life. God PREDICTED PRECISELY HOW HE WOULD WORK OUT that merciful plan through centuries and centuries of history—and he fulfilled his predictions exactly, in spite of the devil and wicked men attempting to stop it. Second, we may have confidence in God because Christ was made manifest at the end of the ages for our sake. God came to earth in his Son, in human form, walked this earth and performed miracles (even raising the dead), predicted

future events, and taught with divine wisdom. He lived the life of love and righteousness which he preached. There will be no more manifestations upon which we may build our confidence in God while we suffer during history. Christ came at the “end of the times” i.e., at the “last age” (see 1 Cor. 10:11—the Christian “age” is the last age until eternity). We must gird up our minds in the midst of our suffering by finding confidence in the historical manifestation of Christ in time and history. Third, GOD RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD AND GAVE HIM GLORY. God didn’t raise Christ from the dead and hide him somewhere (Acts 26:26-29). He gave Christ glory. PEOPLE SAW HIS GLORIOUS RESURRECTED STATE. THEY SAW HIM ASCEND INTO HEAVEN, BODILY, ON THE MT. OF OLIVES. THEY SAW CHRIST PROVE HIS GLORY BY KEEPING HIS PROMISE TO GIVE BIRTH TO THE CHURCH. THEY SAW HIS GLORY AS THE CHURCH SURVIVED THE IMPLACABLE ENEMIES, BOTH JEWS (Acts and Epistles) AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE (Revelation). So, it is the resurrection and glorification of Christ that gives the ultimate CONFIDENCE in the midst of suffering. Christ endured all that the world could possibly produce in suffering and was victorious over it, rising to a place where he will never suffer again!

WE DO NOT EARN OUR PURIFICATION BY BEING PERFECTLY OBEDIENT—WE KNOW WE COULDN’T DO THAT—EVEN AFTER WE HAVE BECOME CHRISTIANS—GOD’S WORD CALLS US LIARS IF WE SAY WE COULD! (1 John 1:10; 2:4). But God “declares” us purified (God imputes righteousness to us) when we obey the truth of the gospel in its initiatory requirements (belief that Christ was God in the flesh; repentance—change of mind; and immersion in the watery grave. Paul wrote, “For a man believes with his heart and so is justified and he confesses with his lips and so is saved” (Rom. 10:10)—but Paul was himself told, “Arise and be immersed, and was away your sins” (Acts 22:16). Peter states our necessity to obey Christ’s initiatory commandment for immersion (baptism) when he writes, “Immersion, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). Dipping the body or portions of the body in water has always been a Biblical symbol of the cleansing God IMPUTES to those who thus obey (Lev. 14:9,20; 15:13; 17:15; 22:7; Num. 19:12, 19, etc.). Jesus referred to immersion as the cleansing agent commanded by God in the case of Naaman the Leper (Lk. 4:27; 2 Kings 5:13-14). John the Immerser (Baptist) immersed people for remission of their sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). It was practiced all the way through the book of Acts and is taught in many of the epistles (Rom. 6:1-6; Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 1:14-17; Gal. 3:26-27). Obeying the truth as preached and written by the apostles is the ONLY way to purify the soul. The gospel is to be obeyed (John 3:36; Rom. 1:5; 2:8; 6:17; 15:26; Gal. 3:1; 5:7; 2 Thess. 1:8; 3:14; Heb. 5:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Pet. 3:1; 4:17; 1 John 3:24) not just believed or prayed about! Obeying the truth in the midst of suffering matures, produces unfeigned love, produces love that extends us to the limits of the image of Christ for which God predestined us (Rom. 8:29).

YES! That word of God you hold in your hand is ALIVE! It isn’t just dead ink on paper! The two Greek words Peter used to describe the word of God are *apthartou* and

zontos, “imperishable” and “living.” Peter used the Greek perfect tense, passive, anagegennemeno, “have been born anew” literally translated would read, “we were born anew and are continually being born anew” not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living word of God...” (2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Heb. 4:12-13). We do not begin the new birth FULL GROWN—we begin embryonically! Seeds are things that grow “of themselves” (Mark 4:26-28)! The “seed” that becomes the embryo within us is the word of God—the living word of God (Luke 8:11). The word of God is the character of God. The word of God is the life of God (John 6:35-63). When we obey the truth (God’s word), the character of God, the very life of Christ, is born in us (Gal. 4:19). AND IT ABIDES, SO LONG AS WE CONTINUE TO OBEY IT! God’s character grows in us (2 Cor. 3:18) as we endeavor to obey it. It is the desire to obey, the attempt to obey that really counts. THE LIVING WORD OF GOD IMPLANTED IN YOU THROUGH FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, COUPLED WITH THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH, IS WHAT SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (WHICH IS YOUR EARTHLY CALLING) IS ALL ABOUT. You have that which the world most wants (and needs)—right in your hand and heart—the living word of God! DO SOMETHING TO IMPLANT IT SOMEWHERE!

TEACHER'S NOTES 1 PETER 2:1-25

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

That pure spiritual milk certainly does not reside in “malice, guile, insincerity, envy and slander” (The Greek words, *hupokriseis*, and *katalalias* are translated “insincerity,” and “slander”—*hupokriseis* is the word from which the English word “hypocrite” is derived and *katalalias* is a compound word, *kata* meaning “against” and *lalia* meaning “tongue, speech, language.” People who feed on this will die because it is poison! It is very interesting that Peter uses the same Greek word that Paul uses in Rom. 12:1, *logikon*, to describe the “spiritual” milk for which we are to yearn. This Greek word derives from *logos* which means, think, reason, logic, “word.” English translators made Peter say, “long for the pure spiritual milk...” but literally, Peter said, “long for the pure logical-milk, the pure reasonable-milk, the pure word-milk!” It is the same thing Paul means in Rom. 12:1 when he says, We should become living-sacrifices, because it is our reasonable, logical (*logikon*) service in light of the mercies of God extended to us. We are to intensely desire (Gr. *epipothesate*, aorist, imperative, compound active verb, meaning to “long deeply for, desire, have great affection for”) the pure nutrition that makes for spiritual growth. Jesus used the metaphor of “bread from heaven” (John 6:35-63) which he said his word was. The pure spiritual food is so good, the more we taste it and eat it, the more we will long for it (Psa. 19:10; 34:8; 119:103; Prov. 24:13-14; Heb. 6:5; Titus 3:4). But the emphasis Peter makes is on “longing” for it. Watch a newborn baby go after a bottle! Babies cry for their bottles when they get hunger pains. DO CHRISTIANS CRY FOR THE PURE, REASONABLE, LOGICAL “MILK” OF GOD’S WORD? SUFFERING IS GOD’S WAY TO GET US TO CRY FOR THE NUTRITION OF THE WORD! When Zedekiah began to suffer in the Babylonian siege, he called for Jeremiah and said, “Is there any word from the Lord?” Jeremiah had been preaching to the kings and people of Judah for 23 years! What impertinence! God have mercy on the congregation that does not cry out to its preacher and Sunday School teachers when it is not being fed! It will die! Jesus commanded, “Labor not for the food that perishes, rather labor for the food that endures to eternal life” John 6:27—he also said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled” Matt. 5:6. Hungry children are not nonchalant about being fed! Look at the starving children of the world on your TV. Does God want us to get that intense in our longing for spiritual nutrition? INDEED HE DOES! Does your soul long to be fed? Do you know where to get food for it?

Christ (“Messiah”) is symbolized as a “living stone” here by Peter. But Peter didn’t say it first—Isaiah did (Isa. 28:16). God’s Anointed, Jesus the Christ, became our High Priest “by the power of an indestructible life” (Heb. 7:16). He holds his priesthood permanently because he continues for ever (Heb. 7:24). HE’S ALIVE, HE’S ALIVE! His eternal life is the only eternally-solid foundation upon which people may build themselves a spiritual home or dwelling. Everything else changes, in fact, the whole creation is subjected to futility and decay (Rom. 8:20-21). Nothing in all creation is solid. Everything in creation exists for a while then it returns to the dust, whence it came! Every thing in the cosmos is “self-destructing” (2nd law of thermodynamics, i.e., “entropy”). Peter says when Jesus comes

again, even the “elements” (the basic building blocks of the universe—atoms and sub-atoms—will be dissolved with fire (2 Pet. 3:10). Peter says believers should be allowing themselves NOW (Greek oikodomeisthe, imperfect or present tense, passive, verb) to be built, as living stones upon the foundation of Christ, into a spiritual house (home) (see also 2 Cor. 5:1-10 about our “heavenly home”). In our “spiritual house” dwells our Almighty, All-loving, Father (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:19-22). When we suffer he will wrap his “spiritual arms” around us and sympathize with, and strengthen us. He knows how we feel, for he was here once as a sufferer Himself! He will tell us that when we have finally reached our perfected son-ship in heaven, he will wipe away all tears, end all pain, and never allow us to suffer again! If that’s what the Christian has in his “spiritual house” here on earth, why are there so many prodigals down in the far country, far away from home, who will not come back? In our spiritual house we may engage in adoration of our Father by offering gifts and sacrifices. It would make us feel more “at home” if we did more of it! God allows us to suffer, as the father did the prodigal son (Lk. 15), so we will be driven home (if we have any sense left)! When we build spiritual homes for ourselves we can endure the sufferings of our temporary journey in this homeless earth (Heb. 10:32-39; 11:13-16; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; 1 Cor. 15:35-58). So surround your heart and mind with spiritual walls and rooms and a roof, AND LIVE THERE! That is what God intended the OT saints to do when he said: “And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deut. 6:4-9. Surround yourself with a heavenly Father, a divine Elder Brother (Jesus), and a house full of spiritual brothers and sisters in the church of Jesus Christ and you will be nurtured and nourished when you suffer. Jesus Christ is the “living stone.” Any edifice not built on a stone foundation rots from the bottom up and soon caves in. Christ is the foundation of life. Any attempt to build a “house” (a life) without Christ as the solid starting place is doomed to destruction. It has no stability, no perpetuity, no strength to withstand the storms of temptation, trial, and suffering (Lk. 6:46-49).

First we must “declare the wonderful deeds of God” who is building us into a spiritual house built on Christ even though we have to suffer the contradictions and ridicule of those who reject “the head of the corner, Christ.” Much suffering (humiliation, beatings, imprisonments, estrangements, plundering (Heb. 10:32-39; Rev. 7:1—20:10) has resulted from Christians in the past, and now, attempting to declare the wonderful deeds of God. When Paul was given his “thorn in the flesh” he said: “I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor. 12:9). Suffering motivates Christians to declare the wonderful deeds of God. The same Paul said of his sufferings in Asia Minor (“If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation” (2 Cor. 1:3-7). God builds us into a spiritual house when we open up the door of our heart (John 14:23; Rev. 3:20) and obey Christ’s commandments. Jesus went away to the Father but he sent the Holy Spirit back to build a dwelling place for us here, a spiritual house, where he (Christ) dwells with us, and we dwell with spiritual brothers and sisters...IT IS CALLED, THE CHURCH (John 14:1ff).

Second we build that spiritual house when we acknowledge that we are fundamentally, SPIRITUAL BEINGS! God has made Christians, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own people” (1 Pet. 2:9-10). We must “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh” (Rom. 14:13; Gal. 5:16-17). We are to “seek and set our minds on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1-3).

The “Messiah” (Jesus Christ) was the incarnated form of God who is “The Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Jesus was Truth Personified! Everything he did and everything he said was the unalterable, inviolate truth which is eternal. Guido Bruno (A.D. 1548-1600) said, “It is proof of a base and low mind for one to wish to think with the masses or majority, merely because the majority is the majority. Truth does not change because it is, or is not believed by a majority of the people.” Jesus Christ, as Truth Personified, did not change his deeds or his message for politicians, religious bigots, stupid disciples, not even for his own mother, brothers and sisters. Inflexible Truth will not be tolerated by a compromising carnality! Jesus was the inflexible “rock” of truth upon which God would build his Kingdom (or Temple) of Truth in the world (Psa. 118:22; Isa. 8:14-15; 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; Eph. 2:20). When Inflexible Truth confronts compromising carnality A CHOICE HAS TO BE MADE! Truth confronted by creatures who have freedom of choice will either build up or destroy. It could not be world of sense, logic and goodness where it did not matter whether the choice was truth or falsehood. If, in our earthly situation, to be false is as desirable as to be honest, if murder is as desirable as not to murder, and if surrender is as desirable as victory, then we live in hell! That was the situation on earth just prior to the Great Flood (Gen. 6-9; 1 Pet. 3:18-22; 2 Pet. 3:1-18). Only one man (and his family) chose truth! The majority chose hell. So, when Jesus came, claiming and proving that he was The Inflexible Truth, he built his church upon himself (Matt. 16:13-19)—but the majority, many who could not deny the evidence (Acts 4:15-16), chose of their own free will to stumble over The Truth! (Acts 7:51-53; 13:46; 26:24-29; 28:23-28, etc.). This “building/stumbling” paradox (or enigma) continues to this day. The majority continue to “stumble” (Matt. 7:13-14; Lk. 13:24); but a minority continue to “build” upon Jesus, The Rock of Ages. He is the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb. 13:8).

That’s our occupation, we are priests! We are a royal (“reigning”) priesthood, chosen to be such by none other than the King of Kings, the Eternal High Priest! Priests focus their lives on spiritual things. Their minds, thoughts, deeds, talents are all dedicated to producing spirituality. Whatever of material things they possess they use to produce spirituality. God continually allows his “priesthood” to be put in the crucible of suffering and chastening to KEEP THEM LONGING FOR THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE, RATHER THAN THE MATERIAL. The Psalmist wrote, “Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I keep thy word—It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes...Those who fear thee shall see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in thy word.” (Psa. 119:67,71,74). Jeremiah noted that the Lord chastened his people—“to bring them back” (Jer. 31:18-20). Isaiah reminded Israel that God had refined them by “trying them in the furnace of affliction

(Isa. 48:10). Malachi's "refiner's fire and fullers soap to purify the sons of Levi" (Mal. 3:1-4) is predicting the followers of the Messiah (the church). Suffering focuses the minds of the "royal priests" of God (Christians) on things spiritual so they may declare the wonderful deeds of God. They are to let the world know by their declarations and deeds that God has called them out of darkness into his marvelous (Greek, *thaumaston*, "remarkable, unexpected, amazing, beyond human comprehension) light—out of lostness into salvation, out of dread to hope, out of blindness to reality, out of isolation to brotherhood. Priests are to serve God as intercessors to man, and to man as intercessors to God. Christians are "stewards" ("managers, trustees") of God's varied grace to be ministering (Greek, *diakonountes*, "deaconing"—1 Pet. 4:10) it to one another. That "ministering" of God's grace will invariably bring suffering, whether persecution by others or privation of self. If we "minister" we cannot escape suffering. How dare we think we can when our Eternal High Priest couldn't! No servant is above his Master! If they persecuted him, and if he willingly suffered privation, do we demand otherwise for ourselves?! Think of Huldreich Zwingli, Martin Luther, John Knox, Alexander Campbell, Elder "Raccoon" John Smith, Richard Wurmbrand, and literally millions of others. Get a copy of *By Their Blood*, by James and Marti Hefley, pub. Baker, the story of millions of 20th century Christian martyrs—READ IT AND WEEP AND BE STIRRED TO BE A "MINISTER" (PRIEST) OF GOD!

Christians are to abstain (Greek, *apechesthai*, "finish, stop, separate") from the lusts of the flesh that wage war against the soul (see Rom. 7:15-23; 8:5-8; Gal. 5:16-17; Jas. 4:1ff) so that those who are "enslaved" to the flesh (Rom. 6:12-23; 2 Pet. 2:19) may see (not just be told) what it is to be FREE FROM SLAVERY TO WORLDLINESS. The only problem with "stopping" the lusts of the flesh is that it brings suffering! Paul "suffered the loss of all things" of the flesh and counted them as garbage in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:7-11). In order to show people what the priority of spirituality is we may have to deprive ourselves of lots of "things" others make preeminent in their lives. C. S. Lewis says in his book, *The Problem of Pain*, "The human spirit will not even begin to try to surrender self-will as long as all seems to go well with it...But Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains...Pain gives the only opportunity the bad man can have for amendment...it removes the veil; it plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul...God may be really right when He thinks that people in their modest prosperity and the happiness of their children are not enough make them blessed; that all this must fall from them in the end and that if they have not learned to know him they will be wretched. And therefore he troubles them, warning them in advance of an insufficiency that one day they will have to discover. The life to themselves and their families stands between them and the recognition of their need; he makes that life less sweet to them." We are to "stop" the indulgences of the flesh so that unbelievers among us may "see our good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." We are personally responsible to "stop" sinning! Suffering with faithful endurance as a Christian is told to do, leads to understanding the hearts of others. Suffering leads Christians to pray in sincere dependence on God who cares about us. Suffering leads to humility—without it arrogance creeps into the soul. Suffering leads to "patience" (endurance)—without which intolerance and cynicism takes over. Suffering teaches gratitude; without it greed and ingratitude rot our souls. SO

GOD “PREACHES” TO THE WORLD THROUGH CHRISTIAN SUFFERING! All Christians do not have to stand in pulpits to preach to the world—just endure faithfully whatever suffering God sends your way, pray, exhibit humility, dependence, and gratitude for what Christ has done for you—AND YOU WILL WIN SOULS TO JESUS!

Our being “subject to every human institution” is qualified by the phrase, “for the Lord’s sake.” The NT teaches that Christians are not obligated to obey any laws of human institutions that are clearly, unequivocally against God’s clear and unequivocal commandments. BUT CHRISTIANS HAD BETTER BE VERY SURE THEY WILL VIOLATE GOD’S COMMANDMENT BEFORE THEY DISOBEY HUMAN INSTITUTIONS! The Greek word *Hupotagete*, (“Be subject”) is in the imperative mood, Peter is giving an apostolic commandment here—not just a suggestion! Christians cannot disobey human institutions and governments just because they don’t “like” the institution or its laws. Human governments and institutions are ordained by God to punish wrongdoers and reward those who do right (Rom. 13:1-7) and all human beings, Christians-most-of-all, are to be subject to them so long as they do not order disobedience of clear commandments of God! If a Christian lives in a nation or culture whose rulers forbid them from doing what God commands them, or commands them to do what God forbids----the Christian will simply have to obey God and be ready to suffer whatever the godless rulers impose upon them—or move to another country. “Every human institution” would include family, school, city, nation, There are plenty of examples in both the OT and the NT; Moses, David, the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel etal), Jesus (Matt. 17:24-27; 22:15-22), Paul (Acts 25:11, etc.). That includes being conscripted into military service if one’s government requires it to defend itself or to honor its treaties with other nations (cf. Amos 1:9-10). Even civil governments have a “spiritual” purpose in God’s plan of redemption. They are to keep evil and wicked behavior in check so that Christians (and all those who wish) may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way...so that all men may come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4). Christians are exhorted to pray for kings and all who are in high positions” that this may be so! Civil government, the family, and the church are God’s three ordained institutions to bring about the redemption of mankind. Each has its own functional sphere and none has God-ordained right to usurp the other’s domain.

YES! History (especially Biblical history) documents the fact that believers must often suffer unjustly. Civil governments are highly predatory. They exist only at the expense of individual tribute (taxes). Governments produce nothing except “protection” through laws and those who enforce the laws (legislators, police, armies, etc.). It is individual human beings, separately or corporately who produce (goods, inventions, wealth, etc.). Governments must fulfill their God-ordained sphere either by persuasion or force (so must families and churches, for that matter). Sometimes these 3 God-ordained institutions overstep their domain and that means either the usurpation of unalienable freedoms or unnecessary taxation, or physical abuse (or all 3). When that happens Christians on an individual basis must suffer injustices. When Christians are subject for the Lord’s sake to

every human institution, it is guaranteed they will suffer, one way or another. In addition to taxes, there is “red-tape,” discrimination, corruption, injustice, oppressive and restrictive laws, inconveniences, confusions, stupidity of authorities, abuse in godless homes, uncaring authorities and laws.

It is only IGNORANT people who want to destroy all human institutions and disobey rulers—even when the rulers are “overbearing.” The Greek word skoliois, is translated “overbearing” RSV, “froward” meaning “difficult” in KJV and ASV and “harsh” in NIV. But more literal synonyms for skoliois, are “crooked, dishonest, unscrupulous, perverse.” Modern scoliosis is a medical term meaning “crooked spine.” So, Christians are to be submissive with all respect even to the “crooked, dishonest, unscrupulous, and perverse” who have come to places of authority over them in every human institution. That’s asking a lot! And it’s not easy to comprehend! It takes great trust that God’s word is correct when it says believers must behave this way! There’s plenty of evidence to prove God’s word is divinely inspired and therefore authoritative. But history also proves this admonition is true and practical! Only the “ignorant and foolish” (1 Pet. 2:15) would want the nihilism that produces anarchy! THAT IS THE DEVIL’S GAME! Satan’s obsession is to create anarchy where God has ordained order! It was the stupidity of the Israelites against the policies of David and Solomon that brought upon them death, devastation, and exile. It was the ignorance and foolishness of the Jews against the Roman government which led to their total destruction in A.D. 70. Under Roman sovereignty the Jews had many privileges—no military conscription, their own religion, self-government to a certain extent, protection from other enemies. So far as I know the Romans demanded nothing of the Jews that would have violated the law of Moses—but they were unwilling to suffer the indignities of taxation and the small amount of foreign interference into their political structures imposed by the Romans. Christians in any country who obey civil institutions, even when they must suffer to do so, will produce a “longing” for a spiritual house in both the Christians around them and in many unbelievers.

There’s no escaping the fact that Christians have been CALLED to suffer, because Christ left them an example that they should follow in his steps! No one can be a Christian without some suffering (2 Cor. 4:7-12; 2 Tim. 3:12) Anyone who wishes to enter the kingdom of God must do so through some tribulation (Acts 14:22). Anyone who doesn’t acknowledge this “is not fit to be a disciple of Jesus” (Lk. 9:57-61; 14:25-27; 14:33-35; John 15:18-21). JESUS CONSTANTLY DEMANDED THAT THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED TO FOLLOW HIM SHOULD COUNT THE COST! (Luke 14:28-33; Matt. 10:24-25; 10:34-39; 20:20-28). The apostle Paul wrote to Philippian Christians, “...it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine” (Phil. 1:29-30). He also said that the continuing ministry of the church was that Christians, in their flesh, complete what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is the church (Col. 1:24). Paul said every servant of God had his share of suffering to endure for the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8; 2:8). If

the Perfect Man, who had every justifiable reason in the world to revile those who reviled him, did not do so...can we not follow in his steps?!

Jesus dealt with suffering unjustly by trusting God who judges justly (1 Pet. 2:23), or as Peter puts it later, "Let those who suffer according to God's will do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator." (1 Pet. 4:19). The way to handle suffering (just or unjust) is to have faith and patience that Almighty God will more than recompense those who cause the suffering and will reward those who endure beyond their wildest imagination! For those who cause suffering God will give them what is due them (Rev. 14:9-12; 15:3-4; 16:4-7; 18:6-8; 18:20; 19:1-3). God sometimes handles our injustices through human governments instituted for that very purpose (Rom. 12:14—13:7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). But whether our suffering is relieved and vindicated in this world or not, rest assured, in the next world it shall be! That is what Jesus looked forward to (Heb. 12:1ff), and we are to follow his example! Jesus has dealt with the only thing that can really hurt us----SIN—THE SECOND DEATH! Sin hurts our temporary bodies; our pride; our sense of justice and fairness; our emotions. BUT CHRISTIAN FRIEND, HURT IS ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE—AND IT DOES NOT DESTROY. IT IS SIN THAT DESTROYS—UTTERLY, FINALLY, ETERNALLY! Paul calls suffering, "this slight momentary affliction" (2 cor. 4:17). Peter says, "after you have suffered a little while the God of grace will restore you" (1 Pet. 5:10). The author of Hebrews said, "chastening seems painful for the moment." (Heb. 12:11). The Psalmist wrote, "The years of our life are threescore and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away." (Psa. 90:10). THERE IS NO HURT THAT CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD—ONLY SIN (Rom. 8:31-39). "Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection (immersion into Christ). Over such the second death has no power" (Rev. 20:6).

TEACHER'S NOTES 1 PETER 3:1-22

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

“There he goes again,”—to plagiarize Ronald Reagan. Peter brings up that word “suffering” again in chapter 3. In the first 2 chapters he has used the word “suffer” 3 times in reference to Christians, and 3 times in reference to Christ as an example for Christians! Now in the 3rd chapter he will use the word “suffer” 2 times and “abused” 1 time! What is this guy, Peter, some kind of weirdo-masochist? But, Peter’s not the only “advocate” of suffering in the NT! Think about these statements: (a) we are children of God and heirs with Christ “provided we suffer with him” (Paul, Rom. 8:17); (b) “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Paul, Acts 14:21-22); (c) “If one member suffers, all suffer together...” (Paul, 1 Cor. 12:26); (d) “Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...” (2 Tim. 3:12); (e) “...we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance...” (Paul, Rom. 5:3); (f) “For you have need of endurance that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised” (Paul, Heb. 10:32-36); (g) “If you are left without discipline (chastening, suffering), in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons” (Paul, Heb. 12:8); (h) For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Paul, Heb. 12:11); “A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you...” (Jesus, John 15:20); (i) suffering is evidence that we are worthy of the kingdom of God (Paul, 2 Thess. 1:5); (j) godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation (Paul, 2 Cor. 7:10); count it all joy when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness...and let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James, 1:2-4). And these are just a few of the passages in the NT alone (not taking into account OT passages like Psa. 119:67,71; Jer. 31:18-19; Isa. 26:9-10, etc.) which advocate “suffering” for the believer a good thing. IT’S A STRONG, ABUNDANT DOCTRINE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT THE CHRISTIAN WHO WANTS TO DEVELOP A COMPLETE, NON-LACKING, SPIRITUAL LIFE SHOULD WELCOME ALL THE TESTING OF HIS FAITH HE GETS. Of course, suffering just for self-glorification, or perverse physical eroticism (that some get from it) is forbidden by the scriptures (Matt. 6:16-18; 1 Cor. 13:3; Gal. 2:16-23; Col. 2:20-23). But the greatest apostle of them all, Paul, WELCOMED suffering for Christ’s (righteousness’) sake (Phil. 3:7-11). So, if we are not suffering some way, some place, some time, and suffering more than most of us as Americans are suffering there is indeed something wrong with our “following in the footsteps of Jesus!” Perhaps the reason we are not suffering is because we are more of the world than we ought to be (John 15:18-27). Are we speaking to the world about sin as we ought; are we doing among the people of the world the works we ought? The message of Jesus to the 7 churches of Asia Minor (Revelation ch. 2 & 3) was “repent—do the works you did before—and when you do that you are going to suffer through great tribulation—but do not worry about that, you will come through that to heaven and great rejoicing. Jesus said to the church at Laodicea which was so smug and complacent in its prosperity, “Those whom I am loving (present tense verbs in Greek) I am reproving and chastening, so be zealous and repent.” (Rev. 3:20). And even when

Christians do bear fruit, he “prunes” them so they may bear more fruit (Jn. 15:1-5). It isn’t necessary to suffer for Jesus for us to go buy whips and racks and flagellate one another like the monks in the monasteries. All we have to do is go out and speak about the judgment that is coming on sin, on the need to obey Jesus and his apostolic word, and we will suffer. It is those who are apathetic to godliness who do not suffer (Lk. 6:26; Jn. 7:6-9; 7:13; 9:18-23; 12:41-43). We cannot be friends of the world and friends of God at the same time (Jas. 4:4). As Christians we must expect the world to hate us! It should not surprise us at all (1 Pet. 4:12-13). “Beware when all men speak well of you!” (Jesus said that). Jesus didn’t come the first time to bring peace upon the earth for his disciples, he came to bring a sword, even within families (Matt. 10:34-39). Did God design the human marriage relationship to produce suffering? NOT WHEN IT WAS FIRST CREATED! It was the sin of human beings that introduced suffering into the marriage relationship (Gen. 3:14-21; Matt. 19:8). God made marriage (gender union) in the beginning to be a total blessedness for human beings. God made human beings multi-variable. We are all different (not merely male and female). We have different physiology, genetic-chemical makeup, cultural and social backgrounds, experiences, ages, likes and dislikes, prejudices, rearing, circumstances, and a hundred other differences. WE ARE DIFFERENT! That is not evil in itself. God made us to be that way. It was sin that polluted these differences and that has resulted in more suffering in the world than anything else—more than “natural disasters”. And in the most intimate of personal relationships, that of husband and wife, parents and children, often come the deepest sufferings and hurts. The suffering of heart-break is the worst kind of suffering there is! BUT THERE IS REDEMPTION, CLEANSING, REBIRTH! THE SUFFERING INHERENT IN FALLEN HUMAN INCOMPATIBILITY CAN BE ENDURED, CONQUERED, AND TURNED INTO VICTORY THROUGH FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TO JESUS CHRIST!

God also created man and woman with a divinely ordained hierarchy! Man is the leader—woman is the helper (see notes on 1 Corinthians ch. 11). When that hierarchy, order, or rank, is violated, suffering and hurt are inevitable! Peter warns about woman’s vulnerability to want to lead instead of help. Women need to be submissive to their husbands; do less nagging; and assist their husbands by silent, reverent and chaste behavior. THAT DOES NOT MEAN A WIFE HAS NO RIGHT TO OFFER ADVICE, WISE AND CANDID AND BRIEF! SHE SHOULD BE CONSULTED BY HER HUSBAND (Prov. 31:10-31) IN EVERY FACET OF THE FAMILY’S LIFE! But for the wife, “The better part of valor is discretion” (Wm. Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I (act 5, sc. 4, line 120). Too much and/or unwise advice leads to arguments, which leads to hurtful words, which leads to resentments, which may lead to violence, but inevitably leads to deep hurt and suffering. Wife, give your husband advice, support, love and let it go at that. If he makes a mistake, makes a mess, perhaps he will learn and listen better next time. Whatever the case, your relationship to him will not suffer the deep resentments of nagging and hostility. Words can set on fire the furnaces of hell (Jas. 3:1-18). Many a woman has brought deep hurt and sufferings with words (Jezebel; Job’s wife; Hagar; Miriam; Sapphira). There have been millions of terrible words by countless ungodly mothers to their sons and daughters, sisters to brothers, daughters to mothers. Even Mary, the godly mother of Jesus, spoke out of turn to her adult son! Peter also warns about women’s vulnerability to physical vanity and their

tendency to sometimes use their vain adorning to exploit men and “rule” them. Some women (worldly-minded ones) are vulnerable to worldly fads and fashions. Often, their self-esteem rests on the basis of what the world pretends is “beautiful, prestigious, charming, desirable,” etc. They are vulnerable to the need for the vanities of this world. Herodias; Jezebel; Lot’s wife; Delilah; Potiphar’s wife; the Hebrew women of Isa. 3:16-26; the adventuress, Prov. 7:5-27; the harlot of Revelation 17-18; women adoring David over Saul, etc. Much suffering in the world has been caused by female vulnerability to worldly vanity; families financially over-extended causing anxiety, stress, hostility----illicit romantic affairs causing broken hearts, divorce, broken homes, broken children; jealousies, envying, extravagance and waste. Peter’s direction on avoiding this is that women should let their adorning “be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit which in God’s sight is very precious.” DID YOU GET THAT? AFTER ALL, LADIES, WHOM SHOULD YOU SEEK MOST DILIGENTLY TO PLEASE? The only way women in their intimate relationships as sweethearts, wives, mothers, sisters and daughters may avoid suffering and causing suffering is to reverence Christ as Lord in their hearts (1 Pet. 3:15). They must listen to the Lord about submissiveness and inner adorning and not to the world! They must let the peace of Christ rule (arbitrate, umpire) in their hearts (Col. 3:15), and NOT fad or fashion!

“Live considerately” (3:7) is in the Greek text, sunoikountes kata gnosin, translated, “dwell with your wives according to knowledge” in both KJV and ASV. That is a more literal translation because gnosin is the word in Greek for “know, knowledge.” What it really means is, “live intelligently with your wives—don’t live with them like a dummy! Peter warns against husbands or men who remain ignorant about the physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological needs of their wives and children, mothers and sisters! How much suffering has been caused by dumb men?! Why are men dumb, inconsiderate, and ignorant about women? Because they won’t learn—they won’t communicate! The devil has seduced millions of men all over the world that the “macho” image is the ideal of maleness. “Macho” is nowhere taught in the Bible! Presenting the husband as the “head” of the household does not mean he is the tyrant. Christian men, learn what the Bible teaches about women—their needs, their natures, your responsibilities toward them, and their ministry in the Lord’s hierarchy of humanity.

Bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex is, in Greek, asthenestero skeuei to gunaikeio aponemontes. The Greek word skeuei is literally, “vessel” but is used euphemistically (i.e., a less offensive word) for “sex-partner.” Most women are clearly “weaker” physically, than most men! Women are also made by God to need more sentimentality, tenderness, and compliments than men. That may be a “weakness” (some think it is actually a strength—at times). Women are certainly not intellectually or morally inferior to men.

Female physiological and emotional “weaknesses” are “in-step” with God’s word!

It is the world that is “out-of-step” with God’s word. The National Women’s Organization (NOW) and other liberal feminist organizations are eroding, and will, unchecked, destroy God’s ordained purpose for marriage and family. Reality, reason, morality and God’s Word demands God-oriented marriage/families. Modern feminist movements are about as “out-of-step” with reality as one can get! The Bible is as “up-to-date” as today’s newspaper when it speaks to the issues of marriage, divorce, abortion, family, social order, crime, goodness, holiness, etc. etc.

Their weaknesses (compared to men) are physical and emotional. They need emotional and sentimental support and protection. And they need it every day. This is the primary obligation of men toward women—especially husbands toward wives. Some men get by with taking their wife’s love for granted! Women’s needs must not be ignored. They need demonstrative love, demonstrative tenderness, and demonstrative respect! And husbands (men) are to handle the suffering that comes through their dumb inconsiderateness the same way as women, by reverencing Christ in their hearts as Lord! Francis Schaeffer says in his book, True Spirituality, “The trouble with human relationships is that a man without God does not realize that all men are sinful, and so he hangs too much on his personal relationships, and they crush and break. No love affair between a man and a woman has ever been great enough to hang everything on...But when I see that the last (ultimate) relationship is with an infinite God, and these human relationships are among equals, I can take from a human relationship what God meant it to provide, without putting the whole structure under an intolerable burden...I can enjoy that which is beautiful in a relationship, without expecting it to be perfect....Modern multiple divorce is rooted in the fact that many are seeking in human relationships what human relationships can never give...If a man tries to find everything in a man to woman or a friend-to-friend relationship, he destroys the very thing he wants and destroys the one he loves...But as Christians we do not have to do that. Our sufficiency of relationship is in that which God made it to be, in the infinite personal God, on the basis of the work of Christ in communication and love....For the Christian who does not need to have everything in human relationships, human relationships can be beautiful!” SCHAEFFER IS SAYING WHAT PETER IS SAYING—REVERENCE CHRIST AS LORD IN HUMAN, INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AND THE PROBLEMS IN THEM WHICH PRODUCE SUFFERING WILL BE MINIMIZED AND EVENTUALLY CEASE TO BE!

There are those human relationships, even in the body of Christ, not quite as intimate as those of marriage and family. But “church” and “job” and “circle-of-friends” are inter-personal-relationships and may often result in stress, tribulation and suffering of some sort or another. ANY PREACHER OR ELDER CAN TELL YOU THAT! One of the inter-personal problems which has caused the most heartbreak, reproach on the name of Christ, and tribulation is disunity within a congregation of Christians. THE CHURCH AT CORINTH IS A CASE IN POINT! Peter puts the phrase in Greek like this: to de telos pantes homophrones sympatheis, philadelphoi, eusplangchnoi, tapeinophrones, freely translated it

would be “Now let the goal or aim be that all of you are same-minded, sympathetic, loving-brothers, tender-hearted, and humble-minded (i.e., “count others better than self).” Peter is not talking about something the church sits around and waits for the Holy Spirit to do upon them miraculously—he is saying that each individual member is going to have to “give in”; learn to agree; learn and grow in knowledge of God’s word until everyone thinks alike enough to maintain oneness. **THAT HAS TO BE THE GOAL OF EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH—EVERYONE HAS TO WORK AT IT!** When this is not being done, suffering and tribulation comes between people, and to people—many people. The solution is, of course, to reverence Christ (not ourselves) in our hearts. Christ has to be the Lord of our minds, our thinking, our learning, our likes and dislikes, and our attitudes toward others (2 Cor. 5:16). The KJV actually translates 3:8—“Finally, be ye all of one mind...” There has got to be Biblical harmony in the church or it had better quit calling itself the “kingdom” of God! Paul told the Corinthian church that to stop all the suffering, hurting, tribulation and pain going in in that congregation they must “agree,” and have “no dissensions among them, and be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). We Christians have got to quit forming hostilities toward one another over methods, personality quirks, cultural and social preferences and causing one another so much anguish and suffering over things that do not really matter in the scope of eternity! We can do that and still be entitled to our opinions (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8-9-10), have the freedom to express our opinions, and disagree with other’s opinions so long as we don’t let “opinions” disrupt and divide the church from its mission of saving souls.

The Greek word, *dolon*, is the word translated “guile” in 3:10. It literally means “a bait for fish” but metaphorically means, “deceit, treachery, fraud.” A person who “keeps his...lips from speaking guile” will keep himself from a bundle of trouble and suffering in life. Those whose lives are constantly deceitful, treacherous and fraudulent, will attract suffering like a magnet attracts nails! It has been proven over and over that a person cannot live their lives trying to avert trouble or suffering by deceit, lies, or treachery. History is filled with the wreckage of those who have tried! We have had recent examples of this by politicians, celebrities and high-profile people in very high places in our country and other countries. Peter quotes Psa. 34 in 3:10-12. Henry H. Halley says, “In every trouble David went straight to God in prayer. On every deliverance he went instantly to God in thanks and praise. What a glorious thing to thus LIVE IN GOD. And how that must please God. Someone has said, Thank God for the starlight, and he will give you the moonlight. Thank him for the moonlight, and he will give you the sunlight. Thank him for the sunlight, and by and by he will take you where he himself is the Light.” Christians are to pursue (Gr. *dioxato*, sometimes translated, “persecute”), or chase after PEACE (i.e., integrity, well-being, wholeness). That cannot be done through guile dishonesty, deceit, or fraud. Peace results only from truth, righteousness, integrity. Paul wrote, “If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all” (Rom. 12:18); and “Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). So much suffering in the world is caused by people who are deceitful, treacherous, fraudulent, dishonest, dissembling (i.e., fakes). Interpersonal suffering cannot be healed by sacrificing what is right and good. Curing suffering demands zeal for what is right! The rich man in Hades (Lk. 16) suffered eternal torment because

although he knew Moses and the prophets were right about caring for the poor, the rich man did not do it!

1 Peter 3:15 in Greek is *kurion de ton christon hagasate en tais kardiais humon*, and literally translated, “as the Lord, Christ, consecrate in the heart of you.” The Greek word *hagasate* is 2nd aorist, active, imperative, and is a command that we consecrate, make holy, dedicate, REVERE, in our hearts (the place of decision, choice, determination) Jesus Christ as LORD! We are more than eager to take Christ as Savior, Sustainer, and Aide (prayer-answerer). BUT DOES HE RULE US? DOES HE COMMAND US? IN EVERYTHING? EVERYWHERE? DOES JESUS “CALL ALL THE SHOTS” IN OUR LIVES? Peter makes this the answer to “suffering for righteousness sake...” and to “fearing” or being “troubled” by those who may cause us to suffer. He says, once Christ rules in our decisions and choices as Lord, who is there to harm us? This is Paul’s message in Rom. 8:31-39. David knew this very well—as did Jacob, Moses, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Esther, Ruth, Paul, Timothy, Titus, and a great host of others through the centuries.

The words (3:15) translated “calls you to account” in Greek are, *aitounti humas logon*—literally, “asking you for a word” concerning the hope that is in you. The Greek word *apologia* the word from which we get “apologetics” (in theology, the defense of the faith) and “apology” (as in legal argument or debate). There are literally billions of people suffering in the mental and physical darkness of ignorant idolatry—watch your TV screens for those billions in India, Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas! That old saying, “Ignorance is bliss” must have been coined by the devil himself! Paul writes about those who were at one time “separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). IS THERE ANY WORSE SUFFERING THAN BEING WITHOUT HOPE?! Well, then, are you READY to give an apologetics lesson to anyone who happens to ask you about Christian hope? WHAT’S AN “APOLOGETICS LESSON”? It’s a lesson on WHY WE BELIEVE WHAT WE BELIEVE, AND WHY WE HAVE HOPE? It’s a lesson with EVIDENCE, FACTS, LOGIC, REASONING. IT IS NOT A “TESTIMONY” OF AN EMOTIONAL, SUBJECTIVE, “FEELING”! IT IS GIVING PROOF FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN FAITH AND HOPE! CAN YOU DO THAT? IF YOU CAN’T YOU CAN’T RELIEVE THE SUFFERING OF HOPELESSNESS!!! HOPELESSNESS CAN’T BE RELIEVED BY SENTIMENTALITY, EMOTIONALISM, OPTIMISM, IDEALISM, ENTERTAINMENT OR SOUP-KITCHENS. HOPELESSNESS IS RELIEVED BY PROOF, BY EVIDENCE, BY REASONING, BY APOLOGETICS. GOD HAVE MERCY ON A CHURCH OR A CHRISTIAN THAT IS NOT READY TO RELIEVE THE SUFFERING OF HOPELESSNESS BY APOLOGETICS! The first priority of the church is apologetics! All the sermons of the apostles in the book of Acts start and finish with apologetics! All the epistles of the NT are apologetic in essence. Even the prophets of the OT tried to relieve the hopelessness of an idolatrous society by apologetics!

The account of Noah here in 1Peter 3:18-22 is being used by Peter EXCLUSIVELY to illustrate that obedience to Christ in immersion in water (“baptism”) averts not only the suffering of a guilty conscience, but also engenders the conviction that the Lord will save those who are obedient and deliver them from the suffering of the “prison” of sin which is hell! There is no “second chance” doctrine being taught in this passage at all. That would contradict all the rest of scripture, and the Holy Spirit does not contradict himself!!! A clear conscience will put to shame those who abuse or cause other to suffer. A clear conscience will go a long way in helping anyone handle suffering. It may not bring immediate relief of the pain of revilement and reproach, but it certainly keeps such pain from being intensified. And in the long run, a clear conscience will heal and vindicate and turn suffering into gladness (Acts 5:40-42; Heb. 10:32-39; 1 Pet. 4:14; Matt. 5:10-12; Jn. 16:33; Acts 16:25-40). **THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE IS TO TRUST AND OBEY CHRIST WHO PROMISES THAT WHEN WE ARE BORN AGAIN OF WATER (“BAPTISMS” IMMERSION) AND THE SPIRIT, WE ARE NEW CREATIONS, OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY, ALL THINGS ARE NEW—INCLUDING OUR CONSCIENCES!** A clear conscience comes from being faithful to God, even if we are the only one in the world doing so! Noah was (Heb 11:7)! The Spirit of Christ was in Noah when Noah was preaching to the evil and wicked world of his day who were “prisoners of sin.” This text does not mean Christ went to hell and preached to sinners there! God promises us “rose gardens—with thorns” in this world. We are exiles and strangers here and as such we shall suffer. Because Christians will ALWAYS BE IN THE MINORITY HERE, WE WILL SUFFER—MINORITIES ALWAYS SUFFER, YOU KNOW! Ultimately, the way a Christian is to handle suffering is to reverence Christ as Lord, and be ready always to give evidential proof to anyone who asks for a logical reason concerning the hope the Christian has!!!

TEACHER'S NOTES 1 PETER 4:1-19

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

Suffering is something in which to rejoice (?). Yes! It was the measuring stick by which the OT Prophets measured their spiritual nearness to God (Matt. 5:11-12; 23:29-36). So, says Peter to Christians, “Suffering is a yardstick by which you may measure your intimacy with the spiritual stature of Christ.” (1 Pet. 4:14; 2:19; 2:20-24; 5:9, etc.). Life without pain, as attractive as it sounds, carries a price tag too high. Occasionally someone is born without the ability to feel pain through their sense of touch or hearing. It is far from being a blessing! Persons who feel no pain may have their flesh literally burn away and be unaware of what is happening. They must live guarded lives, sheltered from many of the joys we take for granted. The same is true in the church. Christians of the first century, and in every succeeding century, knew God’s will could never be accomplished apart from pain! The painless Christianity that is preached and practiced today is a false message. Convenience has been substituted for commitment, and a seared conscience for conviction. No wonder people lose interest in the church! Only when we become vulnerable to suffering, to hurt, to rejection, can we know real Christianity! Only when we leave the psychological security of those who like what we like, live like we live—go where people are hostile and hurting—will we really find the “measuring stick” of our spiritual nearness to Christ—SUFFERING! (Phil. 3:10-11; Col. 1:24-29). Suffering must be viewed from the reference-point of eternity. Only thus can one recognize its high value. Suffering is not something superfluous or even something that disturbs or restricts our real life and eternal profit. God “scourges” all sons (Heb. 12:6-7) because he loves them! We should not exaggerate our suffering knowing that the same afflictions are required of our brotherhood through the world (1 Pet. 5:9).

The Greek phrase, *kai humeis ten auten ennoian hoplisasthe* literally translated would be somewhat like this: “also, yourselves, with the same way of thinking, be armed!” The Greek verb *hoplisasthe* is from *hoplon* which is any tool or implement for preparing oneself, usually, for war (see Jn. 18:3; Rom. 6:13; 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:4). In this text, *hoplisasthe* is in the imperative mood meaning, not just a suggestion, but an order. But notice, Peter says, the armament is the THINKING OF CHRIST about suffering in the flesh. Just how or what did Christ “arm” himself to think about “suffering in the flesh?” That’s an easy one to answer! HE ARMED HIMSELF TO THINK ACCORDING TO THE REVEALED WILL AND WORD OF GOD! There are two classic events in Christ’s “fleshly” life that instruct us: (a) his duel with Satan in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13); his answer to the war of the flesh against the spirit was unequivocally, always, “It is written...”—no hesitation, no equivocating, ducking, dodging or hedging. Jesus used the “sword of the Spirit, the word of God” (Eph. 6:17) which is “mighty through God...to bring every thought into obedience” to his will (2 Cor. 10:3-5); and (b) his duel with himself in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:30, 36-46; Mk. 14:26, 32-42; Lk. 22:39-46), when he surrendered the compulsion of the flesh to the supreme will of his Father, “My Father, if it be possible, let this

cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.”

The Christian arms himself by suffering the loss of fleshly pursuits (see Gal. 4:16-24). Peter put it this way in the Greek: “...the one having suffered in the flesh has given up and is continuing to give up sin.” Peter uses the aorist participle pathon (from which come the English, “pathological, pathology, and pathos” or terminal disease) and the perfect tense verb pepautai which means “has ceased in the past and is continuing to cease.” Paul says the same thing in Gal. 2:20 “I have been crucified (suffered in the flesh); it is no longer I who live (so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God) but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Paul wrote to the young evangelist, Timothy, “Take your share of suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him.” (2 Tim. 2:4), Peter says it this way: “Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.” CHRISTIANS ARE IN CHRIST’S “ARMY.” THEY BELONG TO HIM, BODY AND SOUL! THEIR SERVICE MUST PLEASE HIM! HE IS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. CHRISTIANS ARE TO OBEY HIS ORDERS AND COMMANDS. So, they must arm themselves to suffer the loss of the old way of entanglement in sin. Paul armed himself to suffer the loss of all things in order to know Christ (Phil. 3:8). NO SOLDIER EVER GOES INTO BATTLE CARRYING WITH HIM HIS CIVILIAN EQUIPMENTS—HE WOULD BE TOTALLY VULNERABLE TO THE ENEMY! NO CHRISTIAN CAN WAGE THE SPIRITUAL WAR DOING WHAT SINNERS (THE GENTILES) DO! THAT WOULD MAKE HIM VULNERABLE TO THE VERY WEAPONS HIS ENEMY HAS AT HIS COMMAND!

Godliness always surprises the ungodly! The wild, profligate person (Gr. asotias anachusi, “excessively wasteful, or riotous-living), never ceases to be surprised when everyone doesn’t live like they do—like hogs or wild dogs! The Prodigal Son quickly found out down in the “far country” that everyone (especially the man who sent him out to feed the pigs) did not waste their whole inheritance on riotous living—they sponged off him! What is even more amazing is that the wicked don’t want to be wicked all by themselves, they want to abuse (Greek blasphemountes, “slander, speak evil of, blaspheme”) those who want to live godly lives. The wicked “bad-mouth” Christians if Christians do not join in their wickedness. HAVE YOU EVER SUFFERED THUS? SURE YOU HAVE! ALMOST EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS SUFFERED RIDICULE, SLANDER, BAD-MOUTHING, TEASING, LYING, DARE-TEMPTING FROM THE WICKED AROUND THEM! Often Christians are accused of serving God for ulterior motives—as a “crutch,” in order to have friends, or in order to obtain a good reputation. Christians are often accused of hypocrisy! Why do the wicked speak evil of godliness? Because godliness condemns them (John 3:18-21; 15:24-25; Heb. 11:7). They do not want to hear of their evil, because they know it is evil and foolish, and they do not want it exposed. The wicked hated Jesus without a cause (Jn. 15:25). He lived godly and taught godliness just to help people—not to hurt them, but they blasphemed the evident work

of God's Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:22-24). When people blaspheme (bad-mouth) you for doing what the Holy Spirit has directed you to do in his word, they are blaspheming the Holy Spirit! When the gospel is preached "to those dead in sin, it is done in order that even though their bodies are judged and condemned to death in the flesh, they might live spiritually like God! That is what verse 6 means here. It DOES NOT mean that Jesus went to hell and preached to the dead and gave them a second chance to repent and be saved. Purgatory does not exist! If we do not "mortify" (put to death) the flesh in this life and live spiritually as God would have us do in this life—there is no other preaching we will have by which to make a response (see Luke 16:19-31; Heb. 9:25-28).

Peter command Christians (Greek imperative verbs *sophronesate* *oun* *kai* *nepsate* *eis* *proseuchas*) "you be mentally-sound and you be serious in your prayers."). *Sophronesate* means to have a sound, clear, healthy mind and not be half-witted, mentally unbalanced, and stupid in thinking. It means to "use a healthy mind." Christians who are going to employ their weapons for others had better have them in good shape, healthy, ready for use (remember 1 Pet. 3:15). The mind must be sharpened, honed, fed, disciplined, USED! Some people use their minds for everything but God. They think and study, and reason, and plan, and cogitate about everything under the sun except God's will. *Nepsate* means be "unintoxicated" in your prayers. No Christian should pray like a drunk— uninhibited, out-of-control, intemperately, boisterously, chaotically. JUST THE OPPOSITE. God wants intelligent, sane, alert, decorous, dignified prayers. The emotional insanity of adoring teenie-boppers toward their celebrity idols is a kind of behavior absolutely unacceptable in approaching God! Yet, it is this kind of wild exuberance and animal behavior we find going on in some congregational meetings (or "Christian rock concerts") that many Christians today see as the right kind of approach toward God! Perhaps if there was more suffering (persecution) among us, their behavior might be more sedate and reverent! Emotional shouting and quivering and repetition in prayers does not equal "being sane and sober in your prayers." The Pharisees put on "long faces" when they prayed and prayed loudly in public to be seen and heard by men (Matt. 6:5-14) and we know what Jesus thought about that. The Gentiles heaped up empty phrases and many words, and you know what Jesus thought about that! The Jews of old spread forth their hands and prayed many prayers but God would not hear them (Isa. 1:15) because they were insane, unintelligent, repetitious, almost unconscious prayers. They were fervent enough, emotional enough, but unthinking! Yes, God wants Christians to be enthusiastic, courageous, determined, BUT HE WANTS THEM TO ALSO BE REALISTIC, TO THINK, TO EXERCISE SOME CAUTION, TO COUNT THE COST, TO KNOW WHEN TO STAY AND WHEN TO FLEE (Matt. 20), TO BE AS WISE AS SERPENTS AND INNOCENT AS DOVES.

It is interesting that while our minds are to be sober and sane in praying, OUR LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER IS TO BE UNFAILING (RSV) OR FERVENT (KJV & ASV)! But the word translated "unfailing or fervent" here is Greek *eketne*, which means "stretched out, strained, strenuously, intently." It has to do with action rather than feeling. The love that

extends itself or loves strenuously and intently, will be the kind of love Paul describes in 1 Cor. 13... “patient and kind, not jealous or boastful, not arrogant or rude, not insist on its own way, not irritable or resentful, not rejoice at wrong, but in the right, will bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things...” **THAT KIND OF LOVE WILL COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS!** By “cover” Peter means fervent love forgives a multitude of sins. The Christian dare not hide (or try to hide) sin. He must not compromise with sin, he must not ignore sin. But he must forgive sin. And he must do it fervently, unflinchingly! **CHRISTIANS CANNOT FAIL TO FORGIVE!** “Practice hospitality” is literally, in Greek, *philoxenoi eis allelous aneu goggusmou*, “give love to strangers without grumbling or complaining.” Of course, we are to be hospitable to one another—but it means extend yourself strenuously for those “outside” your family and your immediate circle of friends—i.e., **FOR STRANGERS** (Greek *xenos*—“strangers, foreigners, aliens” see Heb. 13:2). **JESUS DID!** We are not to do it grudgingly, murmuring and complaining, but fervently, gladly, thankfully. God did not give us gifts, he did not equip us with weapons, to be used just for our immediate circle of choice friends—but for the whole world—for **STRANGERS**, too! We are stewards of God’s grace—strangers need God’s grace, too! Give them that, too!

The Greek is more specific than the RSV translates, the Greek phrase is *ei tis lalei hos logia Theou*. Literally translated it would be, “If any man speaks—the result will be from the word of God.” Peter is here referring to preaching, teaching the gospel. No matter how gifted the speaker, the glory belongs to God because he speaks the words of God, thus, the power is in the words—not in the speaker. Whoever speaks, he would be nothing without the words of God. The word of God does not need the skill of human eloquence (1 Cor. 1:17-25; 2:1-5). It needs only to be made fully known (Col. 1:25-29; Acts 20:20,26; Matt 28:18-20). The trouble with too much preaching today is that it’s not making the Word of God fully known. Too much speaking is on methods, problems, programs, personality-improvement, self-esteem, etc. on everything under the sun except “the whole counsel of God” being made fully known. Isn’t it interesting that there were so many conversions in the first century and during the “Restoration Movement” of the 1800’s without all the conventions, conferences and seminars on “how to do it!” “Whoever renders service,” in the Greek text is *ei tis diakonei hos ex ischuos hes choregei ho theos*, “If any man serves (“deacons”)—it is out of the strength of God...” Those who serve must remember that they do so only because God has given them the health, resources and opportunities to do so! All the great heroes of the faith in ages past acknowledged this and gave the glory to God. This is how Christians are to **ARM THEMSELVES** in the battle against the flesh...so as to live for the rest of their lives in their bodies no longer by human lusts but by the will of God.

The Greek word translated “surprised” is *xenizesthe* and is imperative mood—therefore, it is an apostolic order that Christians not be surprised about suffering as though it is something strange or “foreign” (1 Jn. 3:13). No servant of God has a right to be surprised at suffering. No servant of God has any right to allow suffering slip up on him as if it were strange, unusual, unexpected! **IF YOU ARE A SERVANT OF GOD YOU MUST EXPECT**

SUFFERING! It is not at all strange that in this world those who do good suffer for it! Christ expected it for himself—it was predicted for the “Son” by the OT prophets (Isa. 49:1-4; 50:4-11; 53:1-12; Dan. 9:26; Zech. chs. 11-13). The Christ knew he was coming as a human sacrifice (Heb. 10:1-10). The OT leaders were warned they would suffer for serving God (Isa. 6:8-13; Jer. 1:18-19; 20:7-8; Ezek. 3:2—3:21; Heb. 11:24-28, etc.). The first apostles were warned they would suffer (Jn. 15:18-27; 16:20-33); Peter was warned (John 21:18-19); Paul was warned (Acts 9:16); Timothy was warned (2 Tim. 2:3; 3:12). **GOD KEEPS HIS WORD! HE IS FAITHFUL—THE GODLY WILL SUFFER. DO NOT EXPECT TO ESCAPE IT!** When Christians preach the truth of God, and live godly lives, they condemn the world and the world doesn’t like to be condemned! The Christian’s godly truth exposes the ungodly as fools (Lk. 12:20), exposes the worldly-minded as laboring for that which is vain and perishing (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 4:16-18) and the world doesn’t like that! The devil, knowing from the book of Daniel he had only a “short time” to use the Roman empire to try to eradicate the church, came down to the Gentile world in great wrath (Rev. 12:12-13), and so there was the “great tribulation” upon the church A.D. 100-500. Christians, by entrusting their souls to a faithful Creator show they understand persecutions and sufferings as being allowed by God for their good. Joseph told his brothers, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20; see also Rom 5:3; 8:28; Heb. 12:1-17, etc.). This gives the Christian great confidence and a remarkable sense of independence from the world and a sense of superiority over all the transitory things of this earth—**THAT’S THE WAY JOSEPH SAW IT!** (Gen. 45:8).

Everything which reaches us in life must first have passed before God for his approval! He allows everything which reaches us (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Jer. 27:5-7; Isa. 10:1-19; 45:7, Rom. 8:28, etc.). God is never merely a “spectator! His attitude is not passive in the happenings of this world, but definitely active He is not beside the events, but **IN** them. “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28) and Paul was not speaking just “spiritually” there—he was speaking literally, even of Gentile philosophers! Rather than being surprised at suffering, and trying to rationalize that we deserve a Christian life of comfort, without suffering, trial or test. Away with all complaint and dissatisfaction with the God who orders the course of our struggle. Love your destiny, for it is God’s way with your soul (Jas. 1:2-4; 1:12-18; Heb. 12:1-28). Jesus said, “Rejoice and be exceeding glad when men persecute...” Matt. 5:11-12. Even if a thousand questions and enigmas surround you, even if you can see no way out and everything appears senseless, **FAITH CAN WAIT!** Having once reached the goal (heaven), looking back, we shall see that all the obstacles and darkness of our struggle will have become radiantly bright spots! “Farther along, we’ll know all about it, farther along, we’ll understand why.” **GREAT OLD SONG—WISH WE’D SING IT NOW-A-DAYS!** “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, henceforth, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow after them.” Rev. 14:13. Small trials often make us beside ourselves, but great trials bring us back to ourselves (the Prodigal Son had his big trial, he “came to himself”). When Paul had his big trial (2 Cor. 12:7ff) he “came to himself.” and decided that God’s grace was sufficient for him. When Christians suffer for the sake of Christ, as they surely shall when they seek to do his will, they can be sure that Christ’s Spirit is in them, rests upon them, along with the glory of God!. **CHRISTIANS MAY BE SURE OF**

THAT ONLY IF THEY ENTRUST THEIR SOULS TO A FAITHFUL CREATOR. That certainty does not come with some special sentimentality or emotion, or physical feeling—it comes from knowing and trusting the Word of the Faithful Creator, and then the emotions follow! BUT THE EMOTION IS PRODUCED BY THE TRUST (FAITH) AND NOT VICE VERSA! Proof that the Spirit of Christ and the glory of God rested on the OT prophets was that they suffered for their preaching of the truth and their godly living (Matt. 5:11-13; Jas. 5:7-11; Lamentations 3:1-33; Ezek. 3:1-27). Paul believed this about his sufferings (2 Cor. 12:9). It is a true omen that Christ is with us when we suffer steadfastly for his sake (Phil. 1:27-30). It is proof that the word of God is at work within us (1 Thess. 1:6; 2:13-16) when we suffer for his sake. It is proof that we are God's beloved sons when we are chastened by him (Heb. 12:5-11). It proves we are Christ's disciples (John 15:28-27; 17:14; 1 John 3:11-18). In the book of Revelation, there was the "mark of the beast" for the Roman infidels who persecuted Christians, and there was "the mark of God" for Christians who by faith endured under great tribulation.

One suffers "according to the will of God" when one suffers for righteousness sake. There is much suffering brought on individuals because of their sins—that cannot be "according to the will of God" in the sense the phrase is being used here. Of course, all suffering is allowed by the will of God. God, not Satan, "cursed the earth" for man's sake as a result of the rebellion in Eden. God is the One who has subjected this world to futility and decay (Rom. 8:18-25). It is clearly the will of God that the whole world experience suffering (i.e., "groan and travail to be set free of its bondage to decay"). All humans, even Christians, suffer because of Eve and Adam's sin (physical sickness, death, tragedies of "nature" etc.). Thanks be to God he permitted his beloved Son to suffer the SECOND DEATH (the ultimate suffering) and redeemed us from sin's ultimate punishment. One suffers "according to the will of God" when one suffers for thinking and doing what he is commanded to think and do in the Scriptures. Christ suffered for righteousness sake—never for sins or mistakes. He left us an example, that we should follow in his steps! WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN TO A CHRISTIAN (OR A BUNCH OF CHRISTIANS) WHO WENT TO WASHINGTON, D.C., AND GAVE A PUBLIC BIBLICAL, TONGUE LASHING TO THE POLITICIANS THERE AS THE O.T. PROPHETS DID TO THEIR KINGS, PRINCES, PRIESTS, AND OTHER "LEADERS?" What would happen to a Christian who went up town in Joplin or out on Range Line where all the "hot-spots" are and preached like John the Baptist or Jesus, or the apostles? TRY IT, YOU'LL FIND OUT WHAT "SUFFERING ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD" IS! Our Restoration Movement forefathers found out what "suffering according to the will of God" means when they preached the unadulterated, Biblical truth in the "dens of denominationalism." Or, has the modern church become like that one at Laodicea—neither hot nor cold—lukewarm, putrid, sickening—ready to be puked out of the mouth of Christ? To be glad, exceeding glad, about suffering according to the will of God necessitates that we entrust our souls to a FAITHFUL CREATOR. It is absolutely imperative that we teach and preach so people will be fully convinced of God's faithfulness. That means we must prove his faithfulness. How do you prove it? By the evidence of fulfilled prophecy, by eyewitnessed testimony, proven credible and authentic, of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! SO, LET'S DO IT—LET'S GET THAT

MESSAGE, PROVEN BY THE EVIDENCE, THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL TO KEEP HIS WORD, OUT TO THE WORLD—EVERY WAY, EVERY DAY! IT'S THE ONLY SOURCE THE HUMAN RACE HAS BY WHICH TO BEAR ITS SUFFERING—AND THERE'S A WORLD OF SUFFERING OUT THERE!

TEACHER'S NOTES I PETER 5:1-14

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

The Greek phrase, *poimante to en humin poimeion tou theou*, literally translated, is “See to it that you shepherd the sheep of God”—*poimante* “shepherd” is a verb in the imperative mood—an apostolic command! *episkopountes*, “in your charge,” (RSV) is in some ancient mss. but “taking the oversight” (KJV) is not—*episkopountes* literally means, “visit, care for,” and is the word from which we get “episcopal.” The work of the presbytery (eldership) is (a) to protect the flock from those who would destroy or scatter it (Jn. 10:12-13; 1 Sam. 17:34-36; Psa. 23:4; Ezek. 34:1-10); (b) to go before them and lead them (Psa. 23; Jn. 10:1-6); (c) to find proper food for them—in ancient Palestine the chief care of the shepherd was to see that the sheep find plenty to eat and drink. The flocks were not fed in pens or folds, but, summer and winter, had to depend upon foraging for their sustenance (Psa. 23:2; Ezek. 34:11-31; Micah 5:4; Isa. 40:11, etc.); (d) to watch the flock carefully—the shepherd tries to keep the sheep from straying, but if one goes astray, he goes after it and brings it back to the fold (Lk. 15:3-7). Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account.” (Heb. 13:17). The little Greek word, *oun*, in verse 1 should be translated, “Therefore,” and connect everything Peter is going to say to the elders to everything he has already said. And what is Peter’s main topic?—SUFFERING. “Elder-ing” is tending to the suffering of the saints, as those who shall suffer with the saints. Elders must prepare themselves to be surrounded by “suffering sheep” and know how to care for their sufferings. Paul was educated in the school of Christian suffering (2 Cor. 1:3-11). That is why the Good Shepherd had to suffer (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 5:7-10). This is why people of each congregation should be ministered to by people OF that congregation—there is no such thing as “remote-control” ministry!

Notice there is a plurality of elders, *presbuteros* (plural pronoun), in the first century church, and Peter was one of them. Peter does not say he was THE elder. Nor does he say he is a “district bishop, or chief elder!” Even less does he intimate that he might be “THE PONTIFF” (i.e., Pope) of the entire Christian Church! Yet, if he was writing as, or soon to be elevated to, the office of Pope, one would think that a title of greater esteem would be more appropriate than *sumpresbuteros*, “fellow elder with” you. Strange indeed is the utter silence concerning the promotion of Peter who our Roman Catholic acquaintances tell us was “Lord God, the Pope!” Strange, too, that the “future Pope” was not so much as greeted by the apostle Paul in Paul’s lengthy list of persons to salute in his letter to the church at Rome (Rom. 16). PETER IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT HIS MINISTRY AS A “FELLOW-ELDER” THAN HE IS EVEN ABOUT HIS APOSTLESHIP! Besides, what is Peter going to do with his wife when he becomes “Pope” and has to take a vow of celibacy! Search the NT as much as you want, and you will find no indication that one apostle was to become the “pope” of the early church (see Matt. 20:20-28)! The Roman Catholic church argues this way: “The Church came before the NT, therefore the Church interprets the NT,

not vice-versa! Therefore, if the Church says Peter was a “pope” and all “popes” have inherited his authority, it makes no difference what the Bible says!” NOW WHAT’S YOUR ANSWER TO THAT?

The best way to find out what “tending” the flock of God is: WATCH THE “CHIEF-SHEPHERD” TEND THE FLOCK WHILE HE WAS HERE ON EARTH! Some, the Good Shepherd (Jesus) dealt with gently—some, sternly. Some, he gave things—from some, he took things. Some, he could lead; some, he had to prod. But always his GOAL was to SAVE them from the “roaring lion” (the devil)! HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP! To be an elder is to be someone who takes care of others at the cost of their own lives. We had “Destroyer-Tenders” when I was in the U.S. Navy. They were ships that stayed in the harbor so Destroyers could come along side, tie up to the “Tender” and there be supplied, repaired, and replenished. That’s what an elder is—a “Christian-Tender.” We may get a good idea about “shepherding” from Ezekiel chapter 34, and John chapter 10. But don’t forget the little parable in Luke 15:3-7 (“The Ninety and Nine”). Paul first told the elders of Ephesus how he conducted his ministry among them and then told them, “Take heed...to all the flock...” (Acts 20:17-35). PAUL EXEMPLIFIED “ELDER-ING” WHILE HE WAS IN EPHESUS! James should also have written, “Let not many of you become elders, my brethren, for you know that we who are elders shall be judged with greater strictness”—but he didn’t—Peter did! The early church had “elders” who received “double honor” Greek diples times, i.e., “double pay” (1 Tim. 5:17). I see nothing wrong and lots that could be positive with having “paid” elders for a congregation—that is if they took their mandate from God seriously and really labored in caring for, and in preaching, and teaching the congregation. We now have “multiple-staffed” “mega-congregations” staffed with some who may be too young and inexperienced! The Biblical admonition is that anyone set apart for a leadership role in the church should “not be a neophyte” me neophyton, (i.e., amateur, novice, beginner, rookie), (1 Tim. 3:6,8,10), “able to give instruction in sound doctrine and...to confute those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28-32).

Humility Gr. tapeinophrosunen, literally, “lowliness of mind,” is probably the MOST essential characteristic desired by God in an elder or “leader” in the church! We’ve already referred you to Jesus’s admonition to the disciples about arrogance and pride (Matt. 20:20-28). There are many more statements of Jesus about this. One of the most incisive (which applies to anyone even wishing to get into the kingdom of heaven) is the one in Matt. 18:1-14 about becoming like a little child! The Greek adverbs anagkastos, and ekousios, in 5:2 are appositives (i.e., not “unwillingly,” but “willingly”). To get the deliberate flavor of the meaning of ekousios, see how it is used in Heb. 10:26! No one should become an elder through force, or coercion, or compulsion, but prothumos, “eagerly, freely, readily.” An elder must “seek” the office—not be dragged into it kicking and screaming, “No!, no! I really don’t want to!” But does “seeking” sound humble? It does if the prospective “seeker” knows what the office is all about and is “willing” to suffer the humiliating things he will have to do to be one! FOLLOW THE “GOOD SHEPHERD” OF THE SHEEP AROUND THE GOSPELS AND YOU

WILL KNOW WHY AN ELDER “SEEKER” HAS TO BE HUMBLE (John 13:1ff, 1 Pet. 2:18-25, etc.). HE HUMBLD HIMSELF ALL THE WAY FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH (Phil. 2:5-11). The Greek word *aischrokerdos*, in 5:2 means, “not be a man who so loves money that he will, without hesitation, stoop to low practices to make a quick buck.” (1 Tim. 3;3,8; Titus 1:7). An elder “seeker” should be humble (child-like) about wealth, whether he has it or doesn’t have it!—willing to share, unaware of the position wealth puts one in the eyes of the world! JESUS, THOUGH HE HAD ANGELS AT HIS BECK AND CALL, AND WAS THE CO-CREATOR OF ALL THAT EXISTS, HAD NOT WHERE TO LAY HIS HEAD UPON THIS EARTH! The elder “seeker” must never *katakurieusonte*, “lord it over” or “domineer over” those the Lord has placed in his charge! Look again at Matt. 20:20-28—even apostles were warned not to try to “domineer” one another! The church is not like human institutions where some give orders and others merely take them; where there is a “pecking order” and there are bosses who boss everyone else. The church is a group of forgiven sinners who need tending to by those who are eager, willing, and humble enough to do the tending! If a congregation is to be tended to and led through all the suffering it will endure here on earth, IT MUST BE TENDED TO BY HUMBLE MEN! Why did God choose Joseph to be the Savior of Israel from famine? Because God knew through suffering Joseph would become a humble, forgiving, tenderly-caring leader. Why did God choose Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt? Because he was the “meekest man on earth” and was willing to lay aside the crown of Egypt to suffer with his brethren by faith in the Messiah. Why did God choose David to be king of Israel instead of Saul? Because David had the humility and caring attitude that could stand the test of Saul’s implacable persecution.

Anxiety, stress, worry—everyone has some! Even Jesus had a “troubled soul—even unto death” (Jn. 12:27; Lk. 12:50; Matt. 26:38; Heb. 5:7-8). He cast all his care upon the Father. He was not copping out—he was coping! Humility demands trust. Rigid programs in military “boot camps” humiliate new trainees to engender absolute trust. When a Marine Drill Sgt. wants to teach absolute trust, he usually makes the trainee suffer. When you get a physical ailment, does casting your care upon a trained expert mean you are copping-out in personal responsibility? Not on your life! It means you are smart! When you get a “soul-ailment” does trusting your soul to a faithful Creator mean you are shirking responsibility? Trusting is NOT COPPING OUT—IT’S COPING! The Greek word in 5:7 for “cast upon” is *eipripsantes*, (an imperative verb—a command) from *hripto*, which means, “let ‘er go, let ‘er rip,” a seagoing term used by sailors for “casting forth immediately the anchor.” Probably a sharp, quick command to be used at the moment the storm seems ready to swamp the ship. Peter isn’t merely suggesting we cast all our cares upon God—he is giving an apostolic command that we do so!

Does Peter really mean that we are to cast all our cares upon God? Doesn’t God want us to take some of our care upon our own shoulders? We couldn’t do anything about our anxieties even if we wanted to (Matt. 6:27,34)! The words for “all your cares” in 5:7 is *pansan ten merimnan*. *Pansan* definitely means ALL. *Merimnan*, the word for “cares” is a

word which depicts a mind going both ways at once—a fretting, distressed, vexed mind. It is the same word used in Matt. 6:25ff and translated, “anxious, anxiety” (RSV). Jesus used the imperative mood of the verb in the Sermon on the Mount to command his disciples against anxiety. Paul used the imperative mood (a command) Phil. 4:6 to admonish Christians they should “not be anxious about anything.” The other word translated care in 5:7, *melei*, and the phrase would literally be, “because to him (God) it matters concerning you.” God cares for the earth which he created (Deut. 11:12); God cares about oxen (Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor. 9:8-10; 1 Tim. 5:17-18); God cares for every sparrow that falls (Matt. 6:26; 10:29-33). There was a point in David’s life (hiding in a cave from Saul) when he thought no man cared about him, but he knew God did (Psa. 142:1-7). The apex of God’s demonstration of how much he cares for people was when he sent his “one-of-a-kind-unique Son” to earth to be one of “us” in order to save us. Jesus cared when people had no visible means of support, or were handicapped, hungry and hurting. He cared to help some blind beggars—even when he was tired and hungry himself and looking forward to an unjust death just hours away (Mk. 10:46-52)! Jesus cared when people lost loved ones in death. He risked his own life just to go and comfort the bereaved (John 11). Jesus cared when people were scared of dying (Mk. 4:38). Jesus cared most of all that people were starving for the word of God (Matt. 9:36-39; Jn. 4:31:38)! In God’s interposition of himself (in Christ on the cross) we have as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine...where Jesus has gone as a “pathfinder” on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:13-20)—let the billows roll! Let us learn to “let ‘er go” (DROP ANCHOR), when every storm-wave of life’s sufferings makes us think we are perishing. BECAUSE TO HIM IT MATTERS ABOUT US!

Understand! The devil can be resisted! God’s word says we can resist Satan—and God does not lie! The Greek word in 5:9 is *antistete*, literally, “against-stand.” No human has to do what the devil tempts him to do! Jesus proved that by becoming one of “us” and “against-him-standing.” (Matt. 4:1-11). All circumstances, all human passions, all falsehoods—put together and brought to bear at one time does not make any person necessarily vulnerable to the devil. We become vulnerable and fall into sin because we want to—not because we are forced to (Acts 5:1-4; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 10:12-13; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Jas. 1:13-15). We have the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10ff) and mighty weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-5) with which to “stand-against” all the fiery darts of Satan.

First we must be “sober and watchful” (Greek *Nepsate*, *gregoresate*, double imperatives!). To be “sober” means to be unimpassioned, unexcitable, well-balanced. To be “watchful” means to be awake, vigilant, attentive, alert. The way to resist the devil is to have stability and guardedness. We must not be ignorant of the devil’s devices, 2 Cor. 2:11 (the Greek word here means, “mentality”). Second, we must be firm in our faith. The Greek word for firm here is *stereo*, from which we get “steroid, stereo-type, or stereo.” It means, “be solid” (like an Olympian discus-thrower’s muscles) in your belief in Christ. Third, we must humble ourselves to the suffering God allows us, and our brethren all over the world. All this

Christian suffering in the world doesn't just "happen" to us—God permits it for a purpose. We don't have room here to paraphrase all of C. S. Lewis's book, *The Problem of Pain*, but we might encapsulate it in one sentence from his book—"Pain plants the flag of truth in the rebel soul." The proud, arrogant and self-sufficient will not seek God's defense against the devil. The proud feel confident they can deal with temptation, sin, and falsehood all by themselves. They do not need anyone outside themselves. It would be amusing if it weren't so tragic that the proud and arrogant can handle everything themselves but suffering. Only suffering shows human beings they can't resist the devil by themselves; produces endurance, and hope (Rom. 5:3; Heb. 10:36); puts to death the fleshly-mindedness in us (1 Cor. 5:5). Yes! God accomplishes something even when Christians to suffer. The Greek word *epiteleisthai*, is translated "required" in 5:9 of RSV and "accomplished" in KJV, and not even translated into the NIV! The root word is *teleios* which is often translated, "perfected, finished, completed, reached its goal." In other words, God has a goal, an accomplishment to complete through allowing Christians all over the world to suffer. God takes the attacks of the "roaring lion" and makes them accomplish his divine purposes—"a call for the endurance and faith of the saints" (Rev. 13:10; 14:12). Jesus "tenderly" but "sufferingly" calls us home! God's word says Christians will suffer on a world-wide basis—that settles it! And in our "instant-communications-oriented-world-wide-web" society, no Christian in technologically-literate nations today should be ignorant of the world-wide suffering of Christians. Now how does that help? Jesus wanted his disciples to suffer the lack of sleep and "watch and pray" with him at Gethsemane; Jesus wanted people to suffer the privation of giving up families and fortunes to follow him; Paul encouraged other Christians and churches in their suffering by relating the details of his own trials; John encouraged the 7 churches of Asia Minor by letting them know he shared with them in the tribulation. The very fact that we know Jesus suffered in the flesh makes it possible for us to cast every anxiety upon him!

Part of the Christian's ability to "stand fast" against the devil is that he has resources by which he can "stand fast in the true grace of God" (see Acts: 20:28-32). This is the fundamental reason for which Christians get up on Sunday morning and come to "church"—to exhort one another to stand fast in the true grace of God. Most evangelism is done out where the unsaved are—where you work—friends you visit—people you meet. Evangelism is important—Jesus want's the world saved! But he also wants the church exhorted to stand fast in the true grace of God—that's important, too. Just what is THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD? Unless you just fell off the turnip cart—and if you've been paying attention to Peter's first epistle—you can't help but know he means to say that the true grace of God IS HIS FAVOR SHOWN TO MANKIND BY ALLOWING SUFFERING TO OCCUR! In his second epistle Peter warns against false teachers who say that the true grace of God would not want suffering to occur; the true grace of God would not want people to give up the passions of the flesh; the true grace of God would not destroy sinners and this world. THAT IS WHAT FALSE TEACHERS WOULD SAY! But the true grace of God says just the opposite—it insists that God allows suffering to produce the virtues of endurance, holiness, goodness, purity and hope. The true grace of God will insist upon a new birth for salvation (1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1:22-25). The true grace of God into which Christians must "grow" will insist upon JUSTICE which, sadly, will ultimately destroy this sin-cursed world and impenitent sinners

forever (2 Pet. 3:1-18)!

The “kiss of love” in Greek (5:14) is: *aspasasthe allelous en philemati agapes*, “embrace one another with a kiss of love.” The word for “kiss” is used numerous times in the NT and the father kissed the prodigal son profusely *katephilesen* when he “came to himself and went home” (Lk. 15:20; see also Lk. 7:45; 22:48; Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:16). Love is the end of all ends (1 Cor. 13:1-13). When God loved the world (*agape*) he embraced it with his Son. Love is the fulfilling of the law (word, or will) of God (Rom. 13:8). Peter says we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God and “love one another with genuine devotion,” i.e., fervently (1 Pet. 1:22). What Jesus (in the “Prodigal”) and Peter and Paul mean is more than a ritual, more than a handshake, more than a hug, more than an embrace—even more than a kiss on the lips or cheek. IT IS THE KIND OF DEVOTION TO ONE ANOTHER DESCRIBED IN ACTS 20:36-38; LK. 7:38,45; 15:20. IT MAY BE SHOWN WITH TEARS, WITH CUPS OF COLD WATER, AND BINDING UP WOUNDS (LK. 10:34).

TEACHER'S NOTES 2 Peter 1:1-21

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

Yes! All things that pertain to life and godliness are energized in us through the knowledge of Jesus Christ and God's precious promises. We find knowledge of Jesus Christ and we find God's precious promises in God's revealed, written, human-language-transmitted word, the Bible! **THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY INERRANT SOURCE FOR FINDING THIS POWER—IT CAN'T BE FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE.** It is not found in the words of teachers, song-writers, poets, pictures, as helpful and dear as those things may be to some people. It is not found in extra-Biblical "prophets" or "revelations" because there are none such sanctioned by the Word of God! **IT IS NOT EVEN FOUND IN PRAYER OR WORSHIP,** as important as those things are. Prayer and worship are only our expressions of belief and thanksgiving for what we have received from the Word of God (see Psa. 119:1ff; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jn. 20:30-31).

The corruption that is in the world originates from a secular mind-set. It is an attitude of unholiness and lawlessness (Rom. 8:5-8; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 3:4). The "mind of the flesh" is directly connected to the futility of creation and the "corruption" that is in the world. The divine nature is, of course, the Holy Spirit of God—the spirituality of God's character. The "agency" through which we escape the mind-set and futility of the world, and through which we participate in the holy, spiritual character or nature of God, is, once again—the word of God (the knowledge of Jesus and God's precious promises). It is through the word of God that: (a) the "seed is sown which grows automatically into the kingdom of God within us (Mark 4:28; Lk. 8:11); (b) we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man (Jn. 6:63); (c) we are changed into Christ's likeness from one degree of glory to another (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18); (d) we are born anew (1 Pet. 1:23); (e) and through which God and Christ comes and lives in us (Jn. 14:23; 1 Jn. 2:24; 3:24, etc.). This word we hold in our hand has divine power! Extra-Biblical experiences are not needed for that power to work! It works by degrees, slowly like leaven, but inexorably and gloriously, if we will simply believe it and do this powerful, written word of God.

Virtue is from the Greek word areten, and is translated in 1 Pet. 2:9 & Phil. 4:8, "excellence" but means, "honor, courage, boldness, manliness, grit, bravery." A person has to be a very morally upright person to maintain his/her "virtue"! Virtue is an active characteristic, not a passive one. The virtuous person is the "bold-for-God" person. One gets virtue by "being with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Being "with" Jesus over whom death has no power, and knowing he promises you the same eternal life he has, makes one bold! Read about the boldness of the early Christians in Acts 4:19-20; 4:31. In Philippians 4:8 we are told to "think-virtue" (translated "excellence"). Have you added boldness, courage, excellence, grit, bravery and honor to your faith?

Indeed, in fact, the only way a person can be effective in the knowledge of the Lord is to supplement his faith with the characteristics of life listed here. Money by the billions does not make the church effective. The early church certainly didn't have that. Notice—the fishermen were observed to be “uneducated” men, common men, but they were effective! Expertise does not necessarily mean effectiveness! Personal “charisma” does not guarantee effectiveness for the Lord (the apostle Paul is the classic example of a man with what today would be called “personality-deficient” and “politically-incorrect”). Watch out for the “hucksters” and plastic-people in religion. They are probably false-teachers (2 Pet. 2:2-3). Knowledge, self-mastery, stick-to-itiveness, Godwardness, brotherly affection and agape love—these are the character traits that make people effective for the Lord! Anyone who lacks these traits is spiritually myopic (short-sighted) and is surrounded by a black, dark smoke-screen of the devil's which says this world is all the world there is—there is no “next life.” But those who have these traits produce (are fruitful) in what God created them to produce—godliness!

In order to make our calling and election sure, we must do these things: (a) be bold; (b) grow in knowledge; (c) master self; (d) endure; (e) please God; (f) be affectionate toward Christian brethren; (g) love the world as God loves it. God does his part by giving us his powerful word through which we may partake of his divine nature. It is up to us, individually, to make the aforementioned choices and do them! These are things to do! We can't be them without doing them! Anyone who does these things, enters heaven as a rich person! These actions make our election sure because God has elected to have only these kind of actions in his eternal kingdom. This is what the next life consists in.

It is the truth that arouses us to do these things! The stability of our Christian experience (or life), the stability of the church, depends on the truth being constantly reiterated (“reminded”). It is not excitement, entertainment, visiting, not even worshiping—but the truth! Peter said he would remind his readers of things they already were established in, as long as he lived, over and over and over and over again! This is the primary reason for any church meeting. Church meetings are not for visiting, but for instruction, edification, reminding one another of the truth which we already know! Why do we think we always have to have something new and different than preaching and teaching to excite people? The Bible cannot be taught too much, too often, too thoroughly, too well!

Peter emphasizes his preaching about Jesus was not mythological because he preached things he saw and heard which demanded moral, intellectual, physical and spiritual surrender! He claimed to have seen a man suddenly turn into deity then turn back into a man, and heard the voice of an invisible God saying this metamorphosed (i.e., “transfigured”) being was to be listened to and obeyed in preference to the law and the prophets (i.e., “Moses and Elijah”). Now that is either fact or fable, truth or myth. Nothing is stable if it is

built on mythology. Faith built on mythology will not stand the test of suffering or sin! Stability is founded on truth. Paul clearly told the Corinthian church that its instability was a consequence of its doubts about the resurrection (1 Cor. 15). A congregation that does not know why it believes, will not care much what it believes. I repeat, apologetics is the church's number one priority! Perhaps the most significant reason behind the fragmentation of the Restoration Movement was the creeping in "secretly" of those who taught that the Bible was filled with mythology and inaccuracies. And it appears to be starting all over again in some places today!

What Peter and James and John witnessed with their eyes had been predicted by the Israelite prophets centuries earlier. The prophets predicted that God would become man! (Micah 5:2, etc.). But that was the one thing most unbelievable

to the Jew. So Peter declared, he saw and heard this actually taking place right before his eyes and ears, and thus he had word of prophecy made more sure. And all mankind will do well to pay attention to OT prophecy of the incarnation of God as a light shining in a dark place. But most of the world had rather invent myths and philosophies and ideologies rather than pay attention to the fact that God became man! They want God to be "wholly other"—not be down here messing around in man's affairs.

A literal translation of 2 Pet. 1:20-21 would be: "Keep this foremost in your minds and know it—no prophecy ever became loosed (or originates or occurs) of itself, for no prophecy was ever carried along by the will of man at any time, but men spoke prophecy as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The word normally used in Greek for "interpretation" is hermeneuo (from which we get the word "hermeneutics" which means "the science of interpretation"). But that is not the word Peter used here. He used the Greek word epiluseos, which means, "loosed, liberated, originated." Peter is saying that the OT prophecies are to be accepted as originating from the Holy Spirit. Even the most unbelievable prophecies—like God becoming man! All the OT would be in Peter's mind here since Moses, David, Joshua and the others were all called "prophets." All the OT comes from the Holy Spirit of God, even the first eleven chapters of Genesis! The Bible is not destitute of factuality like the myths and sophistries of men. This apostolic message is powerful and productive because it is factual and its prophecies are fulfilled. It is the will of God's Holy Spirit, breathed-out from God theopneustos, "God-breathed" 2 Tim. 3:16 "inspired"). It is God's will "breathed" into the apostles and transmitted ("imparted") by them to us in "words" (1 Cor. 2:12-13) in human language. This very Bible we hold in our hands and hearts is divine! It is supernatural! It will make you and anyone else who wants it, a partaker of the divine nature.

TEACHER'S NOTES 2 PETER 2:1-22

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

“Speaking of prophets,” continues Peter from 1:21, “there were false prophets in the days of old.” That was a fact of history. All the Jews had to do to find that out was read the OT. That began with Cain (see Jude 11). The great and true prophets of the OT (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and others) all denounced in no uncertain terms the false prophets of their times. They called them liars, wicked, “soul hunters,” destroyers of the flock of God, “dumb dogs,” self-deceived. These false prophets led thousands of Hebrews astray—even kings, princes and priests were deceived by them. This is what brought about the Exile and all the troubles the Jews have endured from the Exile to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), to this very day at the chastening hand of God.

The Jews of Peter’s day would have a difficult time accepting the idea that in the glorious Messianic age, there would be false teachers. They looked for the Messianic age to be one of absolute justice, truth, righteousness and glory. It was difficult for Christians to believe that many of these false teachers would arise ‘from among themselves: (Acts. 20:30; 2 Pet. 2:1). These pseudo-prophets would be wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matt. 7:15). They would represent themselves as having “gone out from the apostles” (1 Jn. 2:19) but they would be antiChrists! They would have “gained admission into the brotherhood secretly” (Jude 4). Paul told Timothy they would be people “wandering away from the faith” (1 Tim. 4:1-2) through the “pretensions of liars.” These false teachers would tell people what they liked to hear (2 Tim. 4:3).

It is still difficult for some Christians to believe that there are false teachers among them. Some people think that anything or anyone who attaches the name “Christian” to itself must be at least “trying” to do the truth and surely, no one would deliberately use the name of Christ or the Church for exploitation. Most Christians would not be seduced by avowed atheists. Some Christians could even resist the falsehoods of the more bizarre “cults” and “weirdos.” But thousands of believers are being duped and “fleeced” every day by the subtle deceptions of false teachers “from among themselves” whose intent is to exploit them.

While God will deal with false teachers in the long run, Christians must deal with them in the here-and-now to the extent that they may not be turned away from the Lord and his truth by them. Christians may not be able to protect themselves from all exploitation—God will rectify that in the next life, but Christians must find the protection they need to keep from being led astray unto destruction.

False teachers operate secretly, seductively and with self-will. No one is going to go around advertising, “I am a false teacher!” Not even the devil himself, who in Rev. 12:9 is called “the deceiver of the whole world.” All false teachers try to travel under some form of disguise. Deceit is their only weapon (Gal. 2:4; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; Jude 4). In Jeremiah’s day the false prophets went about claiming divine authority for their message (“Says the Lord”) when they had no such authority (Jer. 23:31-40). In Ezekiel’s day it was much the same—they cried “Peace, peace, when there was no peace” (Ezek. 13:1-23). False teachers usually disguise themselves by telling their follower exactly what their followers want to hear (Isa. 30:8-11; Micah 2:11; Jer. 5:12,31, Micah 2:6; 2 Cor. 11:12-15; 2 Tim. 4:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:6-9). The church (its servants, elders, evangelists and deacons) must always be “alert” (Acts 20:31) because the spiritual war that is going on is not conducted by the enemy using “gentleman’s” rules. Jesus said of the devil that he was a murderer and liar from his banishment from heaven, and there is no truth in him at all! THE DEVIL’S SOLDIERS WILL LIE, CHEAT, DECEIVE, HIDE THEIR MOTIVES, USE WHAT APPEARS TO BE GOOD FOR BAD PURPOSES, AND DO ANYTHING THEY CAN TO SEDUCE THOSE WHO BELONG TO GOD! AND ESPECIALLY THEY WILL TRY TO SEDUCE, SECRETLY, THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE THROUGH SELF-WILL....THOSE WHO WANT TO BE SEDUCED! All false teachers will be “wolves in sheep’s clothing Matt. 7:15) and they will claim over and over that their teaching is true! False teachers are insincere “peddlers” of the Bible (2 Cor. 2:17), and use “disgraceful, underhanded ways, to practice cunning and tamper with Gods word” (2 Cor. 4:2). They will go to great lengths to camouflage their teaching; they will conceal anything that might betray the falsity of their teaching. They will “deny the Master who bought them...” secretly, of course. They will not openly renounce Christ’s authority over their whole existence, but subtly they will side-step the issue with rationalizations. Jude describes false teachers as self-willed (Jude 4,8,10). The self-will of the Pharisees is a classic illustration of the false teacher (see also 2 Pet. 2:10,18, 3:3,5; Jude 8,11,16). For self-will (see Jer. 6:16-19; Isa. 30:8-11). Balaam (see Numbers chs. 22-25; 31:8,16; Deut. 23:4; Joshua 33:22; 24:9; Nehemiah 13:2; Micah 6:5; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14) is the most dreadful example of headstrong, self-willed teachers who wander into falsehood and destruction, and carry thousands with them! No teacher in the Bible is more severely castigated than Balaam! Although he did once turn away from false teaching, he eventually went back to it (Num. 31) and led 24,000 Israelites to be slain under God’s judgment.

The inevitable experience of Christendom as a result of false teachers and their followers is EXPLOITATION. Almost all false teaching is done to EXPLOIT. There may be a few false teachers who are teaching what is untrue because they are genuinely ignorant—but not very many! MOST OF THOSE WHO “WREST THE SCRIPTURES” (2 Pet. 3:16) DO SO FOR SOME PERSONAL GAIN (MONEY, FAME, POWER, ETC.). Peter writes, “And in their greed they will exploit you with false words...” The Greek word *plastois*, is translated “false” in 2 Pet. 2:3 and is the word from which we get the English word, plastic. The Greek work *plastos* comes from the root word, *plassein* which means, literally, to “mold or form”—we also get the word “plaster” from this Greek word. Peter is telling us that false teachers “mold” or “form” or “pattern” their words in order to exploit. While their words may have the ring of truth to them, their purpose is to exploit! THAT IS EXPLOITATION with a capital “E.” WHAT

FALSE TEACHERS DO IS MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL RAPE!

One of the methods of false teachers is described by Jude as: “Flattering people to gain advantage...” (Jude 16). Other methods they have are “wearing sheep’s clothing,” “loud-mouthed boasting, “enticing” (or alluring with bait—see 2 Pet. 2:14,18), “promising freedom,” “cleverly devising myths.” Micah talks about the false prophets of his day leading the people astray, crying “Peace” when they have something to eat, but declaring war against him who puts nothing into their mouths (Micah 3:5). THE “PROSPERITY-EQUALS-PEACE-WITH-GOD” SYNDROME. Isaiah characterizes the people of his day, incredibly, actually wanting false teachers who will “Prophecy not what is right but speak to them smooth things, and prophesy illusions...” (Isa. 30:10). False teachers habitually get wrapped up in “nit-picking” in genealogies, the esoteric, angel-ology, disputing about words, pseudo signs and wonders (1 Tim. 1:4; Titus 3:9; Col. 2:16-23; 2 Tim. 2:14; 2 Thess. 2:9-132; Rev. 13:11-15, etc.). NOW WE KNOW WHY PETER INSISTS CHRISTIANS ADD KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-CONTROL TO THEIR FAITH—SO THEY WILL NOT BE SEDUCED BY FALSE TEACHERS! We certainly have our share of “Plastic” religious teachers in the word today—cleverly “forming” words to “entice” or “bait” people—speaking smooth things, illusions, performing pseudo-signs. And many are being led astray and exploited by them. The Greek word *emporeusontai* is translated “exploited.” It is the word from which we get the English word emporium which is a department store, a market-place. ALL THE FALSE TEACHER IS AFTER IS A PLACE TO DO HIS SHOPPING! HE IS A “HIRELING”—HE DOES NOT WANT TO “LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR THE SHEEP” BUT WANTS THE SHEEP TO BECOME HIS “DISH” Jn. 10:1-18. The false teacher wants only to feed himself (Ezek. 34:10) and use the flock of God as his food!

The American Banking Association has a training program which exemplifies what the church is supposed to do about false teachers. Each year it sends hundreds of bank tellers to Washington D.C. in order to teach them to detect counterfeit money, which is a great source of loss of revenue to the U.S. Treasury. It is most interesting that during the entire two-week training program, no teller touches counterfeit money. Only the original passes through the teller’s hands. The reason for this is that the ABA is convinced that if a teller is thoroughly familiar with the original, he will not be deceived by the counterfeit bill, no matter how much like the original it appears. If every Christian would become familiar with the great foundation of his faith—the Bible—hermeneutically, apologetically, familiar—he/she would be able to detect those counterfeit elements so prevalent in religion today—no matter how much like the original they claim or appear to be!

Despising authority is the very essence of false teaching! False teachers are “bold and willful, not afraid to revile the glorious ones.” Jude says, they “reject authority” (Jude 8). They act like “irrational (wild, untamed) animals” (2 Pet. 2:12; Jude 10). Peter uses the angels who rebelled against God, the flood of Noah’s day, and the cities of Sodom and

Gomorrah as illustrations to exemplify the character and motives of false teachers. Peter is also illustrating that it is possible for God to deliver anyone who wants to be delivered from any amount of false teaching. The false teacher will be motivated by his deep attachment to this world—to worldliness. They “indulge (perhaps not openly, but secretly) in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.” (Many today can remember one famous “faith healer” of a few decades ago who died in Arizona as an alcoholic—and there have been many other fraudulent secrets revealed of false teachers through the years). Jesus indicated we were to discern false teachers by what they have produced (Matt. 7:16). **WHAT A TEACHER’S LIFE AND DOCTRINE PRODUCES TELLS WHETHER HE IS TRUE OR FALSE!** Of course that is not the only way to tell a false teacher. We are also charged with checking a teacher’s doctrine to see if it agrees with the apostolic written word (1 Jn. 4:1-6). The Greek words *kuriotetos kataphronountas*, form a phrase literally translated, “lordship (they) scorn and mentally despise.” False teachers know no “Lord” but themselves! False teachers revile in matters about which they are ignorant (2 Pet. 2:10-12). The Greek phrase is *toluntai authadeis doxas* or *tremousin blasphemounte*, literally, “Presumptuous (or daring) and arrogant (*authadeis* is from *autos*—“self”, and *hedomai*—“pleasing”) they do not tremble (*tremousin*) at blaspheming the glorious ones.” To blaspheme the Holy Spirit is to call “evil” that which God’s word calls “good.” Jesus made this plain in Matthew ch. 12. Many false teachers do exactly this today! **GOD IS CLEAR IN HIS WORD AS TO WHAT IS “GOOD” BUT FALSE TEACHERS REVERSE THAT.** God is also equally clear in his word as to what is evil and false teachers reverse that also (see Isa. 5:20; Prov. 17:15; Amos 5:7). False teachers revile against what is right because they are ignorant (2 Pet. 2:122; Jude 10)—not innocently ignorant—deliberately and willfully ignorant (Matt. 22:29; 1 Tim. 1:6-7). Peter calls them “irrational animals, creatures of instinct (Greek *physika*, “the physical”) born to be caught and killed...” **ALL THEY KNOW IS EAT AND ACT ON EVERY INSTINCT TO PRESERVE THIS LIFE!** Isaiah spoke of some of his people where were “dumber” than animals (Isa. 1:3). Worldly-minded, greedy, rebellious false teachers are ignorant of spiritual-mindedness so they revile against “organized religion,” against the “clergy,” against “head-religion,” against “preacher-training-schools” (i.e. Bible-believing Bible Colleges). The Pharisees reviled Jesus, saying he was “demon possessed,” a “Samaritan,” a “Galilean,” “the son of the carpenter,” “a blasphemer,” “a seditious,” because they did not know spirituality!

Angels and human beings were created by God as moral beings. They evidently may choose whether they will obey God or not. God sends them forth to serve him in many ways. Angels do not have the redemption of grace which God has so infinitely given to man—Hebrews 2:16. When angels sin, God casts them into Tartarus (the only place in the NT where this Greek word is used). Tartarus is borrowed from Greek mythology as the best word in human language to describe a place that really exists (see Lk. 16:23-26) (Homer and Hesiod wrote of a place deep under the earth where the Titans were bound with chains in thick darkness and under punishment for their wickedness). These probably are the same angels of Jude 6 who “left their proper dwelling and....did not keep their own position.” These angels rebelled against God’s assignments! The ancient world of Noah’s day also rebelled against God’s order and was destroyed totally—except for Noah and his family! Sodom and Gomorrah rebelled in the days of Lot, and God destroyed them with fire and brimstone—

rescuing only righteous Lot who was vexed in his righteous soul day after day. Lot's soul was tormented (Gr. *ebasanizen*, same word as is used in Lk. 16:28 to describe the "torment" in Hades) by the wickedness of the cities. And if the rebellion and wickedness of false teachers vexes a man like Lot—think how much it vexes the absolutely righteous God! AND WHAT DID GOD DO WITH THOSE REBELS OF HEAVEN, THE ANGELS, AND THOSE REBELS AND FALSE TEACHERS OF NOAH AND LOT'S DAY? UTTERLY DESTROYED THEM IN HELL! HE SLAUGHTERED THEM LIKE WE SLAUGHTER "ANIMALS OF INSTINCT WHICH ARE BORN TO BE CAUGHT AND KILLED." One thing is certain, the religious teacher or leader who abuses the scriptures to preach worldliness (i.e., "Jesus wants you well" or "Jesus wants you rich" or "Jesus wants you to live it up") should be considered a false teacher. Clearly, the NT teaches us "our citizenship is in heaven" and we are to "set our minds on things above." Whoever does not "renounce all that he has, cannot be Jesus' disciple" (Lk. 14:33). THERE IS MORE FOR THE CHRISTIAN TO FEAR FROM WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS THAN FROM DOCTRINAL ERROR—GOD MAY GIVE GRACE FOR THOSE MAKING HONEST ERRORS IN INTERPRETING DOCTRINE, BUT NEVER FOR WILLFUL DEFILEMENT IN WORLDLY PASSIONS."

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread! (Jude 8-10; Exodus 22:28; Titus 1:7). Peter characterizes false teachers as *aloga zoa*, and you can't get a more literal translation than "creatures without reason" (ASV). The American Standard Version uses the word "railing" as a translation of the Greek word *blasphemounte*. "Railing" is from a Latin root word which means "to bray like an ass." False teachers are "irrational" (Gr. *aloga*, without logic) because they keep on "braying like an ass" their false doctrines and living their false lives, indifferent to the inexorable logic of the consequences of their false teaching. Romans 1:18-32 classifies such teaching and living as "foolish" and that which will "receive in their own persons the due penalty of their error." Paul says at the beginning of this great text in Romans that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse...." But instead of logically seeing what God has said in creation, "claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...." EVEN ANIMALS "KNOW" THEIR "OWNER" AND WHERE TO GO TO GET THEIR "FOOD"—TOO MANY HUMAN ARE DUMBER THAN DONKEYS AND OXEN (Isa. 1:3).

False teachers are pictured by Peter as pleasure-mongers. He says they "count it pleasure—Greek *hedonen*)—to revel (Greek *truphen*) in the daytime." The Greek word *hedonen* is the word from which we get the English word "hedonism" (crass materialism), and

the word truphen means “to luxuriate, indulge, wallow in.” They have eyes that look around on everything in order to have it as their own (adulterously eye-balling it) even if it belongs to someone else. Their eyes do not cease from sinning (Gr. akatapaustous hamartias, never ceases, never satisfied from sinning). We have our East-Indian gurus, our playboy-philosophers, TV religious broadcasters, Christian “entertainers,” modern-day prophets, and they do their share of luxuriating! Some of them claim small salaries for personal income, but it is the hidden accounts and the worldly-mindedness that betrays them! False teachers are PREDATORY! The “entice unsteady souls.” They have “hearts trained in greed.” The false teacher is like a vulture or vicious beast of prey—he is like his father, the devil, who goes about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). The Greek word deleazontes is translated “entice” and means “to entrap by alluring with bait.” False teachers are shrewd enough to know how to allure, to bait, to entice. They study the styles of Madison Avenue, they study the charts on how to make a sale. And they use the methods of the world. They try to find people’s weaknesses and vulnerabilities and then they pounce on them! Paul calls them “peddlers” of God’s word (2 Cor. 2:17) who use disgraceful, underhanded, cunning ways and tamper with God’s word (2 Cor. 4:2). They prey on unsteady (Gr. asteriktous—literally, “without steriods,” infirm, unstable, the opposite of stereoi, or firm in 1 Pet. 5:9). Steadfast faith cannot be built on emotions—they are unstable—emotions are highly vulnerable to be “preyed upon” by predatory false teachers. Our trust in God has to be a thinking, reasoning, conclusive, convicted faith! We must be ready at all times to give a reason to anyone concerning the hope within us—especially in view of the cunning and predatory nature of false teachers. The false teacher is trained in greed. He is not an amateur! He practices his art with great expertise. The Greek word gegumnasmenen, is a perfect-tense verb and is translated “trained.” It means “exercised” and from it we get the English word gymnasium! No wonder so many thousands are hooked by them. Thousands of people do not know God’s real word! Their faith is not firm. They have no convictions! An unreasoning (feeling-only), convictionless, mind is “easy pickin’s” for a false teacher. Christian evangelists (preachers) are obligated to proclaim an “open statement of the truth (2 Cor. 4:2)...which only an “honest and good heart” (Lk. 8:15) will receive.

False teachers have followed the way of Baalam. They are enslaved to greed. Baalam was hired to curse Israel—at first he was restrained by a donkey speaking to him by a miracle of God, but he finally went with Balak and evidently told the Moabites and Ammorites to tempt the men of Israel to act immorally (Num. 31:15-16; Rev. 2:14). Balaam could not, no matter how hard he tried, get a curse out of his mouth against Israel. But he was able to teach Balak how to tempt Israel into sin. So Balam got his money after all. Balaam “loved gain from wrongdoing.” Many false teachers are fond of money. One hears more about money from them than any other subject! There’s nothing wrong with religious teachers and preachers being supported with living wages (1 Cor. 9 & Gal. 6:6), but for a teacher to make wages his first concern is to fall into the trap of Balaam—willing to do anything, even go against the will of God to get money! False teachers are enslaved to enslavement! Peter says they are “waterless springs—mists driven by a storm...” Uttering loud boasts of folly, they entice, promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves. They’re

slaves and revel in their enslavement! Jude says “they reject authority...look after themselves...waterless clouds, carried along by winds...fruitless trees...twice dead...uprooted wild waves of the sea...grumblers...malcontents, following their own passions, loud-mouthed boasters, flattering people to gain advantage.” IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE FAKERS! Peter had already warned in his first epistle, “Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil” 1 Pet. 2:16. Modern false teachers do just that—promise freedom from “organized religion,” freedom from “too much tradition and freedom from the head-religion of old-line churches, etc.” Modern false teachers are promising freedom from “outdated, irrelevant, unloving ethical systems of the old mythological Christianity.” BUT FALSEHOOD IS THE MOST ENSLAVING CIRCUMSTANCE INTO WHICH THE HUMAN PSYCHE CAN FALL. No matter what is done with the human body by others to enslave or incarcerate it—the human mind and spirit can always remain free if it is committed to the truth of God! False teachers make glowing promises of freedom because they know they are dealing with people who are unstable. They must use their enticements upon those who have no fixed convictions. They must appeal to those who are “just escaping from them that live in error.” Anyone who is mentally settled, who has reasons for his hope, is also emotionally settled, and therefore, not vulnerable to the false teaching! In his book, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin lists the psychological structure of cultism: (a) first and foremost, the belief system of the cults are characterized by closed-mindedness. They are not interested in a rational cognitive evaluation of the facts; (b) secondly, cultic belief systems are characterized by genuine antagonism on a personal level since the cultist almost always identifies his dislike of the Christian message with the messenger who holds such opposing beliefs; (c) thirdly, almost without exception, cultic belief systems all manifest a type of institutional dogmatism and a pronounced intolerance for any position but their own; (d) the fourth point of cult-systems is the factor of isolation. Within these systems one can observe the peaceful co-existence of beliefs that are beyond a question of a doubt logically contradictory and which in terms of psychological analysis would come under the heading of “compartmentalization.” Martin goes on to explain the psychological-conditioning processes used by the cults to seduce their victims. They are taught to hate outsiders, are placed under absolute authority of the “leaders,” lines of communication with others are severed, social welfare programs make them dependent, and even threats of bodily harm for disobedience or disavowal of the cult. SO THEY ARE ENSLAVED! False teachers are enslaved to lust. False teachers do not deliver freedom—they themselves are bond-servants of corruption or sin. When a man serves sin he is certainly in no condition to proclaim liberty to others! All people are servants—either of sin or righteousness (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:15-23). Peter’s statement is conclusive: “...for whatever overcomes (defeats) a man, to that he is enslaved.” Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything” (1 Cor. 6:12). Teaching what is contrary to the Bible, whether in doctrine or ethics, means the teacher is the servant of sin! For falsehood is sin! Falsehood was the trap into which the first human beings fell! A person overcome by falsehood, even in doctrine alone, is the servant of sin...he is enslaved...he is not free. Only abiding in the truth, makes one free! (Jn. 8:31). And the truth is to be found in the word of Christ (Jn. 17:17). Peter’s statement that, “if after they have escaped the defilements of the world...they are again entangled...and overpowered, the last state has become worse for them than the first...” DEMANDS SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT! Is it really

better for a person never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment? WHY? BECAUSE THERE IS SOMETHING PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY HARDENING IN THE EXPERIENCE OF RETURNING TO FALSEHOOD HAVING ONCE KNOWN THE TRUTH! There seem to be warnings against sinning “with a high hand...” i.e., deliberately choosing to sin after one has known what is right (Lk. 12:47-48; Heb. 6:108; Lk. 9:62). And there are indications that people will try to go back from the truth and will “sear” their consciences over. Peter does not paint a pretty picture in 2:22! Sin is repugnant to the Almighty—and should be to us! Let us no more think of taking sin into our spiritual beings than we would of sharing a dog’s regurgitated, vomited-up food, or wallowing in the sow’s hole of mire and muck! After once coughing up and regurgitating our sin, let us not sit down and make a meal of it again!

The certain way to be protected against false teaching is TO KNOW THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD...THAT MEANS, KNOW THE BIBLE! IT IS UNEQUIVOCALLY, BIBLICALLY-MANDATED THAT EVANGELISTS (i.e., PREACHERS) AND ELDERS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO GUARD THE CHURCH AGAINST FALSE TEACHING! THAT IS ALL THE PROTECTION THE CHURCH HAS AGAINST FALSEHOOD! THERE IS NO PROTECTION OTHER THAN THAT! MAN CANNOT DEPEND ON HIS OWN LIMITED KNOWLEDGE—ON HIS EMOTIONS—ON SOMEONE ELSE’S HUMAN WISDOM OR FEELINGS. AND DO NOT FORGET—EVEN THE DEVIL AND HIS HELPERS KNOW HOW TO QUOTE, OR MISQUOTE, THE BIBLE! THE BIBLE MUST BE READ AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE FLOCK OF GOD! The primary job of preachers and elders is not to organize, administer, visit, pray, raise funds, or do a 1000 other things—THEIR PRIMARY JOB IS TO “FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD” AND COMMEND THE FLOCK TO THE WORD OF GOD WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD THEM UP AND GIVE THEM AN INHERITANCE AMONG THE SAINTS (Acts 20:28-35; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus; 1 Peter; 2 Peter; 1 John; 2 John; Jude). Church members must become less dependent upon the preachers and elders for the physical (1 Thess. 4:9-12; 2 Thess. 3:1-15) and more insistent that these leaders feed them the spiritual word of God. That will demand that preachers and elders be given more time to study the Word and then teach the Word, and less time to “run after hurt feelings, physical problems, and socializing.”

86 NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES CONCERNING FALSE TEACHERS & FALSE TEACHING —AND WHAT WE MUST DO ABOUT THEM

Compiled by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

1. Beware of them (be on the lookout for them), Matt. 7:15.
2. Know them, by their fruits—their works and doctrines, Matt. 7:16.
3. Beware of their leaven-like doctrines, Matt. 16:5-12; Gal. 5:9.
4. Follow God's word even when the teachers may be hypocritical or partisan, Matt. 23:1-3; Phil. 1:15-18.
5. Let them alone, Matt. 15:13-14.
6. Even if their doctrines are a result of centuries of national heritage, we must follow divinely revealed truth, Jn. 4:24.
7. We must not hear the voice of hirelings if we want to remain in the one true fold, John 10.
8. We must follow only those who keep the word of the apostles, John 15:20; 17:20.
9. We must follow only those who strive for unity, John 17:21-23.
10. We must cautiously resist any teaching not in the Bible lest we be found fighting against God, Acts 5:38-39.
11. We have apostolic precedent for debate with false teachers to defend the truth, Acts 6:8-10; 9:28-29; 10:1-18; 11; 13:6-12
12. We are not to resist evil opposition to the point of reckless and foolhardy throwing away human life, Acts 14:1-7.
13. All doctrine must be investigated in the light of revelation and the true doctrine preached polemically, Acts 15:1—16:5.
14. When Biblical teaching is opposed and blasphemed we should refuse to continue with those who do so, Acts 18:6; Matt. 7:6
15. Separate the disciples from those who speak evil of the Way, Acts 19:9
16. Those sincere believers who have not learned and are not teaching the complete revelation of God need to be taught privately, Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7.

17. Elders are to “take heed,” “feed,” watch,” “admonish with tears night and day,” “commend the flock to God’s word” as preventive polemics, Acts 20:28-32.
18. Opinions are not necessarily false teaching until someone makes them out to be God’s revelation, Rom. 14:1—15:7
19. Mark false teachers—turn away from them in their divisive doctrines, Rom. 16:17.
20. Those who claim to be prophets or teachers must acknowledge the apostles’ letters as divine revelation 1 Cor. 14:37-38
21. We must be wise as to the mentality (the way of thinking) of Satan, 2 Cor. 2:11.
22. We are not to be “yoked together” with those who teach falsely or live falsely, 2 Cor. 6:14-18.
23. We must not allow our thoughts to be led astray by the devil and his cohorts, 2 Cor. 11:3
24. Beware of their abilities to fashion themselves into angels of light and ministers of righteousness, 2 Cor. 11:13-15.
25. They are to be anathematized, Gal. 1:6-9 for they anathematize themselves.
26. Rebuke them publicly (“to the face”) in some instances, Gal. 2:13-14.
27. Stand fast in the freedom of the gospel (do not be bound by false laws added to the Gospel), Gal. 5:1.
28. If a brother trespasses in false teaching we are to seek his restoration in a spirit of gentleness, Gal. 6:1-5.
29. We are to grow up in faith to prevent being “carried away by false teaching” Eph. 4:11-16
30. We are to speak boldly the truth in love—each member of the body fulfilling its part in this, Eph. 4:15-16.
31. We are not to be partakers (associate) with them, and prove all things by bringing God’s revelation to shine upon them--we are to expose false teaching, Eph. 5:6-11.
32. We are to “redeem the time” by learning and understanding what the will of the Lord is in order to prepare for combating falsehood, Eph. 5:15-18.
33. We are to recognize that we wrestle against supernatural power, Eph. 6:10-18 —and we must arm ourselves with truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (the word of God), and prayer.
34. We are to pray for knowledge to prove what is excellent, Phil. 1:9-10.
35. Mark them and beware of false teachers, Phil. 3:2; 3:17-19.

36. Take heed and beware of the philosophies of men, Col. 2:8.
37. Let no man judge us in matters of expedience, Col. 2:16.
38. Train ourselves to answer false teachers, Col. 4:6.
39. Declare the gospel in the face of great opposition and beware of those who preach to please men, 1Thess. 2:1-6
40. We are not to be ignorant, 1 Thess. 4:13
41. We are to prove all things and hold fast to the good, 1 Thess. 5:21.
42. We are to strengthen one another with pure doctrine, 1 Thess. 4:18.
43. We must not be deceived by “pretended signs and wonders and wicked deception,” of the “man of lawlessness, 2 Thess. 2:3-12
44. We are to withdraw from every brother that does not abide in apostolic doctrines, 2 Thess. 3:6.
45. We are to have no company with the disobedient, but to admonish them like brothers, 2 Thess. 3:14
46. We are to charge false teachers to refrain from their teaching, 1 Tim. 1:3-4.
47. Paul delivered two unto Satan who, through their blasphemy and apostasy, had “shipwrecked the faith” 1 Tim. 1:19-20
48. Preachers are to expose the hypocrisy and demonical nature of false doctrines, 1 Tim. 4:1-6.
49. We are to refuse profane doctrines, 1 Tim. 4:7.
50. Evangelists (preachers) are to train themselves in the Word to withstand false doctrines, 1 Tim. 4:11-16.
51. We are to shun those who do not agree with sound doctrine and have a morbid craving for controversy, 1 Tim. 6:3-11.
52. We are to “fight the good fight” and withstand false doctrine, 1 Tim. 6:12.
53. We are to turn away from false teachings and “guard” the truth, 1 Tim. 6:20-21.
54. We are to charge brethren in the sight of the Lord not to strive about words, 2 Tim. 2:14.
55. We are to shun profane babbling, 2 Tim. 2:16-17.
56. We are to refuse foolish and ignorant questioning, 2 Tim. 2:23.
57. We are to correct in a spirit of meekness those who oppose themselves, 2 Tim. 2:25.
58. We are to turn away from false teachers, 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

59. We are to imitate the apostles in their dealings with false teachers—to teach, correct, reprove, instruct, 2 Tim. 3:10-17
60. We are to preach constantly, reproving, rebuking, exhorting, 2 Tim. 4:1-5
61. We are to exhort in sound doctrine and convict (expose) the gainsayers, Titus 1:9.
62. The mouths of false teachers must be stopped, by the elders of the church, Titus 1:11
63. The false teachers are to be reprovved sharply, Titus 1:13.
64. We are to shun foolish myths or commands of men, Titus 1:14
65. We are to teach what befits sound doctrine, Titus 2:1.
66. We are to teach what is good, Titus 2:3
67. We are to show ourselves as models of sound speech that cannot be censured, Titus 2:8
68. A factious man is to be refused after a first and second admonition, Titus 3:10.
69. We are to exercise our senses to discern good and evil, Heb. 5:11-14.
70. We are to obey elders as those who watch for our souls, Heb. 13:17.
71. We are to pray for divine wisdom to guard against demonical wisdom, James 2:5.
72. We are to “reverence Christ in our hearts” and be ready always to make a defense to anyone who calls on us to account for the hope that is within us, 1 Pet. 3:15.
73. We are to remember that God’s word foretells false teachers arising, 2 Pet. 3:1-7
74. We are to grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus lest we be carried away, 2 Pet. 3:17-18
75. We are to take heed to what the apostles have warned about false teachers, 1 John 2:18-25.
76. We are not to believe every spirit (teacher) but prove (test) each teacher against apostolic doctrine, 1 Jn. 4:1-6.
77. We are to test teachers as to how they listen and heed the apostolic doctrine, 1 Jn. 4:5.
78. We are not to fellowship with those who deny the deity of Jesus and his incarnation, 2 Jn. 5-11, we are not to receive them nor give them greeting.
79. We are to contend (agonize) earnestly for the faith (doctrine) which is once for

all time delivered unto the saints, Jude 3

80. We are to remember that false teachers have been prophesied, Jude 17.
81. We are to build ourselves up in the faith (Biblical doctrine), pray in the Spirit, keep ourselves in love, as a method of combating false teaching, Jude 20-21.
82. Those who are teaching falsely, not of perverse nature, but out of doubt, we are to convince in an attitude of mercy, Jude 22,23
83. We are to try those who claim apostolic authority to teach, Rev. 2:2
84. We are not to tolerate those who, like Balaam, teach God's people to commit immorality. Rev. 2:14
85. We are not to tolerate those who are false prophets and beguile God's people to practice immorality, Rev. 2:20.
86. We must not be deceived by the "beast, false prophet, and harlot" of secularism, Rev. 20:7-10,; 21:8; 22:15.

TEACHER'S NOTES 2 PETER 3:1-18

prepared by Paul T. Butler, Th.D.

We have come to the last chapter of Peter's writings. Had you been Peter, knowing "that the putting off of your body would be soon" (2 Pet. 1:14) **WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO SAY TO YOUR BELOVED CHRISTIAN BROTHERS?** Of course Peter was not left to say simply what he wanted to say—he was directed by the Spirit of God to say what God wanted him to say (2 Pet. 1:20-21). **SO WHAT WOULD GOD HAVE PETER SAY AS HIS "LAST WORDS?"**

God would have Peter remind his brethren to live in this world as they expect to live in the next world—and not to be deceived into thinking there is no next world! God wants Peter to leave the brethren with the admonition—"KNOW THE FACTS!" HE ESPECIALLY WANTS THEM TO KNOW THE SCRIPTURES... "the predictions of the prophets and apostles."

The scoffers are having their day. They are ignoring the facts and ridiculing the idea of supernatural intervention in "nature." The scoffers hold to evolutionism, mechanistic determinism, and humanism. **THEY HAVE SEDUCED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WITH THEIR FALSE TEACHINGS!**

But God will have his day, also! **THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL CERTAINLY COME! IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE IT TO THE WORLD, BUT THE WORLD IGNORES THE FACTS OF HISTORY AND GEOLOGY (THE FLOOD, THE FOSSIL RECORD, ENTROPY, ETC., ETC.)** This is what God would have come from the pen of Peter at the last of his life—**GOD WILL HAVE HIS DAY!**

In light of the fact that the Absolute Judge of all mankind is going to have his day, let those who believe it prepare themselves mentally and spiritually to meet God on his day. They need to be ready to live forever in God's presence!

Peter wants to leave behind the warning that there are those who will deliberately "twist" the scriptures when they find "unstable" and ignorant people upon whom they may prey. Since Christians may know this beforehand from the assured divine source of apostolic writing, they must beware lest they be carried away with the errors of lawless men and lose their own stability.

Before Peter puts off his earthly body, God wants him to encourage with all tenderness and firmness, all Christians to: “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...” CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE “HASTENING THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD” AND SHOULD BE LIVING EACH DAY AS IF IT WERE THEIR LAST DAY TO SAY WHAT PETER HAS SAID HERE IN THE LAST CHAPTER OF HIS BLESSED WRITINGS!

Peter aims to stir up their sincere minds. The Greek word translated “sincere” is eilikrine, a compound from two other Greek words, heile or helios (“sunshine”)—and krino (“to judge”). In other words Peter wants to speak to minds able to “judge in the broad-daylight of truth.” He wants to direct his teaching at candid, pure-minded, sincere-minded, common-sense people! In 2 Pet. 1:16-21, Peter has emphasized that the teachings of the prophets and apostles coincided with and corroborated each other concerning the deity of Christ (i.e., the Transfiguration). The Greek word translated “spoken before” is proiremenon, and does not mean the OT prophets predicted the Second coming of Christ—the OT prophets did say much about God being a God of judgment! They did say that the First coming of the Christ would usher in the “last days” and his coming the First time would confirm that God will sit in judgment upon all mankind! SO LET ALL CHRISTIANS REMEMBER THESE WORDS SPOKEN BEFORE BY PROPHETS AND APOSTLES. Proiremenon does not necessarily mean prophesying. It could simply be translated, “warned beforehand.” Peter is emphatic because he wants Christians to understand, once and for all, that no matter what scoffers say, and no matter how many scoffers there may be, REMEMBER THAT THE WORD OF GOD BY PROPHETS AND APOSTLES PROCLAIMS A FINAL JUDGMENT OF ALL MANKIND! Remember that the word of God has always, wherever it can be checked against history, physics, archaeology, paleontology, astronomy, philology, and every other —ology, has proven to be 100% accurate! Scoffers, on the other hand, have been proven, time and time again, to be inaccurate!

While scoffing at God’s truth seems bizarre to Christians, it is the logical consequence of unbelief. Scoffers will come “following their own passions” (i.e., lusts). THEY WILL BE SCOFFING BECAUSE THEIR WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS IS LEADING THEM AROUND LIKE SLAVES. Scoffers do not know what else to do! They do not want the truth! So, they scoff! The Greek word for “scoff” is empaiktai, which is sometimes translated “mockers.” It is a compound word from paizo which means “to play like child—that is to jest, and sport.”, and the prefix em which means “in or at.” THESE ADULT SCOFFERS JEST ABOUT REALITY LIKE CHILDREN IN “PLAY-LIKE....” They do not want to face reality. They are spiritual schizophrenics! They are the same people as those in 2 Thess. 2:9-12, who “refused to love the truth....but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” They are like those people of Isaiah’s day who cried out for the prophets to preach to them “illusions” (Isa. 30:9-10). They are those whose “consciences are seared” (1 Tim. 4:2)—“lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with

conceit, lovers of pleasure....holding the form of godliness but denying the power there.” (2 Tim. 3:1-9). “They are futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds are darkened....Claiming to be wise, they have become fools” (Rom. 1:21-23).

The “last days” as Peter is referring to them here are what is included in the entire Christian dispensation—all the way from the beginning of the Messianic age (the first coming of Christ) to the end of time (the end of time no one will know—not even the angels of heaven, Matt. 24:36, et.al.) Scoffers about both the First Coming and the Second Coming of Christ began scoffing from the birth of the Christ (Messiah) and continue to this very day. WE ARE IN THE “LAST DAYS” RIGHT NOW—BUT THEN, SO WAS PETER 2000 YEARS AGO! There will always be scoffers—as long as this world continues! THE CHURCH MUST FACE THIS REALITY AND BE PREPARED TO MEET IT. That is precisely why Peter said, “...be prepared always to give an answer to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is within you...” (1 Pet. 3:15). If you haven’t run into any “scoffers” about the 1st and 2nd Comings of Christ lately it’s because you haven’t been letting it known that you are a Bible-believing Christian!

These scoffers will scoff at both the 1st coming and the 2nd coming of the Messiah. They will say, “Where is the promise of his (God’s) coming (in judgment, see John 9:29 where Jesus said he came even in his first coming for judgment). For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue (Greek, diamenei, “remain unchanged, continue as they always have”) since the fathers fell asleep.” These scoffers mock the NT as nonsense—they say nothing has been done by God since “creation” and since “the fathers (patriarchs) fell asleep.” These scoffer are uniformitarians, evolutionists. Uniformitarianism is a philosophy of mechanistic determinism. IT IS A PRESUPPOSITION THAT MIRACLES ARE IMPOSSIBLE (especially denying the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ). It precludes all possibility of any supernatural intervention in nature at any time—past, present or future. However, uniformitarianism is a presupposition that is a bankrupt theory, murdered by the brutal facts of physics (especially the 2nd law of thermodynamics, i.e., entropy, which is undeniable scientifically a fact that the universe as we know it is not “uniform” or “mechanistic” but is running down, every day, in every way—the only way our universe continues to exist is because God is sustaining it until he is ready to destroy it with a huge, fiery explosion!). Furthermore, history declares in the Bible (and Biblical history is more certainly established as any other human history ever written), that miracles, especially the first coming of Christ, the Messiah, took place, at a place on earth, at a specific time, witnessed by human beings who recorded it.

geological (paleontological) facts are, are two different matters! The facts are NOT concealed; the facts are there for any honest minded geologist or paleontologist to learn that a world-wide cataclysmic deluge of water (i.e., a universal flood) occurred on this planet centuries ago that covered the highest mountain peaks and lowest valleys to be found on earth! And that paleontological record fits precisely with the Genesis account! Should there be any doubters, refer them to the book, *The Genesis Flood*, by Dr. John C. Whitcomb, Jr., and Dr. Henry Mr. Morris, pub. Baker Book House, 1965. The geological record as it really is in the earth's rocks and layers of earth does not fit the evolutionary hypothesis by any stretch of the imagination! Peter calls the Flood of Noah's time kataklustheis, from which we get the English word, cataclysm. This great cataclysm (flood) as God's judgment escaped the minds of the scoffers NOT because they had never been told or were uninformed—but BECAUSE the thought of it was not according to their wishes and desires! The idea that God has judged the world, and will do so again, totally, grates on the minds of those who wish to follow their own passions! Their solution to that "grating" is simply to ignore judgment, ignore the facts, and refuse to let their minds dwell upon it. Sinners wilfully forget many things to their own damnation: the brevity of life (Psa. 91:12); that all men must die and given an account (Heb. 9:27); the surety of a resurrection to judgment (Jn. 5:28-29; 11:17-27; 1 Cor. 15:1-58). Men wilfully exchange the truth of God for a lie, and refuse to have God in their knowledge, even when the wrath of God is revealed from heaven in the things that have been made (history, nature), BECAUSE THEY WANT TO FOLLOW THE LUSTS OF THEIR OWN MENTALITY—WORLDLINESS (Rom. 1:18-32). So beware of scoffers, no matter how many degrees in science of philosophy or religion they may have! If they are saying the world will always continue as it has since creation (or originated by chance)—THEY ARE IGNORING THE FACTS OF BOTH HISTORY AND SCIENCE. Beware of those who even say they believe in the final judgment and know when it is going to occur. Date-setters for the "rapture, tribulation and millennium and judgment have only added fuel to the fires of the scoffers! Because date-setters have been so often proved foolish, many "scoffers" scoff at Christianity as a religion of idiots! Scoffers have used the foolishness of "date-setting" for the final judgment as one of their most potent weapons to revile the way of truth and deceive and lead astray the ignorant and unstable. THE DAY OF GOD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT—UNANNOUNCED! Paul declared to the Ph.D.s on Mar's Hill that the judgment was as certain as the historically, eye-witnessed resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

The first thing Christians are not to ignore is that God will keep his promise to destroy this world just because he hasn't done so according to human time-schedules! God has his own time schedule. Time means nothing to God, particularly here as it concerns the fulfillment of his promises and purposes. As far as God is concerned, he might just as well have decreed the First coming of Christ at 2000 as at 4 B.C. He might as well have decreed the end of the world a couple of days ago! The lapse of time between his predictions of the incarnation of Christ (in the OT prophets) and its fulfillment is no weighty argument against the certainty and truthfulness of the predictions. And neither is the lapse of time between Christ's 2nd coming in final judgment and its tardiness for 2000 years any argument against the certainty and

truthfulness of the predictions. The passing of centuries means nothing to God. Yet such a delay may seem a long time to man. Remember Daniel who had trouble understanding God's long delay in removing the "indignation" God had placed upon Israel. In Daniel 9, Daniel prayed for an answer to his problem—God told him it would be 600 years before he would send his "Anointed One" to take away their "troublesome times" (Dan. 9:24-27). God put the Israelites in Egypt and promised to give them their own land, but it took him 400 years to do that. God promised a "prophet like unto Moses" for his people, but it took God 1400 years to do that! Two basic arguments stand out against those who mock the coming destruction of the world and judgment of mankind (1) true history; (2) God's view of time. God looks at time from the standpoint of one who is eternal—always was and always shall be. Man looks at time from the standpoint of one who only lives 3 score and 10 or a few years longer. Just because what God's word says is going to happen, hasn't happened in our life-time, does not mean it cannot or will not happen!

The second thing Christians are not to ignore is that God is not willing that any should perish. God is patient, forbearing, and slow in avenging wrongs. It is because of this characteristic of God that he may appear "slack" concerning his promises. When he decided the ancient world of Noah's day was to be destroyed his longsuffering caused him to spare that world for 120 years (Gen. 6:3) while Noah preached. **NOAH EXHIBITED THE FAITH THAT SAVES WHEN HE, BEING WARNED BY GOD CONCERNING EVENTS AS YET UNSEEN, TOOK HEED AND CONSTRUCTED AN ARK FOR THE SAVING OF HIS HOUSEHOLD (Heb. 11:7).** God has nothing but the good of his creatures at heart! He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). It is not a "few" or "some" that God desires to be saved, but "all" —whosoever will (Rev. 22:17). A merciful and loving God has provided an absolute and supernatural deliverance from the impending eternal damnation and ruin of the human spirit. He has provided an atonement for sin in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ. All who will believe that, and enter into covenant with God through it, may have deliverance!

The third thing Christians are not to ignore is that God is going to make a new heavens and earth. The elements, the basic components or constituent parts of the earth and its atmosphere will be disintegrated by God in a mighty conflagration (fire), which will dissolve it all. Even scientists tell us that the atmosphere surrounding the earth has potentially combustible materials. God by his mighty power "compacted" or "put together" the earth (2 Pet. 3:5), and he will also by his mighty power pull it apart or blow it up and disintegrate it. Paul also speaks of fire in relationship to Christ's second coming (2 Thess. 1:7). The only possible picture one can draw from these words is that of a mighty, flaming, searing holocaust, enveloping the earth itself and all the atmosphere about it. **A DAY OF ANTICIPATION AND EXPECTATION? YES, INDEED, FOR THOSE WHO ARE READY TO LIVE WITH CHRIST! BUT WHEN ALL THIS HAPPENS IT WILL, ON THE OTHER HAND, STRIKE TERROR INTO THE HEART OF MANY BECAUSE OF THE FEARFUL JUDGMENT THAT IS YET TO COME!** To the righteous that day shall be a day of joy—and we may "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:18). God is going to create a new abiding

place for the righteous (those declared righteous and who want to be righteous by their faith in Christ). GOD IS GOING TO MAKE A COMPLETELY NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH. The Greek word translated “new” is kainen, and means “new in form or quality, or a different nature from what is contrasted as old.” The promise of a heavenly home is repeated several times in Scripture (Lk. 20:34-36; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:6-10; Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5; 22:14-16, etc.). AND THIS HOME WILL BE COMPLETELY NEW IN QUALITY, IN FORM AND IN NATURE FROM THIS EARTH! Had Peter wanted to say that the new heavens and earth were only the old “remade or cleansed,” he would probably have chosen another Greek word (neos, which also means “new” but this word refers to “new” primarily in reference to time). SO HEAVEN MAY BE READY AND WAITING FOR US NOW (Lk. 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:6-10). AND PERHAPS WILL WAIT FOR ANOTHER THOUSAND YEARS, BUT IT WILL BE kainos OR NEW AS LONG AS IT EXISTS (WHICH IS FOREVER) BECAUSE IT IS NEW IN QUALITY OR CHARACTER! NO ONE AND NOTHING WILL EVER GROW OLD IN THE BELIEVER’S NEW HOME! Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, came down to earth to live among men to prove to eyewitnesses that God is able to make things new and abiding. He made new human limbs on human bodies, he made new wine out of water, he made new bread and fish from 5 loaves and 2 fish, he raised dead bodies from tombs, and he raised himself from the grave and ascended to heaven, sending back his Holy Spirit to prove that he lives forever. But his greatest work was to make new minds in those who trusted him and believed him. He recreated people! His word which has all his power, is still doing that! And Peter mentions that in his first letter (1 Pet. 1:22-23) and in his second letter (2 Pet. 1:3-11). God makes new people for the new home he is creating! (See Rev. 21:22-17).

The FACT of the coming judgment of God upon this world should affect the lives of Christians and make them steadfast. —without spot or blemish. Everything burnable and capable of being dissolved shall be dissolved on the day of judgment. How this ought to sober every thoughtful mind! The fine estates, the beautiful homes, the lovely gardens, the expensive clothes, the chrome-laden automobiles—ALL SHALL BE DISSOLVED AT THE COMMAND OF GOD! HOW FOOLISH IT IS, THEN, FOR CHRISTIANS TO MAKE MATERIAL THINGS THE OBJECT OF PRIMARY INTEREST AND CONCERN IN LIFE! The worldly man, after reading this account, has every right to fear and tremble! But the man who is living as he should, looks into the future with the hope that this day is not far distant. THE GODLY MAN IS “LOOKING FOR” AND “ANTICIPATING” AND “EARNESTLY DESIRING” THAT DAY. The godly man is urging that day on—he is desiring that God’s timetable be accelerated! The godly man is of this frame of mind because he is living unstained from the world—he is free from the desires and ambitions and mentality which stains his character (his soul). THE GODLY MAN IS “WITHOUT BLEMISH” OR BLAMELESS. THAT IS, HE IS LIVING A LIFE THAT CANNOT TRUTHFULLY BE CENSURED. HIS LIFE IS NOT REPREHENSIBLE (Phil 2:15). THAT IS BECAUSE THE GODLY MAN IS AT PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, AND THUS AT PEACE WITH HIS FELLOW MAN! THE GODLY MAN IS MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY MOMENT OF GOD’S LONGSUFFERING TO MAKE HIS CALLING AND ELECTION SURE (2 Pet. 1:10-11).

Peter says his beloved brother in Christ, Paul the apostle, wrote of the same things. Paul wrote of the judgment of God, the destruction of this world, a new heaven and a new earth, AND ESPECIALLY OF THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD WISHING THAT ALL MEN MIGHT COME TO REPENTANCE AND SALVATION. And everyone who has ever studied Paul's writings will admit with Peter that some of it is difficult to understand. But that doesn't mean we are to cast them aside and never study them. The book of Revelation is not easily understood, but the Holy Spirit says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3). The word translated "twist" in 2 Pet. 3:16 is the Greek word *streblousin*, from a Greek root word that means, "a windlass, wrench or other thing used as an instrument of torture—a rack." So the word means "to distort (or stretch) the limbs on a rack." Metaphorically, the reference is to "one who wrests or tortures language, or twists language." AND WHO DOES THIS? THE IGNORANT AND UNSTABLE! FALSE TEACHERS ARE STILL "TORTURING" THE TRUTH, AND THE IGNORANT AND UNSTABLE ARE STILL ALLOWING IT TO HAPPEN! PETER COMMANDS (Greek, *phulassesthe*, "aorist imperative, "You do guard") Christians to "beware" of such as those who "twist and torture" the Scripture and keep themselves from them! Christians have an obligation, a duty, a command from God himself to guard against false teachers. Christians cannot be ignorant and unstable they are not allowed to be so!

Peter commands Christians not to lose their "stability" (Greek word is *sterigmou*, the word from which we get "steroid"—i.e., strength, growth, etc.). First, since Christians know beforehand what is going to happen—the world going to be dissolved; that all mankind is going to be judged—they must beware (be on guard) against the enticements of false teachers lest they be carried away by the errors of lawless men. CHRISTIANS MUST NOT SWALLOW THE BAIT. THEY MUST NOT BE DECEIVED BY THOSE WHO IGNORE THE FACTS OF THE FLOOD! Uniformitarianism and evolutionism (in the guise of "science") has led many millions of people astray from the facts! Communism and liberal theology is built upon the presuppositions of these bankrupt philosophies! Part of a Christians's defense against such errors is to be at least knowledgeable about the answers to such errors. TO BE AWARE MEANS MORE THAN JUST TO SAY THE FALSE TEACHER IS IN ERROR—IT MEANS TO BE ABLE TO PROVE IT! AT LEAST TO GIVE EVIDENCE! All the Christian has to do is study his Bible thoroughly, be a good observer of nature, use good logic and reason, and he will be able to refute the errors of uniformitarianism and evolution! HE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A SCIENTIST! Second, the Christian needs to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. The Greek verb "to grow" is a present-tense imperative verb. It is a command to continue growing. It is more than a suggestion! What is there in grace in which to grow? "The grace of God has appeared—training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world..." Titus 2:11. GRACE IS THE FAVOR OR KINDNESS OF GOD. WE ARE TO GROW IN WHATEVER GOD HAS SAID THIS GRACE MEANS TO OUR LIVES—AND GOD TELLS US THAT IN HIS WORD! Paul says in Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Paul is saying, "In the light of God's gracious mercy, it is only

reasonable that Christians present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” THERE IS LOGIC IN GRACE! The grace of God trains us! If the grace is completely undeserved and infinitely given, then the Giver has every right to give commandments saying what that grace demands or obligates in its recipients. THE GRACE OF GOD IS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE CHARACTER OF GOD. WE ARE TO GROW IN THE CHARACTER OF GOD! We are also to grow in the knowledge of Christ. THIS MEANS MORE THAN GROWING IN INFORMATION ABOUT CHRIST. It means to grow in experience of Christ’s “way” or “Life.” We find that “way” of course, in the scriptures. But we must put it to practice to grow in experience!

So, scoffers have their days! They mock the idea of a final judgment. They carry many away with their errors. They deliberately ignore the facts of history and science. BUT GOD WILL HAVE HIS DAY! In fact, God has had many days of judgment upon this world. They are recorded in nature and history. The scriptures (prophets and apostles) have predicted them and they have come to pass! So, while the world is carried away by errors of false teachers, Christians may grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ because they know the final judgment is coming—and they have evidence that it is!

Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

